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# **STUDIES**

## **IN THE**

# **SCRIPTURES**

*“Search the Scriptures” John 5:39*

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EDITOR: Arthur W. Pink (1886-1952)

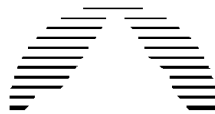
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*Studies in the Scriptures* appeared without interruption from 1922 to 1953, each issue including six to eight articles addressing a different topic in a series. While virtually unknown to the Christian world when he died, his writings continue to grow in their influence upon God's people around the world, through their clarity, careful exposition, and Christ-centeredness.

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## CHRISTIAN SERVICE

Christian service is obviously the service of a Christian, and if words have any meaning, it is the work he does or the duty he discharges unto another in the character of a *servant*. That raises four questions: What *is* a “servant”? What are the distinctive *marks* of one? *Whose* servant is he, or who is his master?—for master and servant are just as truly correlative terms as are husband and wife, parent and children. What is the *nature* of the “service” unto which Christians, all Christians, are called by God? If all ambiguity of thought and confusion of terms is to be avoided, then we need to obtain answers to those questions from the Word of truth, and then “hold fast the form of sound words” (2Ti 1:13) and not perplex ourselves and mislead other people by using them in a way quite foreign from their Scriptural import. God’s Word is made up of words, and as soon as we wrest its language and invest its terms with a signification different from the way in which the Spirit has used them, we land into error.

What is “Christian service”? Many of our readers, especially American ones, will deem it unnecessary to ask such a question. One of the favourite slogans over there is, “We are saved to serve.” When special meetings are held for Christians, for “the deepening of the spiritual life,” for “a baptism of the Spirit,” or for entering upon “the victorious life,” one of the pleas used is, Such an experience is necessary to fit you for Christian service. On the lips of many religious people, “Christian service” signifies Christian *usefulness*: to be a regular attender at church, and a liberal contributor to its finances; to become teacher of a class, or leader of a young people’s society; to engage in evangelistic activities, and do personal work; to “witness for Christ” by verbally announcing His power to save and satisfy, telling others of “what He means to me.” Yet, as the term is used in Scripture, one may do all those things and not be engaged in any Christian *service*.

When Christ said “ye cannot *serve* God and *mammon*” (Mat 6:24), it is clear He did not mean, Be useful unto mammon or bear witness for mammon; but rather, be a lover of and subject unto it. The word is quite plainly defined in “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey” (Rom 6:16). Thus, such expressions as “the servants of sin” (Rom 6:20), “serving divers lusts and pleasures” (Ti 3:3), “the servants of corruption” (2Pe 2:19) mean being the willing and *obedient subjects* of sin, lusts, corruption. A “servant” is one who is not at his own disposal, but is at the beck and call of another, having voluntarily yielded and agreed to do his bidding. It is thus we find him described in the scriptures: “Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters [for an intimation of their will], and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the LORD our God” (Psa 123:2).

Such too is the New Testament description. Said the centurion, “For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my *servant*, Do this, and he doeth it” (Luk 7:8). Servants, then, are not in their own power to please themselves, but are under the control of another, to be employed entirely at his discretion. Now the Christian is *God’s* “servant.” He is so by purchase (1Co 6:19-20). He is so by covenant, having solemnly entered into a compact with God, to perform the duties of a servant that he may enjoy the privileges of one. He has recognized and yielded to God’s claims upon him. Previously, he was his own servant, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, gratifying himself. But upon his conversion, he surrendered to the Lordship of Christ, took His yoke upon him, to henceforth submit to His rule over him and be subject unto His will in all things.

Thus, to “serve the Lord” is not to do something *for* him—as though we showed Him a favour—but it is to render something *unto* Him. It is to perceive His just requirement of me, to own His absolute authority, to dedicate myself wholly unto Him. It signifies that I take the place and honestly endeavour to discharge the obligations of a servant; and a “servant” is one who does as his Master bids him, who seeks to please Him and promote His interests. Above, we pointed out what “serving” mammon does not signify; let us now define it positively. To “serve” mammon is to love riches and make them my dominant quest, to devote all my faculties and energies unto the acquiring of the same. So to “serve” Christ is to love Him, to give Him the supreme place in my heart and life, to devote all my powers and strength unto the doing of what He requires, and abstain from all He prohibits. Love to Christ is to be expressed in obedience unto Him: “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (Joh 14:15).

God glories in His people in this particular character: “My servant Moses” (Num 12:7), “My servant David” (2Sa 7:8), “My servant Job” (Job 1:8). As the saints glory in being able to say “my God,” “my

Lord,” “my Saviour,” so God glories in them as *His* “servants” because He has honour and pleasure by such. It is our honour to be God’s servants; and He is pleased to consider Himself honoured by our *obedience*, yea, more so than by our worship: “Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold [attend to this!], *to obey* is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams” (1Sa 15:22). He was supremely honoured when His own beloved Son took upon Him “the form of a servant” (Phi 2:7). Said the Father, “Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth” (Isa 42:1). And of what consisted the *service* of Christ? In ministering unto others, in dying for sinners? Incidentally, yes: but fundamentally and essentially in that He came not to do His own will, “but the will of him that sent” Him (Joh 6:38), in that He “became *obedient* unto death” (Phi 2:8)!

“Christian service,” then, is the response made by a regenerate soul unto the Lordship of Christ, the voluntary and hearty subjecting of himself to His dominion, the carrying out of His revealed will. In a word, it consists of *obedience unto God*: not merely in one particular or direction only, but in a full and entire obedience. Christian service is a running in “the way of [His] commandments” (Psa 119:32), an acknowledging Him “in *all* [our] ways” (Pro 3:6); and that calls for a diligent searching of the Scriptures, that we may ascertain the details of His will and discover those things which are pleasing or displeasing unto Him. But am I not to “witness for Christ”? Certainly, but how? By your lips, or your life? By your words, or your works? “Let your *light* so shine”—and light shines *silently*, though nonetheless effectively. We are to “*shew forth* the praises of him” (1Pe 2:9) in the home, in the office, factory, shop, in the world; and unless we do so *there*, God will not accept what we do in the church. Only so far as our daily walk is regulated by Christ’s precepts are we *serving* Him.

Most of the so-called “Christian service” which now obtains in the religious world is seen and heard of men, but much of the service which God has appointed His people is beheld by none but Himself. Most that passes for “Christian service” has a tendency to puff up with a sense of self-importance, but that which God assigns humbles, by a realization of how far short we come of measuring up to His standard. Much of the humanly invented “service” is wrought in the energy of the flesh, whereas that which God requires from us can only be performed by the enabling of His grace. Those activities now so prevalent in the religious realm occupy with the creature, but that service which God has enjoined fixes the eye on His glory.

## THE PRAYERS OF THE APOSTLES

### 44. 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13, Part 2

We turn now to consider the *petitions* of this prayer. They were two in number: the one more immediately concerning Paul himself; the other, the Thessalonian saints. The former is recorded in verse 11: "Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you." First, that request concerned the taking of a journey. Second, it concerned a ministerial journey. Third, the one who desired to take it was exercised over it and wanted his steps to be ordered of the Lord. Expressed in those terms (and they are a legitimate and simple analysis of the petition), it should at once be apparent that there is something here of interest and moment to each of *us*: in other words, that this petition has been placed on permanent record for our benefit—for our instruction and guidance. It is thus that we should ponder each verse of Scripture, seeking to ascertain what there is in it which provides help for the details of our daily lives. God's Word is given us as "a lamp unto [our] feet, and a light unto [our] path" (Psa 119:105) for us to walk by, an unerring Guide to direct our way through the maze of this world. To put it in another way, the apostle has here left us an example which it is our wisdom to follow.

The strongest willed and most resolute person on this earth cannot take a journey of so much as a hundred yards, unless God wills it and enables him. "Go to now [a word of rebuke], ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city...Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow...For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (Jam 4:13-15). Even though God grant us permission to carry out our plan, that is very far from saying that He will prosper the same. How that serves to illustrate what we said in our last upon the entire dependency of man upon his Maker! In the verse now before us, we are shown *what effect* that fact, that truth, should have upon us. It should counteract our spirit of self-sufficiency. It should cast us upon the Lord, seeking His enablement for all things. That was exactly what the apostle was here doing: acknowledging his dependency upon God and supplicating Him concerning his journey to Thessalonica.

