

"From the Editor's Desktop" Collection *as of March 2009*

by Tom Stewart

Why Did God Allow It?

April 21, 1999

On the 20th of April 1999, two young men walked into their middle class American high school and proceeded to terrorize their fellow students with guns and bombs. Before their reign of terror was completed, they had killed more than a dozen; and, then they took their own lives. "It's a good day to die," was the announcement of one of the youthful gunmen to his victims.

Could this terror have been prevented? Increased government social spending is the answer of many to prevent this chaos. Closer monitoring of abherent behaviour by educational authorities and parents could have prevented this tragedy, others reply. But, "what saith the Scripture?" (Romans 4:3).

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD" (Psalm 33:12). Can we honestly call this tragedy a blessing? Certainly not. "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34). If a nation is not exalted by God for its right actions, then that nation must suffer a sinful reproach that only repentance can remove. Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, and that My fear is not in thee, saith the Lord GOD of Hosts" (Jeremiah 2:19).

John the Baptist had the right idea as he prepared the way for the advent of the LORD Jesus Christ. "Repent ye: for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2). Either admit that God has been offended by the moral wasteland of the public schools, or bear the brunt of God's anger. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Psalm 9:17).

Unfortunately, professed Christianity is the most guilty of forgetting the Almighty. The result is that God will forget your children. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, **I will also forget thy children**" (Hosea 4:6). To be forgotten by God is to perish. "And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish" (Deuteronomy 8:19).

As the LORD Jesus Christ prepares to return to this planet the Second Time-- "I will come again" (John 14:3)-- He calls for us to turn away from sin and in faith to look to Him and live. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up" (John 3:14). "And I, if I be lifted up from the Earth, will draw all men unto Me" (John 12:32). Faith alone in the LORD Jesus Christ will please Him. "But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

If we have sought Him in faith, **He will receive us**. "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). Not only does He cleanse us from the guilt of our sins-- "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1John 1:9)-- but, He provides us with all of His promises to establish and sanctify us. "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2Peter 1:4).

Standing on the promises of God, we then have His Covenant of Peace. "Moreover I will make a Covenant of Peace with them; it shall be an Everlasting Covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore" (Ezekiel 37:26). Not only will we have peace with God, but with our enemies, also. "When a man's ways please the LORD, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Proverbs 16:7). Surely, the tragedy of death and terror experienced at this American high school can be avoided by all those who put their trust in the LORD Jesus Christ for refuge from the "wrath to come" (1Thessalonians 1:10) and from the "wrath of man" (Psalm 76:10).

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, LORD Jesus" (Revelation 22:20).

Lessons of Columbine: Hatred and Martyrdom, Blame and Forgiveness

April 28, 1999

Few national news events linger long enough in the headlines for most Americans to form deep opinions; but, the carnage that two young men inflicted upon Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado on April 20th 1999, has people talking. Even the LORD Jesus made reference to current events to illustrate His point. "Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?" (Luke 13:4).

Unbridled hatred festered in the two Neo-Nazi gunmen, much like the hatred we now see taking place in the ethnic cleansing of Kosovo (Yugoslavia). "He that sinneth against Me [Wisdom] wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate Me love death" (Proverbs 8:36). Columbine's youthful murderers were motivated by Satan. "Ye are of your father the Devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the Truth, because there is no Truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44). In perspective, as we approach the threshold of a New Millennium that appears to be the very Millennium of the Apocalypse (Revelation 20:4), the downward momentum of man's sin throughout the ages has increased to the point of explosion, and events like Columbine are inevitable. "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2Timothy 3:13).

Even before the Tribulation Week (Daniel 9:27) has commenced, we can see the wrath of the Antichrist against the Saints. "And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the Saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration [wonder]" (Revelation 17:6). Both Cassie Bernall and Rachel Scott voluntarily "witnessed a good confession" (1Timothy 6:13) of the LORD Jesus Christ when they courageously answered "Yes" to the gunmen's question: "Do you believe in God?" As martyrs for their faith in Christ, "they loved not their lives unto the death" (Revelation 12:11). May the Blessed LORD inspire us to be as courageous in living for Jesus as Cassie and Rachel were in dying for Jesus. "And I say unto you My friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do" (Luke 12:4).

Certainly, blame must be fixed upon the killers for their own sin. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4). Though the parents of the killers were either not willing **or** were not able to secure God's "Exceeding Great And Precious Promises" (2Peter 1:4) for their sons, e.g., "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6), God will judge them-- as sinful or holy-- separately from their children's sins. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him" (Ezekiel 18:20). However, the Covenant Keeping God has amply supplied His people with Promises to **definitely secure** the salvation and sanctification of their children. "17 But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children; 18 To such as keep His covenant, and to those that remember His Commandments to do them" (Psalm 103:17-18).

Finally, what about forgiveness? Unfortunately, Professed Christianity often expects forgiveness to be granted regardless of whether or not the sinner has repented. "**If we confess** our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1John 1:9). **Confession and repentance are the necessary conditions for God's forgiveness.** When the Saviour uttered His intercessory prayer from the Cross-- "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34)-- He did not attempt to circumvent man's necessity to repent before the Father could grant forgiveness. Instead, He voiced His **desire** that His tormentors **would not perish**, but "come to repentance" (2Peter 3:9). And, the Father heard Him, for the Roman centurion, who participated in the LORD Jesus' crucifixion, cried out in an affirmation of faith, "Truly this man was the Son of God" (Mark 15:39).

May this Columbine tragedy be used by God to awaken America's Professed Christianity from its Laodicean sense of having "need of

nothing" (Revelation 3:17), and to realize that the "Judge standeth before the door" (James 5:9). "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" (1Corinthians 11:31).

In the Presence of Mine Enemies: The Release of American POWs

May 1, 1999

Mankind has the tendency to think that his own thoughts are original, but this is so untrue. "There is no new thing under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9). Especially when evil men conceive a thought, it is unthinkable to them that God directed or allowed it. "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things" (Isaiah 45:7). Though the Almighty is not the author of evil, He sovereignly uses it to accomplish His purposes. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee: the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain" (Psalm 76:10). In short, "He doeth according to His will in the army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the Earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Daniel 4:35).

Which brings us to the announcement that President Slobodan Milosevic of Yugoslavia will release the three American POWs on Sunday, May 2nd 1999. "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1Thessalonians 5:18). Staff Sgt. Andrew Ramirez, 24, of Los Angeles; Staff Sgt. Christopher Stone, 25, of Smiths Creek, Michigan; and Spc. Steven Gonzales, 22, of Huntsville, Texas will hopefully be released from captivity to Jesse Jackson on May 2nd-- following their March 31st capture by Serb forces. "**The LORD looseth the prisoners**" (Psalm 146:7).

Rather than engaging in a geopolitical analysis of Milosevic's reasons for the seemingly sudden decision to release Ramirez, Stone, and Gonzales, or examining Jesse Jackson's motivations for embarking on this trip, it should be understood that Jesse Jackson-- and the other players in this event-- are being "used by God", as Rosie Gonzales (Steven's mother) noted in a May 1st news conference. "The LORD of Hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand" (Isaiah 14:24).

Even more telling was the video clip of Spc. Steven Gonzales' message at his meeting with Jackson, where he thanked his parents for the Bible verses that they had previously forwarded to him. "Blessed be God, even the Father of our LORD Jesus Christ, the Father of Mercies, and the God of All Comfort" (2Corinthians 1:3). Gonzales' parents stated in another news account that their son is a "good Christian" and that he "has placed all his trust in God". Steven Gonzales assured his parents that he had been reading the Bible verses and committing them to memory. "But his delight is in the Law of the LORD; and in His Law doth he meditate day and night" (Psalm 1:2).

In "The Pilgrim's Progress", John Bunyan told of Christian and Hopeful's imprisonment in Doubting Castle after taking a foolish detour through By-Pass Meadow, because they were discouraged with the difficulty of the way. "And the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way" (Numbers 21:4). Giant Despair soon caught them, cast them into his dungeon, and beat them until Christian despaired of living. "Therefore now, O LORD, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live" (Jonah 4:3). But, Christian finally came to his senses, and reached for a key called Promise (that he carried with him), which, said he, could "**open any lock in Doubting Castle**". "Whereby are given unto us Exceeding Great And Precious Promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having **escaped** the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2Peter 1:4). Of course, Bunyan's allegory ended with both Christian and Hopeful triumphantly reaching the Celestial City, "wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2Peter 3:13). [[The Pilgrim's Progress](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Stories/Bunyan.Pilgrims.Progress.html) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Stories/Bunyan.Pilgrims.Progress.html> -- can be found at our website complete with Bunyan's Scripture footnotes.]

Spc. Gonzales has been particularly chosen by the LORD to communicate a message to the American television viewing public of faith in God, trust in His Word, and hope in His Promises. "Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom **for such a time as this?**" (Esther 4:14). The early pictures of the three American POWs told a story of the stark reality of falling into unfriendly hands with the consequent rough handling, i.e., "in the presence of mine enemies" (Psalm 23:5). After a month in solitary confinement, with no release in sight, it would take great confidence in God to keep from despairing of ever seeing home; but, Steven Gonzales assured his parents that he would see them again. "Now the God of Hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Romans 15:13). [Our article, "[Intercession Promises: Casting the Net](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Promises/Intercession.Promises.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Promises/Intercession.Promises.html> --, may assist you in praying for others like Steven Gonzales.]