"O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer 10:23). How very few professing Christians believe that! Nevertheless, that is the truth, and therefore are we bidden, "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Pro 3:5-6), yet not without our concurrence. God treats with us as rational creatures, as moral agents, and therefore are we required to trust Him fully, to repudiate the competency of our own reason, and to own Him in all our conduct. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD" (Psa 37:23)—not so those of a wicked man, though *his* steps are "ordained" or appointed. Sometimes God lets us have our own way, as He did Israel of old, and then we miss His best and He sends "leanness into" our souls (Psa 106:15).

During the recent national emergency, when the first claim on all forms of transport was the carrying of munitions and the conveying of troops, Government posters were displayed everywhere requesting the public to ask themselves the question, "Is this journey really necessary?" That should have a message for *us* concerning our present subject. The first question for each of us to determine is simply this: Is it my plain duty (as required by my calling, or my obligations to others) to take this journey? If there be any uncertainty, then spread the matter before God and seek wisdom from Him. Observe how frequently it is recorded of the man after God's own heart (i.e. who in his official life was so completely subject to the divine will) that when contemplating a journey, "David enquired of the LORD" (1Sa 23:2, 4; 30:8; 2Sa 2:1; 5:19, 23), seeking His guidance each time and waiting upon Him. When your path *is* plain, then definitely beg God to give you "good speed" (Gen 24:12) and grant you journeying mercies. Act on Psalm 37:5, and count upon the fulfilment of its promise. While on your journey, so far as conditions permit, endeavour to redeem the time by profitable reading (Act 8:28).

Turning now to *ministerial journeys*: first, we would observe that in Paul's case, God's will respecting them was not made known to him uniformly, nor did he have any "unmistakable leading" as some today boast of. He and his companions had "assayed to go into Bithynia," and we are told "but the Spirit suffered them not" (Act 16:7): if it be asked, Was he then acting in the energy of the flesh?—we answer, Certainly not, no more than David did when he purposed to build the temple. His trip to Macedonia was the result of a vision, but that was exceptional. Often persecution forced him to flee elsewhere. Sometimes Paul's movements were regulated by direct command from God; at others, by providential circumstances; at oth-

ers, by his own spiritual instincts and desires. When he bade farewell to those at Ephesus, he said, "I will return again unto you, if God will" (Act 18:21)—permits and enables. Our "times" are in *His* hand (Psa 31:15); and though we propose this or that, it is God who disposes (Pro 19:21). Later, he did return unto Ephesus (Act 19:1).

"I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will" (1Co 4:19). Speaking generally, the apostles knew no more about the common events of life than did other men, nor were they (usually) directed by a supernatural impulse for their journeys. "Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you" (Rom 1:10). Those words should teach us that while the will of God concerning any event is not yet ascertained, we have the right and liberty to desire and pray for what we desire, providing that our desires be conformed to God's holiness and our requests subject to His will—our desires must at once be renounced as soon as it be clear that they are not agreeable to the divine will. Rightly did Handley Carr Glyn Moule (aka H. C. G. Moule, 1841-1920) point out that "The indifference of mystic pietism, which at least discouraged articulate contingent petitions, is unknown to the apostles." And again, "His inward harmony with the divine will never exclude the formation and expression of such requests, with the reverence of submissive reserve." Only One has ever had the right or necessary qualification to say, "Father, I *will*" (Joh 17:24).

"For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you. But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you; Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey" (Rom 15:22-24). The opening, "For which cause" is explained in the preceding verses: it was the pressure of continuous evangelistic labours which had been the principal thing that had made him defer his visit—from which we learn that the call of *duty* deterred him from carrying out his earlier inclination. "God's dearest servants are not always gratified in everything they have a mind to. Yet all who delight in God have 'the desire of their heart' fulfilled (Psa 37:4), though *all* the desires in their heart be not humoured" (Matthew Henry, 1662-1714). It is to be noted that Paul said, "I trust to see you," not "I *shall* do so," for he knew not what a day might bring forth (Pro 27:1). We ought to be very slow in making any promise, and those we do should ever be qualified with "If God permit."

"For I will not see you now by the way; but I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit" (1Co 16:7). Here again we see the beloved apostle making personal acknowledgement of both the providential and spiritual government of Christ and his subserviency thereto. The two things must concur: his purpose and conviction of duty be formed by the Spirit indwelling him, and his external circumstances be so ordered as to confirm and make possible the execution of his purpose. Paul was several times crossed in his intentions. Sometimes he was forbidden by the Spirit (Act 16:7), sometimes hindered by Satan (1Th 2:18); at others, prevented or long delayed by the pressure of work, or by the persecution of his enemies. It is very doubtful if he ever took his journey into Spain (Rom 15:24). But as M. Henry said, "However, Paul, forasmuch as it was in thine heart to bring the Gospel into Spain, thou didst well in that it was in thine heart: as God said to David (2Ch 6:8). The grace of God often with favour accepts the sincere intention, when the providence of God in wisdom prohibits the execution. Do we not serve a good Master, then! (2Co 8:12)."

It is our desire and aim to furnish something in these pages suited to the needs of all classes of its readers. Since this magazine goes to several scores of those who are engaged in the ministry, we feel that a word or two should now be offered for their particular benefit ere we turn from the present subject. One of the matters which, at some time or other in his career, deeply exercises the conscientious servant of God is that of his particular field of labour; and more especially when he is justified in leaving one field for another. Great care and caution need to be used, and prayer for patience as well as wisdom. Ours is markedly an age of discontent and restlessness; and not only are most of God's people more or less infected by its evil spirit, but many of His servants are influenced by the same and suffer from a wander lust. Some who make a change of pastorate every two or three years, suppose they find a warrant in so doing from the experience of the apostle Paul; but that is a mistake. *He* was never settled in a *pastorate*, but instead was engaged in missionary or evangelistic activities; and therefore, he furnishes no example to be followed by those who have the care of local churches.

The first thing is to spare no pains in endeavouring to make sure that a particular portion of the Lord's vineyard is the one where He would have you labour. If it be a "church" (?) where you would be required to employ worldly and carnal methods in order to "attract the young people" or to "maintain its finances," that is no place for a servant of Christ. Take time and trouble to find out what the local conditions are, and

you will probably be spared from entering a position where the *Holy Spirit* would not use you. Far better minister to a small company of saints than to a large one of unregenerate church-members. No plan should be formed without reference to God's will; and His glory and the good of His people must ever be that at which you aim. If assured that God led you into your present field, be very slow in entertaining any thought of removal: an invitation to a more "attractive" field is far more likely to be a divine *testing* of your heart than an intimation God would have you make a move. Consult not your own inclinations, but the welfare of those to whom you are ministering. Seek grace to "endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2Ti 2:3) and let *faithfulness* rather than "success" be your earnest endeavour.

"Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you" (1Th 3:11). That prayer demonstrates that Paul was no fatalist who argued that since God has predestinated every thing that comes to pass, there was no need for him to be uneasy about his plans for the near future—that had been a wrong conclusion to draw. No, he was deeply exercised that his steps might be ordered of God; and therefore, did he trustfully commit his way unto Him (Psa 37:5). In spite of his intense desire to visit these saints (1Th 3:6, 10), he refused to rush matters and act in the energy of the flesh. Nor did he assume that *their* yearning to see him again was a "clear intimation" of God's will in the matter: he waited to be definitely guided from on high. It is not for any minister of the Gospel to effect his own design without the divine leave; rather, must it be by God's permission and providence, by His directing and ordering, that each journey is to be taken. Until His will is clear, remain where you are (Rom 14:23). If you be at the parting of the ways, entreat the Lord to *block* the one He would not have you take. Never force matters, nor act hastily.

The "God himself" is emphatic: literally, "But himself, God even our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, may direct our way unto you." The "himself" is in contrast with "we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but *Satan* hindered us" (1Th 2:18). If God Himself direct us, then none can hinder! In what way Satan has "hindered" Scripture does not inform us; and therefore, it is useless and impious for us to speculate about it. It was not that Satan had in anywise hindered the execution of *God's* purpose, but only the fulfilling of the apostle's "desire." God blessedly over-ruled and outwitted Satan, for in consequence of Paul's being hindered in the first century, *we* in this twentieth now have the benefit of this epistle! In the all-too-brief comments of Charles John Ellicott's (aka C. J. Ellicott, 1819-1905) commentary, a valuable point is here brought out: "The verb 'direct' is in the singular (which of course the English cannot express), showing the *unity* of Father and Son, and the *equality* of the two Persons." There was a blessed propriety in Paul's conjoining the Son with the Father in *this* petition, for it acknowledged Him as the One who holds the stars in His hand (Rev 1:16) and who opens and shuts all doors (Rev 3:7).

"And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you" (1Th 3:12). This is the second petition, but we shall not dwell upon it at the same length as the former—not because it is of less importance, but because it calls for less explication. What is needed here is not so much exposition as the turning of these words into earnest supplication. If ever there was a time in the history of Christendom when God's people needed to entreat the Throne of Grace for an increase and abounding again of love, it is surely now. The exercise and manifestation of this cardinal grace is at an exceedingly low ebb. Sectarian bigotry, carnal strife, roots of bitterness, thrive on every hand. Yea, things are in such a deplorable state today that many of God's own people hold quite a wrong idea as to its nature and fruits. Most of them confound natural affability and temperamental geniality for love. A hearty handshake, a warm welcome, may be had at the *world's* clubs and social centers where Christ is not even professed! The love for which the apostle here prayed was a holy, spiritual, and supernatural one.

Spiritual love proceeds from a spiritual nature and is attracted by a sight of the divine image in the saints. "Every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him" (1Jo 5:1). No one can love holiness in another but he who has holiness in his own soul. Many love particular Christians because they find them to be sweet-tempered or generous-hearted, but that is merely *natural* and not spiritual love. If we would love the saints spiritually, we must disregard what they are temperamentally by nature, and contemplate them as the objects and subjects of God's love and for what we see of Him in them. Only thus shall we be able to rise above individual peculiarities and personal infirmities, and value them with a true spiritual affection. This does not mean that we shall ignore their offences, or condone their sins (Lev 19:17), yet often what we regard as "slights" from them is due to our own pride—hurt because we do not receive the notice which we consider is our due. It is not good for the people of God to know too much of each other (Pro 25:17). Familiarity breeds contempt.

Neither the reality nor the depth of Christian love is to be measured by honeyed words or endearing expressions. We have found from experience that those who have addressed us as "Dear Mr. Pink" and signed themselves "Yours truly" have worn far better than others who greeted us as "Beloved brother" and closed with "Yours affectionately in Christ." Actions speak louder than words. Gushy people are proverbially superficial and fickle. Those less demonstrative are more stable. Still waters run deep. Spiritual love always aims at the good of its object. It is exercised in edifying conversation, seeks to strengthen and confirm faith, exalt God's Word, and to promote piety. The more another magnifies Christ, the more should he be endeared to me. We do not mean mere glib talk about Christ, but that overflowing of heart toward Him which compels the mouth to speak of Him. Love the saints for the truth's sake, for being unashamed to avow their faith in such a day as this. Those who reflect most of the image of Christ and carry about with them most of His fragrance should be the ones we love the most.

Love for the brethren is ever proportioned unto our love for the Lord Himself, which at once explains why the former is now at such a low ebb. The sectarian bigotry and the roots of bitterness growing all around us are not hard to explain. Love *to God* has waned! "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, . . . strength, and with all thy mind" before "thou shalt love . . . thy neighbour as thyself" (Luk 10:27). But the love of material things and the cares of this world have chilled the souls of many godwards. Our affections must be set steadfastly upon the Head of the Church before they will wax warm unto its members. Where the Lord be given His rightful place in our hearts, His redeemed will also be given theirs. Then love will not be confined to that narrow ecclesiastical circle in which our lot is cast, but will embrace the entire household of faith. Then will there be "love unto *all* the saints" (Eph 1:15), and that will be evidenced by "supplication for all saints" (Eph 6:18)—those in the four corners of the earth, whom you have never seen. "Salute *every* saint" (Phi 4:21): poor as well as rich, weak as well as strong.

A word now on the *connection* of this petition with the former one. At first glance, there appears to be none, for what relation is there between one being guided in a journey, and others loving one another? Yet from the fact that this one opens with the word, "And," we are given plain intimation there *is* a coherence between them—and *what* that is, a little meditation should discover. What would be the use of the apostle visiting the Thessalonian assembly if strife and division prevailed in their midst? Under such circumstances, the Lord would not clothe his words with power; and instead of Paul's ministry building them up, at best, he would have to reprove and rebuke them for their carnality—for most certainly, *he* was not one of those who would ignore what was wrong and act as though things were all right. Nothing more quickly grieves and quenches the Spirit than dissension and a spirit of ill-will in the assembly. A servant of God is heavily handicapped when he has to labour under such conditions. If, then, this company of saints was to enjoy a profitable season under the further teaching of the apostle, it was essential that their love unto each other be in a flourishing condition.

"And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another" (1Th 3:12). This petition was addressed more specifically unto the Head of the Church, from whom all "nourishment" and "increase" of its members flow (Col 2:19). It is "of his fulness" we receive (Joh 1:16) and from Him "the supply of the Spirit" (Phi 1:19) is given; yet for the same, we are required to seek. This request supplies a striking illustration of what we pointed out in earlier articles, namely, that we are not to infer from the apostle asking for some particular thing that those for whom he supplicated were deficient therein, but rather the reverse. It was because he perceived that a certain grace was in healthy exercise that he felt encouraged to ask God for *an increase* of the same. Such was unmistakably the case here. He had opened his epistle by referring to their "labour of love" (1Th 1:3), and later declared, "But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren" (1Th 4:9-10). Why then this petition? "That ye increase more and more" (1Th 4:10)! The answer to this "large petition" is recorded in 2 Thessalonians 1:3.

"To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints" (1Th 3:13). Limits of space oblige us to be very brief: 1. This expresses his design in his petitions. Our hearts are sadly fickle and inconstant in their frames, and need divine establishing against the fear of man, the frowns of the world, and the temptations of Satan. 2. Holiness before God was the grand *object* in view, and the abounding of love the *means* for promoting the same (Col 3:14). 3. The establishing of our hearts (which God ever eyes) is our great need, yet how little concern is there about *their* state! Much head and hand religion, but the heart neglected! So far as we recall,



never once have we heard this petition used in public prayer! 4. At the return of Christ, these desires will be fully realized (see next article).

## THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JOSHUA

### 24. *The Memorials, Part 1*

That which is recorded in the book of Joshua fully maintains the truth presented in the Pentateuch, yet its typical teaching carries us considerably beyond what is there set forth. This is to be expected, especially when we bear in mind (as we must do continually while pondering its contents) that it was the *new* generation of Israel which is here in view. The lesson taught at the supernatural crossing of the Jordan conducts us farther in the unfolding of the Gospel than what was signified at the Red Sea. There, it was the might of God put forth on behalf of His covenant people in the total destruction of that antagonistic power, which had held them captive so long and had refused to let them go. Here, it was His vanquishing of that obstacle which barred the way into their inheritance. When Satan's captives are freed at the miracle of regeneration, he does not henceforth ignore them and leave them in peace: though he cannot prevent their entrance into the "purchased possession" (Eph 1:14), yet he is ever assailing them in one form or other as he seeks to keep them from a *present* enjoyment of the same. What is required from us in order to thwart those designs of our enemy, we are seeking to show in the course of this series of articles.

But it was the divine side of things, the provisions God made for Israel's entrance into and occupation of the land of Canaan with which we were more concerned in our last. Those provisions were, first, the appointing and qualifying of Joshua to be the leader of Israel, the typical "captain of their salvation" (Heb 2:10). Second, the ark of the covenant, which (we repeat) was both the witness of Jehovah's presence in Israel's midst and the symbol of His relations to them. And third, the priesthood, culminating in their service in the tabernacle which was pitched in Shiloh (Jos 18:1). Thus, as we hope yet to show, not only are we required to turn unto the epistles of Paul to the Romans, the Ephesians, and the Colossians in order to find the antitypical truths of what was spiritually adumbrated *of us* by Israel in the book of Joshua, but also to his epistle to the Hebrews. We know of only one other writer who has called attention to that fact, in an article written before we were born, and which appeared in a magazine (*The Bible Treasury*) under the title of "The Book of Joshua and the Epistle to the Hebrews"—unto which we gladly acknowledge our indebtedness, and of which we made free use.