American Christians ought to especially be impressed by the events surrounding the capture and release of Spc. Steven Gonzales; as if

the Good LORD is using world events to not only bring to pass His prophetic purpose, but to accomplish His perfect will in the least of all His Saints. "1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:1-2).

May we be numbered with the faithful of the LORD Jesus Christ who are active "partakers of His Promise in Christ by the Gospel" (Ephesians 3:6). And, that we would not hold to a simply theoretical faith. "That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the Promises" (Hebrews 6:12).

Why Will There Be a Tribulation?

May 13, 1999

The Angel Gabriel delivered to Daniel the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks (Daniel 9:24-27) that informs us that making "an end of sins" (9:24) is God's motivation for the completion of the 70th Week (or, the Tribulation Week). Remember, if the LORD only desired the punishment of sinners-- and not their repentance-- He would need only to devise a worldwide catastrophe to annihilate mankind, as He did in the days of Noah. But, the Tribulation Week covers seven years in which He seals 144,000 Jewish Christians (Revelation 7), as well as a "great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues [Gentile Christians]" (Revelation 7:9). Also, Israel will ultimately be converted "in one day" (Isaiah 66:8) at the climax of the Tribulation Week. [See our comments on the 144,000 and the Great Multitude that come out of Great Tribulation in Chapter 7 of our "[Revelation Commentary](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/The.Holy.Bible/Commentary.Revelations.7.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/The.Holy.Bible/Commentary.Revelations.7.html> --.]

The following is an excerpt from our article, "[The Seventy Weeks of Daniel](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/Seventy.Weeks.of.Daniel.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/Seventy.Weeks.of.Daniel.html> --, that explains why there will be a Tribulation:

To Make an End of Sins: The Judgments of the Tribulation Week

Even the Early Church saw the need of warning the world of "judgment to come" (Acts 24:25) when evangelizing the lost. Contrary to the belief of the lost sinner-- and backslidden professing Christian-- all sin must be judged. "Every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward" (Hebrews 2:2) in the past. Since God has not changed-- "I am the LORD, I change not" (Malachi 3:6)-- He will still judge all sin. "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" (1Corinthians 11:31).

God hates sin, so there will be a Tribulation Week. "Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile" (Romans 2:9). Even when the Judgments of the Tribulation Week seem to come from man, i.e., the first 5 Seal Judgments (Revelation 6:1-11), God has merely induced sinful man to fulfill His will. "26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the LORD, and against His Christ. 27 For of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, Whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, 28 For to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done" (Acts 4:26-28).

Why all this Divine, Tribulational ferocity against sin? God hates sin because it is against the highest good of Himself and the universe. David recognized this fact when he confessed the sin of his adultery with Bathsheba. "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight: that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest" (Psalm 51:4). All sin is the "transgression of the Law" (1John 3:4), but what Law is transgressed? "Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself" (Luke 10:27). Therefore, all the ills of mankind emanate from sin. "Your sins have withholden good things from you" (Jeremiah 5:25). Also, "Thus saith the LORD unto this people, Thus have they loved to wander, they have not refrained their feet, therefore the LORD doth not accept them; He will now remember their iniquity, and visit their sins" (14:10). Soberly, God warns: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20).

Sin is so much a part of mankind that mankind eliminating itself would seem to be the perfect fulfillment of Gabriel's revelation to Daniel to "make an end of sins" (Daniel 9:24). But, Scripture assures the Faithful that "except those days [the days that are about to come upon the world] should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened" (Matthew 24:22). The suicide of the world will be prevented by the miraculous hand of the Creator, because "God is love" (1John 4:16).

Also, God is Only Wise (Romans 16:27); so, He has masterfully engineered His Providence to use man's sin to "make an end of sins" (Daniel 9:24). The Psalmist informs us: "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee: the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain" (Psalm 76:10). Even when man does "evil with both hands earnestly" (Micah 7:3), the Almighty assures us that "no weapon that is formed against thee [not to mention Him] shall prosper" (Isaiah 54:17).

As you can see from the above excerpt from our article, "The Seventy Weeks of Daniel", God's judgment of the sins of mankind is for the purpose of making "an end of sins" (Daniel 9:24). But, just as it was astounding at the First Advent of the LORD Jesus Christ almost 2,000 years ago that the Eternal God so loved a sinful world "that **He gave His Only Begotten Son**" (John 3:16) to live and die as a man for the redemption of "whosoever will" (Revelation 22:17), it is *equally astounding that the God of Love would combine His Tribulation Week judgments with the preaching of the Everlasting Gospel to save **all** that can be saved.* "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the Everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the Earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Revelation 14:6).

May the LORD God Almighty find for Himself a people willing to submit themselves to Him in that Day. "Thy people **shall** be willing in the day of Thy power" (Psalm 110:3).

The Pre-Tribulational Rapture "Confidence" Game

May 10, 1999

Life is a game. "Let us run with patience the Race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1). But, unlike the games that the world plays, the Christian is called upon to direct his attention upon the "prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14), making the LORD Jesus the focus and purpose for running the Race. "Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of Our Faith" (Hebrews 12:2). [See our article, "[How to Trust God](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/How.To.Trust.God.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/How.To.Trust.God.html> --, to examine how our necessities are merely opportunities to trust God.]

Confidence is the name of the Christian's game. "Now faith is the substance [literally, confidence] of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). Faith in God, then, is another way of stating the Saints' confidence. "For we walk by faith, not by sight" (2Corinthians 5:7). Our confidence in Bible Prophecy is a product of our understanding of what God has revealed to us in His Word. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind" (Romans 14:5). Our hope of a Pre-Tribulational Rapture must ultimately rest upon our confidence that being "kept from the Hour of Temptation" (Revelation 3:10) means being delivered from entering the Tribulation Week via a Rapture **escape**. "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to **escape** all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36).

How do we know that there will be a Rapture? Consider the following passage from the Apostle Paul's first epistle to the Thessalonians. "16 For the LORD Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the Trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the LORD in the air: and so shall we ever be with the LORD" (1Thessalonians 4:16-17). Notice how clearly Paul speaks of a catching up of those who "are alive and remain" immediately after the resurrection of the "dead in Christ". And, both occur after the sounding of the "Trump of God". "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the Last Trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1Corinthians 15:52). ["[Must There Be a Pre-Tribulational Rapture?](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Must.Pre.Trib.Rapture.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Must.Pre.Trib.Rapture.html> -- is our attempt to answer this timely question.]

Since this writer sees more than one Rapture in Scripture, i.e., the "Come Up Hither" of the Pre-Tribulational Rapture (Revelation 4:1) and the "Come Up Hither" of the Pre-Wrath Rapture (11:12,15), First Thessalonians 4 is actually describing the events of the Pre-Wrath Rapture-- toward the End of the Tribulation Week. [Our article, "[The Seventh Trumpet and the Second Rapture](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/The.7th.Trump.2nd.Rapture.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/The.7th.Trump.2nd.Rapture.html> --, attempts to explain this distinction.] Luke 21:36 is a Pre-Tribulational Rapture promise to "escape **all these things that shall come to pass** [all the judgments of the Tribulation Week]" (Luke 21:36), but to only those who "watch ...and pray" (21:36). This worthiness to escape is based upon our abiding in Christ. "And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have **confidence**, and not be ashamed before Him at His Coming" (1John 2:28). [See our article, "[Babylon the Great \(Part 4\), Or, Come Out of Her, My People](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/Babylon.The.Great.Part.4.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/Babylon.The.Great.Part.4.html> -- to see the relationship of faith, love, and obedience to our abiding in Christ.]

Confidence in our Covenant Keeping God is the foundation of any hope that we possess of a Pre-Tribulational Rapture. "The

LORD is my Rock, and my Fortress, and my Deliverer; my God, my Strength, in Whom I will trust; my Buckler, and the Horn of my Salvation, and my High tower" (Psalm 18:2). David testified of not only past deliverance, but confidence in future deliverance. "The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine" (1Samuel 17:37). [See our article, "[The Character of God Is Revealed in the Rapture](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/Character.of.God.in.Raptur.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/Character.of.God.in.Raptur.html> --, which emphasizes the point that we must trust the very character of God for the Pre-Tribulational Rapture.]

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's deliverance from the burning fiery furnace persuaded Nebuchadnezzar to exclaim, "There is no other God that can deliver after this sort" (Daniel 3:29). Further, Daniel's confidence in Jehovah caused Darius to decree, "He delivereth and rescueth, and He worketh signs and wonders in Heaven and in Earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions" (Daniel 6:27). Paul testified, "I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the LORD shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His Heavenly Kingdom" (2Timothy 4:17-18). Peter confidently asserted, "The LORD knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of temptations" (2Peter 2:9).