We are now to take notice of the divine command which Joshua received: to take twelve stones from the bed of the Jordan, "out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm" (Jos 4:3), which were made a "memorial" unto future generations; and in addition, the setting up of "twelve stones in the midst of Jordan" (Jos 4:9). At the Red Sea, Israel neither left twelve stones in its bed, nor took twelve with them unto the other side. Instead, Pharaoh and his chosen captains, his chariots and his host, God drowned therein, so that Israel sang, "The depths have covered them: *they* sank into the bottom as a *stone*" (Exo 15:4-5). "But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians" (Exo 14:29-30), and put the song of redemption into their mouths, saying, "the LORD....hath triumphed gloriously" (Exo 15:1, 13). At the Red Sea, Jehovah showed Himself strong on the behalf of that people who had previously found shelter under the blood of the lamb (Rev 12:11), and whom He now brought nigh unto Himself—"unto thy holy habitation" (Exo 15:13, 17).

But at the Jordan, a further and grander lesson was taught Israel, something which went beyond the truth of redemption by blood and by power, even that of *resurrection*. Fundamental and blessed as is the truth taught us by the Cross of Christ, there is something further which is even more vital and glorious, and that is our Lord's victory over the grave. When the apostle throws out that irrefutable challenge, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" his triumphant answer is, "It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, *yea rather*, that is risen again" (Rom 8:33-34). It is abundantly clear in 1 Corinthians 15 (see especially verses 3 and 4, 14, 17) that the resurrection of Christ is not only an integral part of the Gospel, but its distinctive and outstanding feature; and those evangelists who go no farther than the Cross are preaching only half of the Gospel. But more, the saints themselves are greatly the losers if their faith and spiritual apprehensions stop short at the atoning death of Christ, for unspeakably precious as it is to recognize *our* death unto sin in the death of the Surety; still more blessed is it to perceive our federal union with Him and our title to the inheritance in His triumph over death.

At the Jordan, the redeemed of God were shown their own passage through death and resurrection by the figure of the twelve stones placed in the Jordan and the twelve stones taken out of it. It was at this point

that Israel entered upon a new stage in their history, yet perpetuating all the essential features which had previously marked them as the peculiar people of the LORD—as will be seen when we examine (D.V.) into the new circumcising at Gilgal, the celebration of the Passover, and the appearing of the Captain of the LORD's host with drawn sword (Jos 5). Nevertheless, as said above, that which characterized the crossing of the Jordan is in sharp contrast with what took place at the Red Sea. There, instead of the priests bearing the ark of the covenant being seen, it was Israel's enemies which lay there, consumed as stubble by the wrath of the LORD. And on the other hand, no Canaanites were in Jordan, not a single foe was overthrown there; yet it was sanctified to the LORD and to Israel by the priests and the ark of the covenant for glory and victory, as truly as were the waters of the Red Sea when they returned and engulfed the host of Pharaoh in terrible judgment—that glory and victory quickly appears in the sequel.

As previously pointed out, the river Jordan was not only the emblem of death, but of judgment also, as the word itself signifies—"jor," literally, "spread"; and "damn" which means "judging" (Gen 30:6). The use made of this river in New Testament times supplies clear confirmation, for the Jordan was where the Lord's forerunner exercised his ministry, of whom it was foretold, "prepare ye the way of the LORD" (Isa 40:3). And how did he do so? By preparing a people to receive Him. In what manner? By preaching "Repent ye" (Mat 3:2), i.e. *judge yourselves*; and those who did so were (most appropriately) baptized of him in the Jordan "confessing their sins" (Mat 3:6); and by that "baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (Mar 1:4), they acknowledged that death was their due, and therefore, were they (symbolically) placed in a watery grave. There, too, the Lord Jesus as the Surety and Sinbearer of His people identified Himself with them by being placed beneath its waters, thereby pledging Himself unto that "baptism" of death (Luk 12:50), wherein He met the needs of all who truly repent or adjudge themselves worthy of death, when all "waves and...billows" of God's wrath (Psa 42:7) passed over Him.

The good Shepherd entered the river of judgment on behalf of His sheep, making for them a new covenant by His atoning death, delivering thereby from judgment all who follow Him: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Mat 26:28), He declared only a few hours before the crucifixion, when He instituted the memorial of His death. That was typified by the entrance into Jordan by the ark of the covenant borne by the priests (Jos 3:14-15); and at once, the flow of its waters was stayed, so that the people who followed it passed over dryshod, though the ark itself did not come out of the Jordan until it had secured a passage for all the people (Jos 3:17). Profoundly suggestive and significant are those words, "For the priests which bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan, until *every thing was finished* that the LORD commanded Joshua to speak unto the people, according to all that Moses commanded Joshua" (Jos 4:10). How that reminds us of "Jesus, knowing that *all things were now accomplished*, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst...when Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost" (Joh 19:28, 30). All that the justice of God demanded, all that the Law required ("Moses commanded") had been rendered by the antitypical Joshua.

"And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over Jordan, that the LORD spake unto Joshua, saying, Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man, And command ye them, saying, Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones, and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging place, where ye shall lodge this night" (Jos 4:1-3), i.e. in Gilgal (Jos 4:19). That those stones were large ones is evident from the fact that they were to be carried upon the "shoulder." The men who carried them had been selected beforehand (Jos 4:3-13), ready for this task, that there might be no delay in connection with what lay immediately before the nation—the encamping of that vast multitude for the night in a suitable place, namely, at one which was afterwards called Gilgal, and which some inform us was about mid-way between the river Jordan and the city of Jericho. In the light of Joshua 4:4, "Then Joshua called the twelve men, whom he had prepared of the children of Israel," we personally regard that as a foreshadowing of the antitypical Joshua, who at an early stage of His ministry "called unto him the twelve" (Mar 6:7).

"And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of Jordan, and take ye up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel: That this may be a *sign* among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones? Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a *memorial* unto the children of Israel for ever" (Jos 4:5-7). The two

words we have italicized call attention to the double design which those stones were intended to serve, which will be more intelligible to the reader when he bears in mind that those twelve stones “did Joshua pitch in Gilgal” (Jos 4:20). They were not left flat on the ground, but orderly formed into a cairn or monument. The Hebrew word for “pitch” there, Young’s Concordance defines as “To cause to stand, raise.” Twenty times this verb is rendered “set up” in the Authorized Version. It is the same word which is used in connection with the erection of the Tabernacle when it was complete (Exo 40:2, etc.). Thus, those large stones were arranged in such a manner, possibly placed one on top of another monolith-like, so as to attract the attention and invoke the inquiry of those who should afterwards behold them.

That monument of stones was designed first as a “sign” unto Israel. It was a message for their hearts via their eyes rather than ears. It was an enduring sermon in stone. It spoke of the goodness and power of God exercised on their behalf at the Jordan. That word “sign” is a very full one—our Lord’s miracles are termed “signs” (Joh 20:30; Ac 2:22). The two wonders which Moses was empowered to work before his brethren were called “signs” (Exo 4:1-9); they authenticated him as their divinely-appointed leader and signified that the power of the Almighty was with him. In Deuteronomy 11:18 and Judges 6:17, “sign” has the force of token or representation of Israel’s being regulated by God’s Word, and of the LORD’s granting success to the commission He had committed to Gideon. In other passages, a “sign” was a portent or pledge of something concerning the future—1 Samuel 10:1-9; 2 Kings 19:29. In each of those senses may “sign” be understood in Joshua 4:6. That cairn of stones was to signify that Israel had not crossed the Jordan by their own ability, but because of the miracle-working power of God. It was a representation unto them that they had passed through the river’s bed dryshod. More especially, it was an earnest and *pledge* of what God would yet do for them.

Second, that monument was designed as a “memorial” that Israel had passed through the river of death, that they were now (typically) on resurrection ground, that *judgment lay behind them*. Israel upon the Canaan side of Jordan adumbrated that blessed truth expressed by our Redeemer in John 5:24, where He so definitely assures His people that each soul who hears His Word and believes on the One who sent Him “hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” The reason why he shall *not* “come into condemnation” is because in the person of his Surety, he has already been condemned and suffered the full judgment of God upon all his sins; and therefore, judicially, as federally united to Christ, he “is passed from death [that death which is the wages of sin] unto life”—that “life” which is the award of the Law, as it was magnified by the Saviour and made honourable (Isa 42:21). As the ark of the covenant entered the river of death and judgment, the flow of its waters was stopped until the ark had secured a safe passage for all who followed it; so Christ endured the unsparing wrath of God that by His atoning death, those who were legally one with Him, and who are made voluntary followers of Him, shall be delivered from all future judgment.