In conclusion, Does faith make a difference for the future? It must, because it already has made a difference for our past and present. "Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in Whom we trust that He will yet deliver us" (2Corinthians 1:10). Can we have confidence that God will rapture us, if we choose to distrust what He has plainly revealed to us? Obviously, this lack of confidence would be sinfully displeasing to Him. "But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6). Our confidence in our LORD delivering us will only give us greater boldness to stand for Him. "The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion" (Proverbs 28:1). May we boldly stand for Him until He Pre-Tribulationally Raptures us. "And to wait for His Son from Heaven, Whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (1Thessalonians 1:10).

Don't Worry About the Rapture

May 22, 1999

Our LORD's injunction against worrying about tomorrow is necessary advice for those who are patiently waiting for His Return and our soon Rapture. "Take therefore no [fearful, anxious] thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matthew 6:34). Fearfulness and faith are as opposite as sin and holiness. "And He said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?" (Mark 4:40). The faith that works in us is the cooperation of our will with the working of the Holy Spirit, i.e., "it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). The joyful task of waiting requires watchfulness and sobriety. "Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober" (1Thessalonians 5:6). Accordingly, we have been provided with the assistance of an Anti-Worry, Watchfulness, and Soberness Checklist: "16 Rejoice evermore. 17 Pray without ceasing. 18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. 19 Quench not the Spirit. 20 Despise not prophesyings. 21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. 22 Abstain from all appearance of evil. 23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our LORD Jesus Christ" (1Thessalonians 5:16-23).

In light of our temptation to worry instead of patiently waiting, have you noticed that the most precious human commodity in the world, is a heart that is right with God? "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole Earth, to shew Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him" (2Chronicles 16:9). And, with all the difficulties of a world, where "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse" (2Timothy 3:13), it is crucial that those who abide "in the Light" continue that abiding. "He that loveth his brother abideth in the Light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him" (1John 2:10). But, as much as the LORD requires us to cease and avoid the sin of worry, He more positively desires that we seek and trust Him. "But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

Perhaps the easiest way to take the offensive against worry, is to begin at the top of the Anti-Worry, Watchfulness, and Soberness Checklist, and say, "Thank You, LORD!" "16 Rejoice evermore... 18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1Thessalonians 5:16,18). Quickly, our grateful heart will ignite within us prayerfulness. "Pray without ceasing" (5:17). Our gratitude to God will encourage us to pray the kind of prayer that will receive its requests from Jehovah Jireh. "4 Rejoice in the LORD alway: and again I say, Rejoice... 6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Philippians 4:4,6).

If we literally receive the command to "give thanks" (1Thessalonians 5:18) in everything, then we would have nothing for which we could be unthankful. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the LORD Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him" (Colossians 3:17). Thank God for whatever the Holy Spirit places before your mind, i.e., pain, the lack of pain, family members, isolation, opportunities, restrictions, past mercies, present grace, bills, present provision, comfort of the Paraklete (Holy Spirit), empowering of the Spirit, wisdom, past failures, future successes, promise of the Pre-Tribulational Rapture, certainty of His Second Coming, etc. "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

Not only will a heart thankful to God erase worry, but it will produce within us peace. "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7). Our thankfulness to Christ aids the LORD in sanctifying and preserving us until He comes for us. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the Coming of our LORD Jesus Christ" (1Thessalonians 5:23). This preservation (and not just our own efforts) accounts us worthy to escape the Tribulation, which is surely good news for those who hope for a Pre-Tribulational Rapture. "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36).

If we thank God for everything, then nothing can stop us from walking victoriously for the LORD. "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our LORD Jesus Christ" (1Corinthians 15:57). May the LORD abolish the sin of worry in our midst and replace it with a joyful confidence in His Return and our Departure. "But Christ as a Son over His own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (Hebrews 3:6).

The Honor of the Eleventh Hour Labourers

May 22, 1999

Our LORD told us, "Occupy till I come" (Luke 19:13). Whether we find ourselves laboring as "fishers of men" (Mark 1:17) or providing for "his own" (1Timothy 5:8), all of the Saints are called to be labourers in the LORD's Vineyard. "For the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a Man that is an Householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into His Vineyard" (Matthew 20:1). From the beginning, our LORD has recruited to Himself a multitude of prophets, apostles, and labourers like you and I, i.e., "partakers of the Heavenly calling" (Hebrews 3:1). "And when He had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, He sent them into His Vineyard" (Matthew 20:2). We have already been commissioned to "teach all nations... all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19,20). "And He went out about the third hour [nine o'clock], and saw others standing idle in the marketplace" (Matthew 20:3).

The Father's Plan of Salvation is so vast that we cannot be idle. We must work, just as the Son worked, i.e., "I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4). "4 And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. 5 Again He went out about the sixth [twelve o'clock] and ninth hour [three o'clock], and did likewise" (Matthew 20:4-5). It is amazing that we, the Eleventh Hour Labourers, have been engaged on the same terms as our Worthy Predecessors, i.e., being granted the "free gift" (Romans 5:18) of salvation. "6 And about the eleventh hour [five o'clock, the second to the last hour of the Jewish day] He went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? 7 They say unto Him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive" (Matthew 20:6-7).

Of course, our predecessors do not presently begrudge our reception of the same salvation as they, but it is understandable (humanly speaking) that the senior would be accorded more privilege than the younger, i.e., "ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder" (1Peter 5:5). "8 So when even was come, the Lord of the Vineyard saith unto His steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. 9 And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. 10 But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny" (Matthew 20:8-10). Possibly, this could be a depiction of Wayward Israel or Carnal Professed Christianity, but the LORD did level a scathing rebuke at the Apostle Peter for his fleshly reasoning, i.e., "He rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind Me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men" (Mark 8:33). "11 And when they had received it, they murmured against the Goodman of the House, 12 Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day" (Matthew 20:11-12).

The Good LORD (2Chronicles 30:18) is also the Righteous Judge (2Timothy 4:8), and His judgment is always right. And, we are but a "drop of a bucket" (Isaiah 40:15) compared to the notable accomplishments of our Worthy Predecessors. "13 But He answered one

of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? 14 Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. 15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?" (Matthew 20:13-15). Amazingly, we, the Eleventh Hour Labourers, have the opportunity to be the servant of all, i.e., "If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all" (Mark 9:35); and thus, honored by our LORD. "So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen" (Matthew 20:16).

May we humble ourselves "under the mighty hand of God" (1Peter 5:6), and recognize our great privilege of being sent forth as "labourers into His harvest" (Luke 10:2). May the LORD of the Harvest increase our numbers and grant to us the fruit of souls for the LORD Jesus. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Psalm 126:6). And, may all the honor, power, and glory of anything accomplished be rightfully laid before the throne of the KING of Kings, and LORD of Lords. "Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" (Revelation 4:11).

Y2K and the Pre-Tribulational Rapture

June 5, 1999

Most who view Endtime Events, wish a Pre-Tribulational Rapture were true; but, wishing-- some would say-- does not make it so. However, we ought to remember that "faith is the **substance of things hoped for**, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). Those who see a Pre-Tribulational Rapture in Scripture, cling to promises such as: "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself [in Heaven] as it were for a little moment, until the indignation [Tribulation] be overpast" (Isaiah 26:20), "Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the Earth, which have wrought His Judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid [in Heaven] in the day of the LORD'S anger" (Zephaniah 2:3), and "In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death [raptured without dying]" (Proverbs 12:28). [For a more substantial discussion of the Pre-Tribulational Rapture, see our article, "[Must There Be a Pre-Tribulational Rapture?](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Must.Pre.Trib.Rapture.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Must.Pre.Trib.Rapture.html> --]

Y2K evokes the same "belief-disbelief" reaction as the Pre-Tribulational Rapture, among those who occupy themselves with Bible Prophecy. "One man esteemeth one day above another [Y2K]: another esteemeth every day alike [no Y2K]. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind" (Romans 14:5). Just as disbelief in a Pre-Tribulational Rapture would not prevent its occurrence; just so, neither will a belief in the cataclysmic outcome of Y2K necessarily bring that to pass. "He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the LORD; and he that regardeth not the day, to the LORD he doth not regard it" (Romans 14:6). In other words, neither the pro or con of the Pre-Tribulational Rapture or Y2K are sufficient grounds to engage in "doubtful disputations" (14:1). Wherever an honest heart stands, God is able to hold him up. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own Master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand" (14:4).

My perspective on Y2K-- "I speak this by permission, and not of commandment" (1Corinthians 7:6)-- is that Y2K is a real problem with real consequences. The real question is only the **extent** of the problem and its consequences. Speed bump or cataclysm, Y2K has real consequences. Problem: "The soul that sinneth" (Ezekiel 18:20). Consequence: "it shall die" (18:20). Problem: Many computer programs and some computer chips only recognize the last two digits of the year in a date, i.e., "99" means "1999". Consequence: "00" may be interpreted as "1900" and not "2000", wreaking havoc on date and time sensitive programs, i.e., reorder and restock of fresh produce, computation of annuities and interest, targeting of nuclear warheads, etc. It is the "little foxes, that spoil the vines" (Song of Solomon 2:15).