In addition to the monument erected on the Canaan side of the river, we are told that “Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood: and they are there unto this day” (Jos 4:9). Thus, there was a *double* monument to perpetually commemorate Israel’s passing through the place of judgment: the one in the midst of the Jordan, the other in their new camping-ground at Gilgal. What anointed eye can fail to see in them the *two signs* and memorials which Christ has instituted to symbolize that—as the result of their faith in His atoning death—His people have not only passed through death and judgment, but are now united to a risen Christ and are “alive unto God” (Rom 6:11)! The meaning of the two ordinances appointed by Christ clearly confirms this, for each of them speaks of both death and resurrection. “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his *death*? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into *death*: that like as Christ was *raised* up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom 6:3-4; and compare Col 2:12). Christian baptism is designed to symbolize the believer’s union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection, as well as being his personal profession that he is dead to the world and has resolved to walk in newness of life.

The Lord’s Supper also, while it celebrates our passage with Christ through death, yet it is with the added blessedness and triumph of being now on the resurrection side of judgment. Just as the *twelve* stones which had been in Jordan were formed into a *single* cairn in the camp at Gilgal—a type of “the Israel of God” (Gal 6:16) in its entirety, made into “one body”—was a testimony that the twelve tribes had passed through the unfordable river; so the Lord’s Supper partaken of by those who were once lost sinners under condemnation is a testimony that they have passed over, and being on resurrection ground, can look for-

ward not to judgment, but to the consummation of their hope and bliss. This is clear from 1 Corinthians 11:26, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death *till he come*." The Lord's Supper not only looks back to the Cross, but forward to Christ's return in glory, and therefore, it is designated a "feast" (1Co 5:8) and not a fast; and instead of "bitter herbs" (Exo 12:8) being eaten, the "wine" of gladness is drunk.

(Heb 4:3). Then *you* too will know the reality and certainty of His so great salvation. Put Him to the proof!

## THE DOCTRINE OF REVELATION

### 8. *The Existence of God, Part 8*

Fourth, *as unveiled in the Lord Jesus*. In the dispensations of His providence, the revelation which God has made of Himself unto mankind has been a progressive one. First, He is manifested in the realm of creation, and that with sufficient clearness as to leave all without excuse if they perceive not that He is. Second, God is revealed in man himself, so that his very constitution evinces his divine origin and his conscience bears witness of his accountability to his Maker. Third, God is plainly to be seen in human history: most patently in His dealings with the Jews during the past thirty-five centuries—yet with sufficient clearness everywhere as to attest that He is the moral Governor of this world, the Regulator of human affairs. But over and above these—O wonder of wonders—God has become *incarnate*. In the person of His blessed and co-equal Son, God deigned to clothe Himself in our flesh and blood and manifest Himself unto the sons of men. For the space of thirty-three years, He appeared among men and displayed His glory before their eyes; yea, gave proof of His matchless mercy by performing a work, at infinite cost to Himself, which has made it possible for Him to righteously save the very chief of sinners.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (Joh 1:1, 14). It is by means of *words* that we make known our wills, reveal the calibre of our minds and the character of our hearts and communicate information unto others. Appropriately, then, is Christ designated “The Word of God” (Rev 19:13) for He has made the Transcendent immanent, the incomprehensible God intelligible to us. Thus, too, is He denominated “the image of the invisible God” (Col 1:15) and the “Alpha and Omega” (Rev 1:8)—the One who spells out the Deity unto us. “The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared” (Joh 1:18)—or “told him forth.” In Christ’s life of impeccable purity, we behold God’s holiness; in His utter selflessness, God’s benevolence; in His peerless teaching, God’s wisdom; in His unrivalled miracles, God’s power; in His gentleness and long-suffering, God’s patience; in His love and grace, the outshining of God’s glory.

The record of Christ’s unprecedented life is found in the four Gospels. Those Gospels were written by men who were constantly in Christ’s company during the days of His ministry, being an ungarnished record of what they personally saw with their own eyes and heard with their own ears. Numerous copies of those Gospels have been in known existence since the first century of this Christian era. Only three explanations of them are feasible. First, that they were written by deluded fanatics. But the character of their contents, the calmness of their tenor, the absence of anything savouring of enthusiasm, cause anyone capable of weighing evidence to promptly reject such an hypothesis. The dreams of visionaries had never received such widespread credence. Second, that they were the inventions of deceitful men. But that could not be, otherwise their contemporaries had exposed them as imposters. Wicked men could not have devised the Sermon on the Mount! Third, that they were written by honest men who chronicled actual facts.

The person of the Lord Jesus presents a baffling problem, yea, an insoluble enigma unto infidelity. Scepticism is quite unable to supply any rational explanation of the phenomenon which He presents. Yet “what think ye of Christ?” (Mat 22:42) is a question which cannot be avoided or evaded by anyone who professes to use his reasoning powers or lays any claim to being an educated person. The obvious fact confronts believer and unbeliever alike that the appearing of Jesus Christ on the stage of this world has exerted a more powerful, lasting, and extensive influence than has any other person, factor, or event that can be named. To say that Christ has revolutionized human history is only to affirm what His bitterest foes are compelled to acknowledge. He dwelt in no palace, led no army, overthrew no mundane empire, yet His fame has spread to the ends of the earth. He wrote no book, framed no philosophy, erected no temple, yet He occupies a place in literature and religion which none else has ever achieved. How is this to be explained? Unbelief can furnish no answer! Nor can it refute, for the historicity of Christ is established far more conclusively than that of Socrates and Plato.

Viewed simply from the human plane, the Lord Jesus presents a phenomenon which admits of no human explanation. The law of heredity cannot account for Him, for He transcends all merely racial characteristics. Though according to the flesh, He was the Son of Abraham, yet He is bounded by no Jewish limitations. Instead, He is the Man of men, the Pattern Man. The Englishman and the Dutchman, with their vastly different racial temperaments, the stolid German, and the warm Italian, behold their ideal in Christ: He rises above all national restrictions. The law of environment cannot explain Him, for He was

born in poverty, lived in a small town, received no collegiate training, toiled at the carpenter's bench. Such an environment was not conducive to the development of thought and teaching which was to enlighten the whole world. Christ transcends all laws. There is nothing provincial about Him. "The Son of man" is His fitting title, for He is the Representative Man.

Christ was not tintured or affected by the age in which He lived. And that can be said of no one else. Study the characters and teaching of any of the outstanding figures of history, and we are at once aware that they were coloured by their own generation. By common consent, we make certain allowances for those who lived in former times, and agree that it would not be just to measure them by present-day ideals. Men of the most sterling worth were, in measure, marred by the crudities, coarseness, or superstitions of their contemporaries. But the Lord Jesus is the grand Exception. You may test Him by the light of this twentieth century—if light it be—or you may judge Him by any century, and no lack or blemish is to be found in Him. His teaching was pure truth without any admixture of error, and therefore, it stands the test of all time. His teaching was neither affected by the prevailing traditions of Judaism, by that of Grecian philosophy, nor by any other influence then abroad. The timeless value of Christ's teaching is without parallel. That of Socrates and Plato has long since become obsolete, but Christ's is as pertinent and potent now as the day He uttered it.

There is no part of Christ's teaching which the subsequent growth of human knowledge has had to discredit. Therein, it is in marked contrast with that of all other men whose dicta have to be constantly revised and brought up to date. There is a universal quality to His teaching which is found in none other's: an originality, a loftiness, an adaptability. There is nothing petty, local, or transient about it. It is of general application, suited to all generations and to all peoples. It possesses a vital and vitalizing freshness without a parallel. It is profound enough for the mightiest intellect, practical enough for the artisan, simple enough for the little child. It is profitable for youth, for maturity, and old age alike. It furnishes that which is needed by those in prosperity, brings comfort to those in adversity, and has imparted a peace which passeth all understanding (Phi 4:7) to thousands who lay upon beds of suffering, and while they passed through the valley of the shadow of death (Psa 23:4). Those are *facts* attested by a multitude of witnesses whose testimony cannot be fairly impeached.