If Y2K is not an issue to be taken seriously, then why does the government and industry give it credence in statements concerning Y2K Compliance or Readiness? It reminds me of the question: "When did you stop beating your wife?" The question assumes the reality that you **were** beating your wife, and it only wants to know **when** you stopped beating her. "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness" (1Corinthians 3:19). Likewise, government and industry assume the reality of the calamity of inoperative ATMs, undelivered government checks, utility outages, unreplenished inventories, etc., so they only reassure the public that measures are being taken for full Y2K Compliance or Readiness to prevent public panic. "For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jeremiah 8:11).

Y2K is like a run on the bank-- it does not need anything more than rumor to cause ruin. The "evil report of the land" (Numbers 13:32) given by ten of the twelve spies caused Israel to be discouraged from immediately taking possession of the Promised Land. "Our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, The people is greater and taller than we" (Deuteronomy 1:28). Even though it was

only a false rumor and lie, it ruined a generation's chance of entering the Promised Land. "So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into My rest" (Hebrews 3:11).

Y2K is like a chain. It is only as strong as its weakest link. "8 It is better to **trust in the LORD** than to put confidence in man. 9 It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes" (Psalm 118:8-9). With the globalization of the worlds' economies comes the interdependence that prevents even a fully Y2K prepared nation from insulation from the ill effects of the least Y2K prepared nations. "Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint" (Proverbs 25:19).

Y2K is admitted by government as serious, but the lack of a real effort to comply and prepare may indicate that even greater calamities loom before the end of 1999, e.g., nuclear destruction of the United States, World War 3, etc. Though God has sovereignly planned Y2K, Satan may be allowed to use it. "1 Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? 2 The kings of the Earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against His Anointed, saying, 3 Let us break Their bands asunder, and cast away Their cords from us. 4 He that sitteth in the Heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision. 5 Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure" (Psalm 2:1-5).

It is the confidence of Katie and I-- and certainly of others-- that the goodness of God dictates a Pre-Tribulational Rapture before any worldwide cataclysm. "He loveth righteousness and judgment: the Earth is full of the goodness of the LORD" (Psalm 33:5). If Y2K is the cataclysm that it seems to be, then at some time prior to that event, would be an appropriate time for the Pre-Tribulational Rapture. "Ye that love the LORD, hate evil: He preserveth the souls of His Saints; He delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked" (97:10).

May the Almighty "grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel" (Psalms 20:4). "Come [quickly], LORD Jesus" (Revelation 22:20).

Antinomianism-- The Popular Heresy

June 20, 1999

Jesus promised that He would avenge speedily anyone who would truly pray and not faint; but, the real issue is whether or not He would find a people in which dwells True Faith, when He returns. "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the Earth?" (Luke 18:8). Surely, the LORD was not referring to Professing Evangelical Christianity when He made this statement-- or, was He? "7 And shall not God avenge **His Own Elect**, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? 8 I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the Earth?" (18:7-8).

The solution to Christ's question, "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the Earth?", is antinomianism. But, you ask, "What is antinomianism?" It is the heresy without a face, presently infecting the vitals of Professing Evangelical Christianity. "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Matthew 24:12). Antinomianism comes from the Greek words "anti" against, and "nomos" law-- "against law". It was considered a heretical doctrine by the Early Church of the 2nd Century, being championed by the Gnostics, i.e., who believed matter to be evil, the spirit good, and salvation to come by secret knowledge (gnosis) granted to initiates. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools" (Romans 1:22).

Antinomians believe in freedom from the obligation to obey the Moral Law to be saved. "Do we then make void the Law through Faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the Law" (Romans 3:31). The heresy of antinomianism springs from unrightly "dividing the Word of Truth" (2Timothy 2:15). And, what Scripture do antinomians mishandle? "Ye are not under the Law, but under Grace" (Romans 6:14) has been the "stone of stumbling" and "rock of offence" to antinomians, who "stumble at the Word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed" (1Peter 2:8). Jude warned against antinomianism, even in the 1st Century. "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness [unbridled lust], and denying the only LORD God, and our LORD Jesus Christ" (Jude 4).

What does it mean, "Ye are not under the Law, but under grace" (Romans 6:14)? This verse simply means that men are not justified and saved by their own works-- which are the "deeds of the Law"-- but by God's grace. "Therefore by the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the Law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20). The guilty-but-now-penitent sinner cannot be accepted and treated as if he were just, i.e., justified, without the merciful pardon of God. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5). And, if God had not voluntarily, freely, and graciously conceived and promoted this program of pardon and redemption, no man

would ever be saved. "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24).

Licentiousness is the lack of moral restraint that accompanies antinomianism. "1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:1-2). Because the antinomian perverts the grace of God, Jude warned of "ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness" (Jude 4), where lasciviousness is unbridled lust or licentiousness. "12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof... 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the Law, but under grace" (Romans 6:12,14). In fact, the Apostle Paul pronounced damnation upon those who used faith in God and the grace of God as an excuse for their sin. "And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just" (3:8).

Gospel Salvation is not freedom from the Moral Law, but freedom to **obey** the Moral Law. "For not the hearers of the Law are just before God, but the doers of the Law shall be justified" (Romans 2:13). The Moral Law is not the Civil Law of Old Testament Israel, nor is it the Ceremonial Law of worship for the ancient Jew, but it is the unchanging requirement of supreme love for God, and an equal love for our neighbor as ourself. "37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind... 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:37,39). Where there is not this Condition of Justification fulfilled of complete and entire obedience to the Moral Law, there cannot be Gospel Salvation. "8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love... 20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (1John 4:8,20). But, the Spirit of Grace (Hebrews 10:29) is given to the Saints to gain that obedience to the Moral Law. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13).

Antinomianism today, takes advantage of the ignorance of Professing Christianity concerning the true nature of our Justification by Faith, stressing grace and faith apart from obedience to the Moral Law. "What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the Law: for I had not known lust, except the Law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Romans 7:7). And, when the Ten Commandments, which expresses the substance of the Moral Law, become the symbol of a vilified, legalistic salvation, then antinomianism has succeeded in convincing Professing Evangelical Christianity to depart from the "faith which was once delivered unto the Saints" (Jude 3).

May God grant you the wisdom to avoid the "profane and vain babblings" (1Timothy 6:20) of modern antinomianism, and make you "wise unto salvation" (2Timothy 3:15).

[Please read our article, "[Is Faith the Only Condition for Eternal Salvation? Or, The Biblical Doctrine of Justification by Faith](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Is.Faith.the.Only.Conditio.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Is.Faith.the.Only.Conditio.html> --, for a more developed discussion of this theme.]

Behold, I Come Quickly

June 24, 1999

"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Revelation 3:11). To our best understanding, the Apostle John-- our "brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the Kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ" (1:9)-- penned these words by inspiration in 96 AD. Now, some may say that the Apocalypse was not intended to fix an idea of the timing of Endtime Events, i.e., "*We should not set dates or become convinced that we will see the Coming of the LORD in our lifetime, for we open ourselves to bitterness, disappointment, and the ridicule of skeptics.*" **But**, none other than **the LORD Himself** made the immutable Promise-- "I come quickly"-- four separate times (3:11; 22:7,12,20) in the Book of Revelation.

Why would the Spirit of Truth (John 14:17) seemingly mislead us with the idea that the LORD Jesus is returning quickly, or that the "time is at hand" (Revelation 1:3), if that return would not be for more than 1,900 years? Perhaps, some may feel forced to conclude that the Son of God was only using divine metaphors-- comparing His sense of quickness with eternity-- which is true-- but the Creator knows better than anyone how His little children would react to such inflammatory language as, "I come quickly" or "the time is at hand". "For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust" (Psalm 103:14).

"Don't let go!" "Hang on!" "**Hold that fast** which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Revelation 3:11). These are the words of exhortation that accompany Philadelphia's Promise of our LORD's soon return. If we look at the context of this first Apocalyptic appearance of "I come quickly" (3:11), we will find that the LORD Jesus Christ had just finished **promising** to the Church of

Philadelphia that He would deliver them from the Hour of Temptation. "Because **thou hast kept** the Word of My patience, **I also will keep** thee from the Hour of Temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the Earth" (3:10). Certainly, that assembly of Believers in 1st Century Asia Minor had been given a real Promise for their own deliverance; but, **is not this Promise of Deliverance the property of the Saints throughout the ages?** "Then touched He their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you" (Matthew 9:29). And, if God has given you the faith to believe that He has promised you a Pre-Tribulational Rapture-- "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to **escape all these things that shall come to pass**, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36)-- then, hold fast to your faith until He fulfills His Word. So, when you are tempted to give up your faith, be **encouraged** that the Master said, "I come quickly".