Unto Christ, the master minds of the ages have paid homage. Such mighty intellects as Lord Francis Bacon (1561-1626) and Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727), Michael Faraday (1791-1867) and Lord Kelvin (aka William Thomson, 1824-1907), John Milton (1608-1674) and George Frideric Handel (1685-1759), John Calvin (1509-1564) and John Locke (1632-1704), and a host of others who towered above their fellows in mental acumen and genius, bowed before Him in adoring worship. Not that Christianity is in any need of human patronage to authenticate it, but that it may be evinced to the thoughtful ones of this rising generation that Christians are far from being a company of credulous simpletons. Christianity is not something suited only to little children or old ladies in their dotage. When the young men of this age behold such hard-headed men as Lieutenant-General Sir William Dobbie (1879-1964), the valiant defender of Malta, and Field-Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery (1887-1976), unashamedly acknowledging Christ as *their* personal Lord and Saviour, they have before them that which clearly challenges them to seriously consider the claims of Christ and carefully examine His teachings—instead of contemptuously ignoring the same as something unworthy of their best attention.

Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821), the military genius of a century ago, declared: "Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and myself have founded empires, but upon *what* did those creations of our genius depend? Upon *force*. Jesus Christ alone established His empire upon love; and to this very day, millions would die for Him. I think I understand something of human nature, and I tell you, those were men and I am a man; Jesus Christ is more than a man. I have inspired multitudes with such an enthusiastic devotion that they would have died for me...but to do this, it was necessary that I should be *visibly* present, with the electric influence of my looks, of my words, of my voice. When I saw men and spoke to them, I lighted up the flame of self-devotion in their hearts. Christ alone has succeeded in raising the mind of men toward the Unseen, that it becomes insensible to the barriers of time and space. Across a chasm of eighteen hundred years, Jesus Christ makes a demand which is, beyond all others, difficult to satisfy.

"He asks for the human *heart*. He will have it entirely for and to Himself. He demands it unconditionally, and forthwith His demand is granted. Wonderful! In defiance of time and space, the soul of man, with all its powers and faculties, is annexed to the empire of Christ. All who simply believe in Him experience that remarkable, supernatural love towards Him. This phenomenon is unaccountable: it is altogether beyond



the scope of man's creative powers. Time, the great destroyer, is powerless to extinguish this sacred flame; time cannot exhaust its strength, nor put a limit to its reign. This it is which strikes me most. I have often thought of it. This it is which proves to me quite convincingly the divinity of Jesus Christ."

Paul Richter (1763-1825) said of Christ: "The holiest among the mighty, the mightiest among the holy, who with His pierced hands has lifted empires off their hinges, turned the stream of centuries out of its channel, and still governs the ages."

Alexander (356-323 BC), Napoleon Bonaparte, Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865), are dead, and we refer to them in the *past* tense. But not so with Christ. We do not think or speak of Him as One who *was*, but as One who *IS*. The Lord Jesus is far more than a memory. He is the great "I am": the same yesterday and today and for ever. He is more real to mankind, His influence is still more prevalent, His followers are more numerous in this twentieth century than they were in the first. On what principle, scientifically, can we rationally account for the dynamical influence of the Lord Jesus today? That One now at a distance of almost two millennia is still moulding human thought, attracting human hearts, transforming human lives, with such mighty sway that He stands forth from all other teachers as the sun makes the stars recede into dimness and pale before the lustre of His refulgence. As a strictly scientific question, the mystery of Christ's influence demands an adequate solution. It requires neither science nor philosophy to *deny*, but it does to *explain*. The only satisfactory explanation is that Christ is God, omnipotent and omnipresent.

We call attention now to what has well been termed, "The Logic of the Changed Calendar": what follows is an enlargement of some notes we made nearly forty years ago from a book entitled, *The Unrealized Logic of Religion*. Few people stop to inquire for an explanation of one of the most amazing facts which is presented to the notice of everybody—namely, the fact that all civilized time is dated from the birth of Jesus Christ! This is the twentieth century, and from what event are those centuries dated? From the birth of a Jew, who—according to the view of infidels, if He ever existed—was a peasant in an obscure province, who was the author of no wonderful invention, who occupied no throne, who died when, as men count years, He had scarcely reached his prime, and who died the death of a criminal. Now if the Lord Jesus Christ were nothing more than what sceptics will allow, then is it not utterly unthinkable that the chronology of the civilized world should be reckoned from *His* birth? The effect must correspond to the cause, and there is no agreement between such a phenomenon and such an inadequate producer.

To have some common measure of time is, of course, a necessity of organized society, but where shall we find an adequate starting point for the calendar?—i.e. one which will be acceptable to all civilized nations! A world-shattering victory, the founding of some many-centuried city, the birth of a dynasty, the beginning of a revolution: some such event, it might reasonably be expected, would give time a new starting point. But no conqueror's sword has ever cut deep enough on Time to leave an enduring mark. The Julian era, the Alexandrian era, the era of the Seleucidae, all had their brief day and have vanished. There is for civilized men but one suitable, enduring, and universally recognized starting point for civilized time—and that is *the manger at Bethlehem*! And how is that strange yet startling fact to be explained? It was imposed neither by the authority of a conqueror, the device of priests, the enactment of a despot, nor even by Constantine I (also known as Constantine the Great, 272-337)—but by slow and gradual consent.

The name of Jesus Christ did not emerge in the calendar till five centuries after His death—a space of time long enough for Him to be forgotten had He been an impostor. It took another five hundred years to become universally accepted; and the process is linked to no human name. Here, then, is a phenomenon that scepticism cannot explain: that without any conspiracy of Christian fanatics, Jesus Christ has altered the almanacs of the world. The one event which towers above the horizon of history serves as a landmark to measure time for all civilized races. The Lord of time has indelibly written His signature across time itself; the years of the modern world being labeled by common consent the years *of our Lord*! Every letter you receive (though penned by an atheist), every newspaper carrying date of its issue (though published by Communists), bears testimony to the historicity of Christ! The One who entered this world to shape its history to a new pattern changed its calendar from A.M. to A.D.

All that had transpired previously in human history counted for nothing. The name of the most famous of the world's generals or of its most powerful monarchs was not deemed worthy to be imprinted upon all succeeding centuries. By a deep, unanimous, inarticulate—and yet irresistible—instinct, each nation has recognized and recorded on its almanacs the true starting point of its life. Several attempts have been made to establish another point of departure for recorded time. Islam has made a faint but broken mark upon the centuries, relating time to the sword; but the Moslem almanac is confined to but a cluster of half-civilized

ances. Pierre Simon Laplace (1749-1827), the astronomer, proposed to give stability and dignity to human chronology by linking it to the stars, but the world approved not. France sought to popularize its Revolution, and count 1793 as year one, but her calendar lasted by thirteen years. The centuries belong to Christ and pay homage to Him by bearing *His* name!

Young men, young women, who are at present being tossed to and fro upon a sea of doubt, there is no reason why you should remain there. It will be your own fault if you fail to secure firm ground to stand upon. You may imagine Christians make an idle boast when they affirm "*we know*," and declare, "That is exactly what you do not: you suppose, you hope, and believe. The dream may be alluring, the hope pleasing, but you cannot be sure." If so, you err. The children of God have infallible proof; and if you follow the right course, assurance will be yours too. The value and Divinity of Christ's teaching may be personally *verified* by yourself. How? "If any man will do his will," said Christ, "he shall *know* of the doctrine" (Joh 7:17). If you will read the record of it in the Gospels, submit to Christ's authority, conform to His requirements, regulate your life by His precepts, then *you* shall obtain a settled conviction that He spake as "never man spake" (Joh 7:46) that His are the words of truth.

Nay, further. If you be an honest inquirer, prepared to follow the truth wherever it leads—and it will be out of the mists of scepticism and away from the fogs of uncertainty—you may obtain definite and conclusive proof that Christ *is*, and that He is the Rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. His invitation is, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (Joh 7:37); and upon compliance, He promises to satisfy that thirst. *Test Him for yourself*. If the empty cisterns of this world—its poor pleasures or its intellectual speculations—have failed to satisfy your soul, Christ can. He declares, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Mat 11:28). If you have toiled in vain for peace, and your conscience be burdened with a sense of guilt, then cast yourself on the mercy of Christ right now, and you shall find "rest" unto your soul such as this world can neither give nor take away

## THE GREAT CHANGE

### Part 8

That which occasions the honest Christian the most difficulty and distress, as he seeks to ascertain whether a miracle of grace has been wrought within him, is the discovery that so much remains what it always was; yea, often his case appears to be much *worse* than formerly—more risings of opposition to God, more surgings of pride, more hardness of heart, more foul imaginations. Yet that very consciousness of and grief over indwelling corruptions is, itself, both an effect and an evidence of the great change. It is proof that such a person *has* his eyes open to see and a heart to feel evils, which previously he was blind unto and insensible of. An unregenerate person is not troubled about the weakness of his faith, the coldness of his affections, the stirrings of self within. *You* were not yourself so, while you were dead godwards! But if such things now exercise you deeply, if your eyes be open to and you mourn over that within, to which no fellow creature is privy, must you not be very different now from what you once were?