The opposite of letting go of our confidence of what we find revealed in the Revelation, is to faithfully **keep** those "Sayings"-- and our confidence. "Behold, I come quickly: **blessed** is he that **keepeth** the Sayings of the prophecy of this Book" (Revelation 22:7). **If we are the Just, then we should live by our confidence in what God has said.** "Now the Just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, My soul shall have **no** pleasure in him" (Hebrews 10:38). Keeping the "Sayings of the prophecy of this Book" (Revelation 22:7) may mean that you must "become a fool" (2Corinthians 12:11) in the eyes of the world for declaring your confidence in what the Comforter has revealed to you concerning "things to come" (John 16:13). But surely, keeping the "Sayings of the prophecy of this Book" (Revelation 22:7) **means to order your decisions and life so that they are consistent with what you understand.** "But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the Word, **keep it**, and bring forth fruit with patience" (Luke 8:15).

The LORD Jesus Christ is both our Reward and our Rewarder. "And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as **his work** shall be" (Revelation 22:12). The third incentive for our LORD coming quickly, is that He will reward us according to our works. What a confusion we have made of the word "works"! If the Spirit of God could only teach His people the concept of a "faith which worketh by Love" (Galatians 5:6), we would close this Church Age with the "greater works" (John 14:12) promised by the LORD Jesus for His people. (And, He will accomplish His Word, but maybe not in the way expected.) "And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them" (Isaiah 42:16).

Finally, the second to the last verse of the entire Bible is, "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly" (Revelation 22:20). As if to **ensure** that we would consider **all** of His Word and Revelation **to apply** to our individual situation, He concludes the New Testament with the encouragement that He is Coming quickly. If we truly Love the LORD, we will "**keep** the Sayings" (22:7) of not only the Revelation, but of "**every** Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Just as the LORD Jesus laid down His life for us, we **ought** to return that Love by tenaciously clinging to Him **in faith with His Promise**, "Behold, I come quickly". We are the "children of God" (Matthew 5:9), and we have the same question that a small child asks a parent on a long trip, "Are we there yet?" The patient reply is, "Soon. Not much longer." Likewise, our LORD **comforts and encourages** us with His Promise, "I come quickly".

"Amen. Even so, come, LORD Jesus" (Revelation 22:20).

Laodicea-- What Happened?

July 5, 1999

The Master Himself described the Church of Laodicea as lukewarm-- being "neither cold nor hot" (Revelation 3:16)-- with the result that the LORD vomits them "out of [His] mouth" (3:16). Standing outside of the Church of Laodicea, the Saviour seeks entrance. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me" (3:20). As if the Heavenly Bridegroom was inviting Deceived Laodicea to repent and receive Him in true faith, in preparation for the "Marriage Supper of the Lamb" (19:9), He counsels Laodicea to purchase His "True Riches" (Luke 16:11), i.e., "gold tried in the fire" (Revelation 3:18), and to buy the Heavenly Clothing of His Righteousness, that they should "not be found naked" (2Corinthians 5:3), i.e., "white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear" (Revelation 3:18). He also gives Laodicea instructions for the restoration of spiritual sight by the divinely anointed clay, i.e., "anoint thy eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see" (3:18). What a powerful but pathetic description of any church!

Now that the Laodicean Church Age is about over, what did the LORD Jesus Christ mean when He said to Lukewarm Laodicea, "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Revelation 3:17)? Was it that Laodicea had no concept of the "love of money" being the "root of all

evil" (1Timothy 6:10)? No, Laodicea's sin is deeper. *They interpreted their sense of material well-being as justification that their Intellectual-Only-Faith was the all-sufficient Evangelical Faith of the Scripture*, i.e., spiritually they felt that they had "need of nothing" (Revelation 3:17). And, they neglected the basic characteristic of Saving Faith-- **faith works, and that, by love**. "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6).

Laodiceanism is synonymous with antinomianism, which is not simply anti-legalism, for Scripture declares that we are not saved by the self-righteous works of the Law. "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the Law: for by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified" (Galatians 2:16). Antinomianism declares that Saving Faith is not a decision, i.e., a free will act, but merely the conviction or persuasion that something is true. "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" (James 2:20). Further, antinomianism-- as it is taught in this Laodicean Church Age-- makes vehement cries against Salvation By Works, e.g. declaring that persevering in faith to the end is unnecessary to be finally saved. But, "what saith the Scripture?" (Romans 4:3). "He that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 10:22). Viewing the addition of any further Condition for Eternal Salvation than a type of Intellectual Faith, Laodicea cries out, "Legalism!" or "Works Salvation!" But again, "what saith the Scripture?" (Romans 4:3). "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12). [For a better understanding of this all-important doctrine of justification by faith, please see our article, "[Is Faith the Only Condition for Eternal Salvation?](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Is.Faith.the.Only.Conditio.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Is.Faith.the.Only.Conditio.html> --]

By purposefully omitting such necessary conditions from Gospel Salvation, as persevering to the end, Laodicea makes possible the Endtime situation of Professing Christians intentionally taking the Mark of the Beast-- and still expecting to go to Heaven. But, "9 ...If **any** man worship the Beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, 10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: 11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the Beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name" (Revelation 14:9-11).

How did Laodicea come to the conclusion that an intellectual perception or conviction of the Truth was all that was necessary for Evangelical Faith? "For unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it" (Hebrews 4:2). Laodicea wrongly reasoned: *Since all men are born into this world as sinners, then salvation only makes them saved sinners. And, if sinners still, then the difference between sinning and not sinning, cannot have the slightest effect upon salvation. Consequently, things other than holiness must attest to spiritual well-being. Hence, a sense of material well-being must be as good as any evidence that God is pleased.* "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools" (Romans 1:22).

In response: Mankind is **not** born into this world as sinners, for sin is **only** the willful act of a moral agent in defiance of the Commands of God. "Whosoever **committeth sin** transgresseth also the Law: for sin is the transgression of the Law" (1John 3:4). Eternal Salvation occurs **only** when the sinner becomes willing to do the will of Christ. "And being made perfect, He became the Author of Eternal Salvation unto all them **that obey Him**" (Hebrews 5:9). Holiness can be omitted only on pain of Eternal Punishment. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which **no man** shall see the LORD" (12:14). And, the Saint's Obedience-- not any sense of material well-being-- is the evidence that we are saved, and that we spiritually prosper. "And hereby we do know that we know Him, **if we keep His Commandments**" (1John 2:3). And, "2 Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. 3 For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the Truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the Truth. 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children **walk in Truth**" (3John 2-4).

May the LORD Jesus Christ deliver us from the deception of Laodicea.

If My WORDS Abide In You

July 16, 1999

Blessed people have the fellowship of Him, Whose "Name is called The WORD of God" (Revelation 19:13). "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1John 1:3). *True Christian fellowship ministers the WORD of God to one another.* "Then they that feared the LORD **spake often one to another**: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a Book Of Remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the LORD, and that **thought upon His Name**" (Malachi 3:16). The barrenness of not fellowshiping with the

"WORD [that] was made flesh" (John 1:14) begets the same wasteland of fellowship among professing Christians. But, out "of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh" (Luke 6:45), and the Spirit-filled Saint *will edify the Body with the WORD*, as a balm out of Gilead.

If the professed Body of Christ understood that *their very life and Spiritual existence is abiding in the WORD of God*, then we would again have Pentecostal giants! "If ye abide in Me, and My WORDS abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7). Not only would the Saints stand tall in the sight of their LORD, but they would be **glad** to see one another. "They that fear Thee will be glad when they see me; *because I have hoped in Thy WORD*" (Psalm 119:74). But, the deceptiveness of sin has hidden their miserable condition from the eyes of the present Laodicean "Church". "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see" (Revelation 3:18).

The only revival that the professed Church needs today, is a Spirit-filled rebirth of the Living Logos in the hearts of those who name the Name of Christ. But, this would mean that professing Christians would have to admit and separate from their iniquities. "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The LORD knoweth them that are His. And, Let every one that nameth the Name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2Timothy 2:19). We have robbed ourselves of Pentecostal power because we stand separated from the WORD of God by our abiding in known sin. "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2). Possibly, the LORD would reveal a Pre-Tribulation Rapture to even more of the modern prophets, if a Tribulation was not necessary to awaken the sinful, wayward Church. "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded" (James 4:8).

The Good LORD will again speak comforting WORDS, when His professed people will turn again to Him. "3 Thus saith the LORD of Hosts; Turn ye unto Me, saith the LORD of Hosts, and I will turn unto you... 13 And the LORD answered the angel that talked with me with good WORDS and comfortable WORDS" (Zechariah 1:3,13). The desire of the Pre-Tribulation Rapturists to depart now or the Tribulationists to see a great moving of God during Judgment; both need to be aware of the Body's need to repent and turn NOW. "For He saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of Salvation have I succoured thee: behold, NOW is the accepted time; behold, NOW is the day of Salvation" (2Corinthians 6:2). The revival needed by the professed Church can and should take place NOW-- before any Pre-Tribulation Rapture or mighty movements of the Spirit during the Tribulation Week. "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till He come and rain righteousness upon you" (Hosea 10:12).

And, what about the Pentecostal Unity of the Primitive Christians? "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with **one accord** in one place" (Acts 2:1). Without a question, the Pentecostal Believers of Acts 2 were **fellowshipping** with their LORD and one another. "These all **continued with one accord** in prayer and supplication" (Acts 1:14). **Every attempt to affect union for the Visible Body without first attempting to find agreement over the WORD of God, must result in failure or ecumenical compromise.** "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3). Ultimately, fellowshipping with Babylon the Great-- the One World Religion-- will result from the indiscriminate attempt to fellowship around some other foundation than that of Him Whose Name Is Called The WORD Of God. "9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, 10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb" (Revelation 14:9-10).

Christian Unity is commanded by the LORD through the Apostle Paul. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the Name of our LORD Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1Corinthians 1:10). Unfortunately, it appears that only the extreme persecution of the Tribulation Week will cause the Backslidden Church to repent and return to her former purity, i.e., "knowing that tribulation worketh patience" (Romans 5:3). If the LORD cannot reach His people with His goodness, then He must accomplish the task with His severity. "When He slew them, then they sought Him: and they returned and inquired early after God" (Psalm 78:34). It is to our shame that we would force God to deal with us thus; but, it is to His credit that He cares. O, the "goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, **if thou continue** in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off" (Romans 11:22).

Whether or not individual Christians have the privilege of true fellowship with anyone else in the world, we have the communion of the Living WORD empowered by the Heavenly Paraklete. "Thy WORDS were found, and I did eat Them; and Thy WORD was unto me the Joy and Rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by Thy Name, O LORD God of Hosts" (Jeremiah 15:16). Our seeking of the LORD Jesus through prayer and the WORD will give us great peace about the future. "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all Truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come" (John 16:13).

An Impossible Standard?

July 20, 1999

Recently, we received the following email from a reader...

an excerpt--

However, this following point you make at the top of your homepage bugged me a little...

The test of knowing if your "love" for Him is self-deceived or REAL, can be conclusively proved by Scripture. If you LOVE Him-- you will OBEY Him. If you will not obey Him-- you do not love Him.

"If ye love Me, keep My Commandments" (John 14:15).

"And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His Commandments" (1 John 2:3).

"But whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him" (1 John 2:5).

"Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My Words" (John 14:23).

"If ye keep My Commandments, ye shall abide in My love" (John 15:10).

"For this is the love of God, that we keep His Commandments: and His Commandments are not grievous" [literally, not burdensome] (1 John 5:3).

"Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our LORD Jesus Christ unto Eternal Life" (Jude 1:21).

My point is that, IF, as you state, "If you LOVE Him-- you will OBEY Him," then, shouldn't the bible use that same word, "obey"? Why do all the verses you quote use the word, "keep"? I keep the commandments close to my heart, mind, and actions, but I find my flesh not obeying my own commands, as Paul struggled with.

I am not saying we don't need to worry about the commandments, and that we don't need to obey. We do need to, but I know that it is impossible to do so in the sinful flesh we all inhabit.

"He who says he is without sin is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

Please don't push a standard of "worthiness" on people that they cannot fulfill.

Our response to this reader...

Dear ____,

We appreciate that you have invested time into reading a website that is premised upon "What Saith the Scripture" (Romans 4:3). You are certainly aware of the necessity of the Body of Christ to live "by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Over the years, Katie and I have been helped in our study of the Scriptures by a simple verse that demonstrates that only those who are willing to do the will of God can truly understand the Scriptures. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself" (John 7:17).

Concerning your difficulty with equating "keep" with "obey", the Greek word "tereo" (Strong's # 5083) is translated by the KJV as "keep" in our LORD's last instructions before His betrayal in John 14:15-- "If ye love Me, **keep** My Commandments"-- and "observe" in the Great Commission of Matthew 28:20-- "Teaching them to **observe** all things whatsoever I have commanded you". Certainly, the LORD Jesus intended by His Words to convey the necessity of loving obedience to all who would claim Him as LORD and Saviour. "And why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the

things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). Even the Old Testament clearly demonstrated that to "keep" is to "obey": "And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep My Commandments and My Laws?" (Exodus 16:28).

It would be helpful for you to consider that **faith always works by love**. "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6). And, **faith always obeys**. "But now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the Commandment of the Everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith" (Romans 16:26).

Your distress about pushing a "*standard of 'worthiness' on people that they cannot fulfill*" seems to be based upon your similarity to the Apostle Paul's "law experience" of Romans 7, i.e., "19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:19, 24). But, Paul's purpose was not to show Romans 7 as a normal, expected experience, but to demonstrate in Romans 8, the necessity-- and possibility-- of walking in the Spirit to accomplish the required obedience. "4 That the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit... 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Romans 8:4, 9). Remember, **the Spirit only dwells with those who walk in obedience**. "And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, Whom God hath given to **them that obey Him**" (Acts 5:32).

Your contention that "*it is impossible to [obey while] in the sinful flesh we all inhabit*" is a mistake founded upon the erroneous Doctrine of the Sinful Nature of Man. In response, please read "[Back to the Basics: The Principles of the Doctrine of Christ](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Exposition.Perfection.html#Back%20to%20basics)" -- [http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Exposition.Perfection.html#Back to basics](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Exposition.Perfection.html#Back%20to%20basics) --, which is a portion of an article, "[An Urgent Call to Christian Perfection](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Exposition.Perfection.html#An%20Urgent%20Call%20to%20Christian%20Perfection)" -- [http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Exposition.Perfection.html](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Exposition.Perfection.html#An%20Urgent%20Call%20to%20Christian%20Perfection) -- "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26)-- that attempts to show that man is not born a sinner; but, all men have become sinners **through their own personal choice**. Therefore, it is not accurate that we blame "sinful flesh" for our lack of obedience. "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not" (Romans 7:18).

How then are we to be delivered "from the body of this death" (Romans 7:24)? Again, our deliverance is through walking by faith in the Spirit. "There is therefore now **no condemnation** to them which are in Christ Jesus, **who WALK not after the flesh, but after the Spirit**" (Romans 8:1). And, again, **the Spirit will always cause us to keep His Commandments**. "And he that keepeth His Commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us" (1John 3:24). And, the Promises of God have been especially designed by the LORD to accomplish the **ongoing** sanctification of His people, who are trusting Him. "Whereby are given unto us Exceeding Great And Precious Promises: that by These ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2Peter 1:4).

Your citing of the Scripture that "*he who says he is without sin is a liar, and the truth is not in him*" [1John 1] is also a mistake in your understanding of the First Epistle of John. In response, please read the "[Christian Perfection: 'Almost Thou Persuadest Me'?](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Exposition.Perfection.html#Almost%20Thou%20Persuadest%20Me%20%3F)" -- [http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Exposition.Perfection.html#Almost Thou Persuadest Me](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Exposition.Perfection.html#Almost%20Thou%20Persuadest%20Me%20%3F) -- section of the aforementioned article, "[An Urgent Call to Christian Perfection](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Exposition.Perfection.html#An%20Urgent%20Call%20to%20Christian%20Perfection)" --

<http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Exposition.Perfection.html> --, for an exposition of both Romans 7 and 1 John 1.

"Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him" (1John 3:6). This concept of the Assurance of Salvation is also covered in our article, "[That Ye May Know That Ye Have Eternal Life](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/That.Ye.May.Know.That.Ye.html)" - <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/That.Ye.May.Know.That.Ye.html> --. You can find additional articles on this subject in our "[Topical Links: On Sound Doctrine](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Topical.Links.On.Doctrine.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Topical.Links.On.Doctrine.html> -- section.

We desire for you-- and ourselves-- that you "may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death" (Philippians 3:10). And, we also seek "14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But **speaking the Truth in Love**, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the **edifying of itself in Love**" (Ephesians 4:14-16).

Maranatha!

Tom and Katie Stewart

"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be **accounted worthy** to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36).

Email from a reader...

an excerpt--

Are you saying that you do not ever sin? Or are you saying that your sins have been forgiven by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and that when you sin, you can confess your sin to the Father through the Son?

Our response...

Greetings. I'll try to respond to your question, "Are you saying that you do not ever sin?" No, not only have I sinned, but I do on occasion foolishly sin and bring reproach upon the LORD. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). But, even as "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1John 1:9), we ought to respond to His love and forgiveness by abiding in Christ. "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not [present tense, sins not]" (3:6). I am not basing any doctrine of holiness, sanctification, or perfection upon my attaining or lack of attaining any particular condition of sinlessness. Instead, I am only concerned with "what saith the Scripture?" (Romans 4:3). If you would like to investigate further this subject, I would invite you to read "[An Urgent Call to Christian Perfection](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Exposition.Perfection.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Exposition.Perfection.html> -- , which was an attempt to answer another's inquiry on the subject of Christian sanctification. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48)...

I have written other articles on this subject, found in "[Topical Links On Sound Doctrine](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Topical.Links.On.Doctrine.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Topical.Links.On.Doctrine.html> -- on our website. I hope that you find the information for which you were seeking. "I am a companion of all them that fear Thee, and of them that keep Thy Precepts" (Psalm 119:63).

Maranatha!

Tom Stewart

"He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities" (Micah 7:19).