But, asks the exercised reader, if I have been favoured with a supernatural change of heart, how can such horrible experiences consist therewith? Surely, if my heart had been made pure, there would not still be a filthy and foul sea of iniquity within me! Dear friend, that filth has been in you from birth, but it is only since you were born again that you have become increasingly *aware* of its presence. A pure heart is not one from which all sin has been removed, as is clear from the histories of Abraham, Moses, David. The heart is not made wholly pure in this life: as the understanding is only enlightened in part (much ignorance and error still remaining), so at regeneration, the heart is cleansed but in part. Observe that Acts 15:9 does not say, “purified their hearts by faith,” but “purifying”—a continued process. A pure heart is one which is attracted by “the beauty of holiness” (Psa 29:2) and longs to be fully conformed thereto; and therefore, one of the surest proofs I possess a pure heart is my abhorring and grieving over impurity—as Lot dwelling in Sodom “*vexed* his righteous soul” by what he saw and heard there (2Pe 2:8).

Then are we not obliged to conclude that the Christian has *two* “hearts”—the one pure, and the other impure? Perhaps the best way for us to answer that question is to point out what is imported by the “heart,” as that term is used in Scripture. In a few passages, where it is distinguished from the “mind” (1Sa 2:35; Heb 8:10) and from the “soul” (Deu 6:5), the heart is restricted to the affections; but generally, it has reference to the *whole inner man*, for in other places it is the seat of the intellectual faculties too, as in “I gave my heart to know wisdom,” etc. (Ecc 1:17)—I applied my *mind* unto its investigation. In its usual and wider signification, the “heart” connotes the one indwelling the body. “The heart in the Scriptures is variously used: sometimes for the mind and understanding, sometimes for the will, sometimes for the affection, sometimes for the conscience. *Generally*, it denotes the whole soul of man and all the faculties of it” (John Owen, 1616-1683). We have carefully tested that statement by the Word and confirmed it. The following passages make it clear that the “heart” has reference to the man himself as distinguished from his body.

Its first occurrence is, “And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the *thoughts* of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen 6:5). “I had done speaking in mine heart” (Gen 24:45) plainly means “within myself.” It does so in “Esau said in his heart” (Gen 27:41)—determined in himself. “Now Hannah, she spake in her heart” (1Sa 1:13). “Examine *me*, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my *heart*” (Psa 26:2)—my inner man. “With my whole heart [my entire inner being] have I sought thee” (Psa 119:10). In the New Testament, the “mind” often has the same force. On Romans 12:2, Charles Hodge (1797-1878) pointed out, “The word *nous* [‘mind’] is used, as it is here, frequently in the New Testament (Rom 1:28; Eph 4:17, 23; Col 2:18, etc.). In all these and similar cases, it does not differ from the heart—i.e., in its wider sense, for *the whole soul*.” Ordinarily, then, the “heart” signifies the whole soul, the “inner man,” the “hidden man of the heart” (1Pe 3:4) at which God ever looks (1Sa 16:7).

Now “the heart” of the natural man (that is, his entire soul—understanding, affections, will, conscience) is “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” (Jer 17:9), which is but another way of saying he is “totally depraved”—the whole of his inner being is corrupt. And therefore, God bids us, “Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart...*wash thine heart* from wickedness [in true repentance from the love and pollution of sin], that thou mayest be saved” (Jer 4:4, 14). Yea, He bids men, “Cast away from you all your transgressions...and make you a new heart” (Eze 18:31), and holds them responsible so to do. That man cannot effect this change in himself by any power of his

own, is solely because he is bound by the cords of his sins: the very essence of his depravity consists in being of the contrary spirit. So far from excusing him, that only aggravates his case, and compliance with those precepts is as much man's duty and as proper a subject for exhortation as is faith, repentance, love to God. So in the New Testament, "purify your hearts, ye double minded" (Jam 4:8).

"Make you a new heart" (Eze 18:31). But, says the awakened and convicted sinner, that is the very thing which I am unable to produce: alas, what shall I do? Why, cast yourself upon the mercy and power of the Lord, and say to Him as the leper did, "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean" (Mat 8:2). Beg Him to work *in* you what He requires *of* you. Nay, more, lay hold of His Word and plead with Him: Thou hast made promise, "A new heart also will I give you" (Eze 36:26), so "do as thou hast said" (2Sa 7:25). It is a most blessed fact that God's promises are as large as His exhortations; and for each of the latter, there is one of the former exactly meeting it. Does the Lord bid us circumcise our hearts (Deu 10:16)? Then He assures His people, I "will circumcise thine heart" (Deu 30:6). Does He bid us purify our heart (Jam 4:8)? He also declares, "From all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you" (Eze 36:25). Are Christians told to cleanse themselves "from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2Co 7:1)? Then they are promised, "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phi 1:6).

God, then, does not leave the hearts of His people as they were when born into this world, and as they are described in Jeremiah 17:9. No, blessed be His name, He works a miracle of grace within them, which changes the whole of their inner man. Spiritual life is communicated to them, divine light illumines them, a principle of holiness is planted within them. That principle of holiness is a fountain of purity, from which issue streams of godly desires, motives, endeavours, acts. It is a supernatural habit residing in every faculty of the soul, giving a new direction to them, inclining them godwards. Divine grace is imparted to the soul subjectively, so that it has entirely new propensities unto God and holiness, and newly created antipathies to sin and Satan, making us willing to endure suffering for Christ's sake, rather than to retain the friendship of the world. To make us partakers of His *holiness* is the substance and sum of God's purpose of grace for us, both in election (Eph 1:4), regeneration (Eph 4:24), and all His dealings with us afterwards (Heb 12:10). Not that finite creatures can ever be participants of the essential holiness of God, either by imputation or transubstantiation, but only by fashioning us in the *image* thereof.

It is the communication of divine grace—or the planting within us of the principle and habit of holiness—which both purifies the heart or soul, and which gives the death-wound unto indwelling sin. Grace is not only a divine attribute of benignity and free favour that is exercised *unto* the elect, but it is also a powerful influence that works *within* them. It is in this latter sense the term is used when God says, "My grace is sufficient for thee" (2Co 12:9), and when the apostle declared, "But by the grace of God, I am what I am" (1Co 15:10). That communicated grace makes the heart "honest" (Luk 8:15), "tender" (2Ki 22:11), "pure" (Mat 5:8). An *honest* heart is one that abhors hypocrisy and pretence, that is fearful of being deceived, that desires to know the truth about itself at all costs, that is sincere and open, that bares itself to the Sword of the Spirit. A "tender" heart is one that is *pliant* godwards: that of the unregenerate is likened unto "the nether millstone" (Job 41:24), but that which is wrought upon by the Spirit resembles wax—receptive to His impressions upon it (2Co 3:3). It is *sensitive*—like a tender plant—shrinking from sin and making conscience of the same. It is compassionate, gentle, considerate.

In addition to our previous remarks thereon, we would add that a heart (or "soul") which has been made inchoately, yet radically, pure—and which is being continually purified—is one in which the love of God has been shed abroad, and therefore, it loathes what He loathes; one wherein the fear of the Lord dwells, so that evil is hated and departed from. It is one from which the corrupting love of the world has been cast out. A pure heart is one wherein faith is operative (Act 15:9), attracting and conforming it unto a Holy Object, drawing the affections unto things above. It is one from which self has been deposed and Christ enthroned, so that it sincerely desires and earnestly endeavours to please and honour Him in all things. It is one that is purged, progressively, from ignorance and error by apprehending and obeying the truth (1Pe 1:22). A pure heart is one that makes conscience of evil thoughts, unholy desires, foul imaginations, which grieves over their prevalence and weeps in secret for indulging them. The purer the heart becomes, the more is it aware of and distressed by inward corruptions.