Editor's Note...

Laodicea's most cherished doctrine is one's **necessity** to sin, i.e., no one's perfect. Regardless of our past failures, neither you nor I should put that lack of success above the plain Word of God, which says, "whosoever is born of God doth **not** commit sin" (1John 3:9). Our experience cannot disprove His Word. If we did NOT have access to the plain statements of Scripture, we would have to wholeheartedly admit that it is impossible to ever stop sinning for even the smallest moment of time. However, we are held to a **Higher Standard** by the LORD Jesus Christ Himself. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). Perfect Love is the Demand of the Moral Law, which the LORD Jesus Christ never set aside. "37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the First And Great Commandment. 39 And the Second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (22:37-39).

From past experience, we have failed in our love to Him through the willful act of sinning. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). Even though we ought to obey, and have been given a free will to obey-- we just didn't obey. And that makes sin "exceeding sinful" (Romans 7:13). The LORD Jesus overcame sin while in human form, "leaving us an example, that [we] should follow His steps" (1Peter 2:21). He destroyed the power that sin had over us by destroying "the works of the Devil" (1John 3:8). But, what makes sin even more grievous is, that we neglect His Ability to keep us from sinning. "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not" (1John 3:6). As a dog returns to its vomit, we return to our sin. "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the LORD and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning" (2Peter 2:20). There is no excuse for sin! We have no excuse for doing it! Because "His Divine Power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and Godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (2Peter 1:3).

If we believe what God says, then "whosoever is born of God doth **not commit** sin; for His Seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1John 3:9). "The Seed is the Word of God" (Luke 8:11). And, "Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee" (Psalm 119:11). It becomes very clear that a child of God "commits" righteousness, and a child of the Devil commits sin. "**In this** the children of God are manifest, and the children of the Devil [this is the way you tell them apart]: whosoever doeth not righteousness is **not** of God, neither he that loveth not his brother" (1John 3:10). I tell you this in all sincerity, "**in this** the children of God are manifest" because a wrong attitude concerning sin will cause death. "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). Sin will deceive you, then slay you. And, you won't even notice that you've been hardened. "But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Hebrews 3:13).

Your only hope is to **trust God to keep you from sinning**. "He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us; **He will subdue our iniquities**" (Micah 7:19). A Christian cannot sin while he is trusting God to not sin. "For **it is GOD which worketh in you both to will and to do** of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). Personal success at holiness demands that we trust Him to work it in us. "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, **according to the Power that worketh in us**" (Ephesians 3:20). May the LORD discover to you **the help of His Promises to keep you from sin and sinning**. "Whereby are given unto us Exceeding Great And Precious Promises: that by These ye might be **partakers of the Divine Nature**, having **escaped the corruption** that is in the world through lust" (2Peter 1:4).

Trust His Ability:

- "Faithful is He that calleth you, Who also **will do it**" (1 Thessalonians 5:24).
- "Whereunto I also labour, striving according to **His Working**, which worketh in me mightily" (Colossians 1:29).
- "According to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the **Effectual Working** of His Power" (Ephesians 3:7).
- "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the LORD, and in the Power of **His Might**" (Ephesians 6:10).
- "And what is the exceeding greatness of His Power to us-ward **who believe**, according to **the Working** of His Mighty Power" (Ephesians 1:19).
- "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our LORD Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do **His Will**, working in you that which is wellpleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to Whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (Hebrews 13:20-21).

Maranatha!

John F. Kennedy, Jr.: America's Departed Prince

July 21, 1999

A small plane piloted by John F. Kennedy, Jr., carrying his wife Carolyn and sister-in-law Lauren Bessette, crashed off the shores of Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts [USA] on the evening of July 16, 1999, killing all aboard. "5 ...Because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets: 6 Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. 7 Then shall the dust return to the Earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God Who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:5-7). Only occasionally does America take such notice of the death of a young man, who was distinguished not so much for what he had personally accomplished, but for whose son he was. "6 I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the Most High. 7 But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes" (Psalm 82:6-7). John's father was tragically murdered in office as the 35th President of the United States on November 22nd 1963. "Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people" (Exodus 22:28).

In Old Testament Israel, the God-like power of life and death was given to secular judges; and thus, the appellation of "gods" (Psalm 82:6) was understood to be theirs-- without any sense of blasphemy. Asaph's authorship of the 82nd Psalm, was a protest against wickedness in the judges of the government of ancient Israel. "1 God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; He judgeth among the gods. 2 How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked?" (Psalm 82:1-2). The close of the 82nd Psalm placed the godhood of Israel's secular judges into perspective, with a statement of the preeminence of the Almighty. "Arise, O God, judge the Earth: for Thou shalt inherit all nations" (82:8).

C. H. Spurgeon's "The Treasury of David" explains the usage of the term "gods" for secular judges: "[Psalm 82:6- 'I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.'] Verse 6. -- 'Ye are gods,' etc. It is of course, to civil governors, especially those entrusted with the administration of justice, that the prophet addresses this stern admonition. He calls them 'the gods' [v. 1], and 'the sons of the Most High' [v. 6]. To the people of Israel this kind of appellation would not seem over bold: for it was applied to judges in

well-known texts of the Law of Moses. Thus, in the code of civil statutes delivered at Sinai, it is said, 'Thou shalt not revile *the gods*, nor curse the ruler of thy people' (Exodus 22:28). Nor is that the only instance of the kind. In two other passages of the same code (Exodus 21:6 ["Then his master shall bring him unto **the judges**; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever"] and Exodus 22:8, 9 ["8 If the thief be not found, then the master of the house shall be brought unto **the judges**, to see whether he have put his hand unto his neighbour's goods. 9 For all manner of trespass, whether it be for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, or for any manner of lost thing, which another challengeth to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before **the judges**; and whom **the judges** shall condemn, he shall pay double unto his neighbour"]), the word which our translators have rendered 'the judges' is in the Hebrew, 'the gods,' or 'God'" (remarks by William Binnie on "Psalm the Eighty-Second" from C. H. Spurgeon's "The Treasury of David").

The mortality of a nation's better known son is sobering, because it reminds us that man is appointed to death. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). Wealth, fame, breeding, or background do not affect the fact that all men are appointed to die. "What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?" (Psalm 89:48). God's Providence ordained the timing and circumstances of the brief flight that killed the three occupants of that small plane. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father" (Matthew 10:29). Panels of experts may theorize over the precipitous descent of Kennedy's plane, and pundits may assert that they would not have chosen to make such a flight; but, in the end, our living or dying is in the LORD's hands. "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23).

All men know, in theory, that they will eventually die; but, *only a wise man lives his life like he must eventually stand before the Judgment Seat of God*. "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21). Whatever the eternal destiny of John F. Kennedy, Jr., his wife, and sister-in-law, it is certain that they would all **now** agree that **the most important thing in life is that a man ought to trust God**, i.e., "But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God **must believe** that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6). The LORD Jesus Christ illustrated the Truth that men should not trust in "uncertain riches" (1Timothy 6:17) by telling the story of the rich man and Lazarus, where the rich man was rewarded with eternal torment for not trusting God. "29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. 30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:29-31).

We have such short memories. In order for any particular event to have much impact, we must act quickly, when the memory is fresh. "Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (James 4:14). The picture of that small son of a fallen president standing at attention, saluting his father's passing casket, *ought to remind us to trust God*. "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17). The best time for Saint or sinner to seek God, is **now**. "Seek ye the LORD while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near" (Isaiah 55:6). Cultivate **now** an active faith in God. "We trust in the Living God, Who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe" (1Timothy 4:10). "Seek ye out of the Book of the LORD, and read" (Isaiah 34:16) for the substance of your faith. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17).

May the memory of the present events cause us to seek God. "And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13).

Why is It So Difficult for a Rich Man to Enter the Kingdom of God?

July 30, 1999

Jesus' response to the rich young man's question, "What good thing shall I do, that I may have Eternal Life?" (Matthew 19:16), was to probe him with the stringent demands of the Moral Law-- not to justify him, but to demonstrate his lack. "If thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments" (19:17). "Which?" asked the young man. Jesus said,

"Thou shalt do no murder,

Thou shalt not commit adultery,

Thou shalt not steal,

Thou shalt not bear false witness,

Honour thy father and thy mother: and,

Thou shalt Love thy neighbour as thyself" (19:18-19).

Everything seemed to be in order, so the young man replied, "All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?" (19:20). Knowing "what was in man" (John 2:25), Jesus offered the rich young man the opportunity to receive Eternal Life. Jesus said unto him, "**If thou wilt be perfect**, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt **have treasure in Heaven**: and come and follow Me" (19:21). Upon hearing that, the young man "went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions" (19:22).

The LORD Jesus then pronounced that a "rich man shall hardly [literally, with difficulty] enter into the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 19:23). In the Gospel of Mark's account of the same story, Jesus proceeded to enlighten His disciples on the reason for that difficulty. "Children, how hard is it for them that **trust in riches** to enter into the Kingdom of God!" (Mark 10:24). So the "trust in riches" or the "love of money" (1Timothy 6:10) is the obstacle for these from entering into Eternal Life. In fact, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (Matthew 19:24). This flabbergasted the disciples. "When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?" (19:25). Demonstrating that the Everlasting God has no prejudice against those with riches to inherit Eternal Life, Jesus said, "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible" (19:26).