The Puritans were wont to say that at regeneration, sin receives its "death-wound." We are not at all sure what exactly they meant by that expression, nor do we know of any Scripture which expressly warrants it—certainly such passages as Romans 6:6-7, and Galatians 5:24, do not; yet we have no objection to

it, providing it be understood something like this: When faith truly lays hold of the atoning sacrifice of Christ, the soul is for ever delivered from the condemnation and guilt of sin, and it can never again obtain legal "dominion" over him. By the moral purification of the soul, it is cleansed from the prevailing love and power of sin, so that the lusts of the flesh are detested and resisted. Sin is divested of its reigning power over the faculties of the soul, so that full and willing subjection is no longer rendered to it. Its dying struggles are hard and long, powerfully felt within us, and though God grants brief respites from its ragings, it breaks forth with renewed force and causes us many a groan.

In our earlier days, we rejected the expression, "a change of heart," because we confounded it with "the flesh." The heart *is* changed at regeneration, but "the flesh" is *not* purified or spiritualized, though it ceases to have uncontrolled and undisputed dominion over the soul. Indwelling sin is not eradicated, but its reign is broken and can no longer produce hatred of God. The appetites and tendencies of "the flesh" in a Christian are precisely the same after he is born again as they were before. They are indeed "subdued" by grace; and conversion is often followed by such inward peace and joy that it appears as though they were dead, but they soon seek to reassert themselves, as Satan left Christ "for a season" (Luk 4:13), but later renewed his assaults. Nevertheless, grace opposes sin, the "spirit" or principle of holiness strives against the flesh, preventing it from having full sway over the soul. As life is opposed to death, purity to impurity, spirituality to carnality, so there is henceforth experienced within the soul a continual and sore conflict between sin and grace, each striving for the mastery.

While, then, it be true that there are two distinct and diverse springs of action in the Christian, the one prompting to evil and the other unto good, it is better to speak of them as two "principles" than "natures." To conceive of there being two minds, two wills, or two hearts in him, is no more warrantable than to affirm he has two souls, which would mean two moral agents, two centres of responsibility, which would destroy the identity of the individual and involve us in hopeless confusion of thought. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Heb 3:12) would be meaningless if the saint possessed *two* "hearts"—the one incapable of anything *but* unbelief, the other incapable *of* unbelief. The Christian is a unit, a person with one heart or soul; and he is responsible to watch and be sober, to be constantly on his guard against the workings of his corruptions, to prevent sin hardening his heart so that he comes under the power of unbelief and turns away from God.

"Incline my heart [my whole soul] unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness" (Psa 119:36). This is another one of many verses which expose the error of a Christian's having two "hearts"—the one carnal and the other spiritual—and making them synonymous with "the flesh" and the "spirit." It would be useless by my asking God to incline "the flesh" (indwelling sin) unto His testimonies, for it is radically opposed unto them. Equally unnecessary is it for me to ask God *not* to incline "the spirit" (indwelling grace) unto covetousness, for it is entirely holy. But no difficulty remains if we regard the "heart" as the inner man: "incline *me* unto thy testimonies," etc. The saint longs after complete conformity unto God's will, but is conscious of much within him that is prone to disobedience; and therefore, he prays that the habitual bent of his thoughts and affections may be unto heavenliness, rather than worldliness: Let the reasons and motives unto godliness Thou hast set before me in Thy Word be made effectual by the powerful operations of Thy Spirit.

The heart of man must have an object unto which it is inclined or whereto it cleaves. The thoughts and affections of the soul cannot be idle or be without some object on which to place them. Man was made for God, to be happy in the enjoyment of Him, to find in Him a satisfying portion; and when he apostatized from God, he sought satisfaction in the creature. While the heart of fallen man be devoid of grace, it is wholly carried out to the things of time and sense. As soon as he is born, he follows his carnal appetites, and for the first few years, is governed entirely by his senses. Sin occupies the throne of his heart, and though conscience may interpose some check, it has no power to incline the soul godwards, and sin cannot be dethroned by anything but a miracle of grace. That miracle consists in giving the soul a prevailing and habitual bent godwards. The heart is taken off from the *love of* base objects and set upon Christ, yet *we* are required to keep our hearts with all diligence, mortify our lusts, and seek the daily strengthening of our graces.

Great as is the change effected in the soul by the miracle of grace, yet, as said before, it is neither total nor complete, but is carried forward during the whole subsequent process of sanctification—a process that involves a daily and lifelong conflict within the believer, so that his "experience" is like that described in Romans 7:13-25. The Christian is not the helpless slave of sin, for he resists it—to speak of a "helpless

victim” *fighting* is a contradiction in terms. So far from being helpless, the saint can do all things through Christ strengthening him (Phi 4:13). As a new object has won his heart, his duty is to serve his new Master: “Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Rom 6:13)—use to His glory the same faculties of soul as you formerly did in the pleasing of self. The Christian’s responsibility consists in resisting his evil propensities and acting according to his inclinations and desires after holiness.

The great change in and upon the Christian will be completed when dawns that “morning without clouds” (2Sa 23:4), when the Day breaks “and the shadows flee away” (Song 2:17). For then shall he not only “see the king in his beauty” (Isa 33:17), see Him “face to face,” but he shall be made like Him, “fashioned like unto his glorious body” (Phi 3:21), fully and eternally “conformed to the image of his [God’s] Son” (Rom 8:29).

## WELCOMING TIDINGS

God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform, yet is it not indefinitely superior to any which our short-sighted policy would devise? For many years past, we have prayed that God would “enlarge [our] coast” (1Ch 4:10), that a greater number of hungry souls might share with us some of the wondrous riches of His grace. Yet instead of our circulation increasing, it has decreased considerably from what it was twenty years ago. This has puzzled and exercised us, for all other requests concerning the magazine have been so manifestly granted. Only of late have we clearly perceived that the above has been no exception, though it has been realized mediately rather than directly. To illustrate: a reader asks, “What is your thought on a minister using your sermons almost *in toto*? We feel that perhaps it is a case of God’s overruling for His own glory, and we rejoice to know that He has given you a sort of vicarious oral ministry when we least expect it. Your articles on —— are forcibly preached, and attended with great blessing. An acknowledgement of their source was given, albeit a bit belated.” Thus, in supplying seed to other sowers, our labours are being multiplied, and through the mouths of many ministers, the substance of our articles is reaching thousands of people who do not read them. Our prayer-helpers will rejoice to know that this magazine is now being taken by over one hundred preachers! Each of the following is an excerpt from a different pastor’s letter recently received by us:

“The members of the church of which I am pastor, and my wife, can testify to the fact that your efforts to help me have not been in vain. They know that since I began studying your writings and receiving your letters, my ministry has been more spiritual and heart-searching” (*Alabama*).

“For some time past, I have been receiving your magazine. There are no words capable of expressing what they have meant to me” (*Kentucky*).

“God has seen fit to richly bless my life and ministry through your writings” (*Pennsylvania*).

“Your *Studies* have been read with real profit; your —— was very helpful in the preparation of a series of sermons” (*Connecticut*).

“Your *Studies* have been a big help in showing me how to make my ministry one of the Holy Spirit, and not one of the flesh” (*Tennessee*).

“I have never read any expositions that have brought such blessing, for which I thank God and you” (*West Virginia*).

“I thank the Lord for your faithfulness, and your understanding of the needs of the times” (*New Jersey*).

“Your works have been of unlimited value to my life and ministry” (*Texas*).

“It is a wonderful strengthener to my faith to know there are still some teaching the same truth, only in a much better way than I, by God’s grace, am striving to do” (*Iowa*).

“I have again had much blessing and joy from your *Studies*” (*Australia*).

“I have received much blessing, and find your writings the richest and deepest so far in my Christian journey” (*Canada*).

“I can assure you that I am helped and encouraged, if rebuked betimes by your writings” (*England*).

“I am much impressed by the faithful level-headed exposition which you evince in your articles” (*Glasgow*).

One or two brief observations on the above: (1) When God does not answer our prayers in the way we expect, or in the direction in which we are looking to, that is no proof He has not already done so. (2) Praise the Lord and take courage from those welcome tidings, and see in them an evidence that the earth is far from being given over to the devil!—God will maintain a witness (in more places than one!) unto the end. (3) We earnestly request the Lord’s people to pray daily for those pastors: to our knowledge, some of them are already encountering opposition. (4) Beg God to give us all needed grace and wisdom, for while ours is a glorious privilege, yet it entails unspeakably solemn responsibilities.