The question is raised, "If riches are such an obstacle to entering the Kingdom of God, then why does God bestow those riches on His people?" "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them" (Psalm 62:10). God does bless with riches; and still, there are "not many mighty" (1Corinthians 1:26) in power and wealth, who know the LORD. "The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it" (Proverbs 10:22). The issue of riches for the Saints is a matter of continuing to trust in God, while being allowed the opportunity of greater usefulness and service to the LORD, i.e., "And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto Him of their substance" (Luke 8:3). "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the Living God, Who giveth us richly all things to enjoy" (1Timothy 6:17). In answer to the question, "Why does God bestow those riches on His people?", because He designs to bless-- as he did Abraham, i.e., "And the LORD hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses" (Genesis 24:35)-- and to test-- as He did Solomon, i.e., "Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward Heaven" (Proverbs 23:5).

And finally, "Why is it so difficult for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God?" "And having food and raiment let us be therewith content" (1Timothy 6:8). In spite of all the problems riches produce, the world seeks riches to insulate from the pain that is in the world. "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition" (6:9). The Almighty intended pain to be the means of gaining our attention to draw us to Himself in faith and dependence. "Cursed is the ground **for thy sake**; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life" (Genesis 3:17). Our LORD, in His humanity, demonstrated that pain and suffering has a sanctifying aspect, though He could have had the assistance of "more than twelve legions of angels" (Matthew 26:53) at any time. "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered" (Hebrews 5:8). The True Saints react to pain and suffering by increasing their faith and confidence in God, i.e., "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2Peter 3:18), while the world responds to the same pain and suffering by seeking the insulation of riches. "19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. 20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? 21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:19-21).

Monkeys are trapped with a snare that allows them only enough of a hole to reach into a tethered coconut to grab the bait. Their reflex is a refusal to release the bait, which prevents them from freeing their hand from the confines of the coconut's narrow hole; and thus, they are brought into captivity. "But they that will be rich fall **into temptation and a snare**, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition" (1Timothy 6:9). Men are often no more thoughtful than monkeys. "But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his Salvation" (Deuteronomy 32:15). Oh, if we would only learn to "labour not to be rich" (Proverbs 23:4)!

Instead of responding to our pain and suffering with the reflexive action of seeking the security of riches, we ought to do as the Apostle Paul. "9 And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in [your] weakness. Most gladly therefore will I [Paul] rather glory in my infirmities, that the Power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2Corinthians 12:9-10). We, as True Saints, ought to seek to learn of Christ **through poverty or riches**. "For so an entrance shall be

ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our LORD and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2Peter 1:11).

May the LORD bless you with the "True Riches" (Luke 16:11).

[Please see our articles, "[No More Pain](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/No.More.Pain.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/No.More.Pain.html> -- and "[Exceeding Great and Precious Promises](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Promises/Exceeding.Promises.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Promises/Exceeding.Promises.html> --, for more on the topic of Christian sanctification.]

Y2K, the Millennium Bug, and Christian Preparation

August 1, 1999

Recently, my attention was drawn to a recounting of a CNN June 5th 1997 news item: "A computer glitch at Smith Barney overnight briefly put \$19 million into each of hundreds of thousands of customer accounts, the brokerage said Thursday morning... Smith Barney spokesman Gordon Andrew said customers were not affected in any way. At some point overnight, he said, roughly \$19 million appeared in separate entries for each Smith Barney financial management account. The brokerage has 525,000 such accounts." "The horse is prepared against the day of battle: but safety is of the LORD" (Proverbs 21:31).

The explanation for the monumental glitch, was that the computer programmers at Smith Barney were attempting to make Y2K repairs to their database. Since the Millennium Bug is merely older computer software interpreting the "00" in a date to mean the year 1900 instead of the year 2000, Y2K repairs would require the updated software to display dates in an expanded format, e.g., "1900" and "2000", to avoid inevitable software confusion. The dates in the Smith Barney database were formerly displayed in a six-digit form, where 970627 would represent June 27th 1997. By the addition of 19 million to each of the dates, the programmers would make their software Y2K compliant, i.e., $19,000,000 + 970,627 = 19,970,627$; and thus, the resulting eight-digit form, i.e., 19970627, would squash the Millennium Bug. "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain" (Psalm 127:1).

After successfully testing their software off-line, the computer programmers decided upon a live test of their Y2K ready software. They only made one mistake. The computer program not only added 19 million to each date, but it added 19 million to each of 525,000 account balances. The result was an unintentional-- and momentary-- enriching of each of Smith Barney's clientele by an additional \$19 million-- possibly as much as a \$10 trillion Y2K generated mistake. Of course, the damage was quickly controlled; and, it made a good CNN story. But, what is worse, the untampered-but-faulty-code of computers worldwide or the unintentional errors from attempted Y2K fixes? The municipal government of Los Angeles, California [USA] recently reported that it would not be Y2K compliant-- with tested code (?)-- until December 31st 1999. How many Y2K noncompliant programs need to fail to be considered a calamity to this computer dependent world? And, why is it that the Millennium Bug has so little registered on the consciousness of the man in the streets? Too many issues of daily survival already, too much engaged with seeking pleasure, or just honestly unaware, the noise of the Y2K Train is barreling down the track. It is important for honest Christian people to assess the situation and make appropriate preparation. "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished" (Proverbs 22:3; 27:12).

Early computer programmers were constrained to conserve formerly expensive storage space. Manufacturers embedded code into a countless variety of computer chips to intelligently control most aspects of human existence. Military applications for GPS (satellite based global positioning) dependent navigation and weapons systems, may be destabilized by a failure of even a minor non-Y2K compliant component. Economics from the perspective of an ATM machine user, a grocery store inventory controller, a utility provider, a floor trader at a stock exchange, or an international banker, would all be affected like dominoes by non-Y2K ready programs. Small failures would be sufficient to spoil the networked system. "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes" (Song of Solomon 2:15).

Some in Christendom are opposed to any discussion of Y2K for fear of the great scorn that would be heaped upon the cause of Christ, if Y2K turns out to be a non-event. But, scorners have mocked Christians from the earliest times. "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate Knowledge?" (Proverbs 1:22). Regardless of the issue, the scorners will always mock the True Saints-- even if we are right about Y2K being a calamity. "3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the Last Days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 4 And saying, Where is the Promise of His Coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the Creation" (2Peter 3:3-4). Even if we turned out to be honestly mistaken about Y2K, how does that affect our standing before God? "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the LORD,

and not unto men" (Colossians 3:23). Our responsibility is to the LORD, and then to those who have been entrusted to our care. "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the Faith, and is worse than an infidel" (1Timothy 5:8).

How can we prudently prepare for Y2K? In answer, we must **do all that is consistent with faith in the LORD Jesus Christ**. "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him" (Hebrews 10:38). If faith dictates that we lay aside provisions for ourselves and our families, then it would be wrong to do otherwise. "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). Exactly, what is necessary for Y2K preparedness? Withdrawing cash from the ATMs well before December 31st? Storing bottled water? Canned goods? Staying home? Battery operated radio? Flashlights? "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John 5:17). You probably recall that sense of helplessness and inadequacy when the electricity went out for only a few hours. But, what about a longer or more indefinite period of time? "Have faith in God" (Mark 11:22).

The Promises of God must be the key to our preparation. "3 According as His Divine Power hath given unto us **all things that pertain unto life and Godliness**, through the Knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4 Whereby are given unto us Exceeding Great And Precious Promises: that by These ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2Peter 1:3-4). If we do not presently walk by faith-- "For we [ought to] walk by faith, not by sight" (2Corinthians 5:7)-- then we are walking in the flesh. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16). Renewing our First Love (Revelation 2:4), we ought to begin afresh to **lean in faith upon the character and Promises of the Living God**. "O Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come" (Psalm 65:2). Whatever is missing from our Y2K preparation, our God can supply. "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

And, **if** we can hear it-- "According to your faith be it unto you" (Matthew 9:29)-- our God may even supply a Pre-Tribulational Rapture prior to any Y2K calamity. "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36).

Maranatha!

[Please see our article, "[Exceeding Great and Precious Promises](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/> --, and the "[Promises](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/WStS.Promises.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/WStS.Promises.html> -- section of our website for more to prepare your faith. Also, the "[Tribulation Survival Guide](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Tribulation.Survival.Guide.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Tribulation.Survival.Guide.html> --, is foundational.]

Have You Heard a Still Small Voice?

August 14, 1999

When Elijah confronted the 450 prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, he boldly stood alone to challenge the nation of Israel to return to the Living God. "And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him" (1Kings 18:21). Agreeing with the assembled people that the God "that answereth by fire" (18:24) to kindle the sacrifice of Baal's prophets or of Elijah's, "let him be God" (18:24). The LORD prevented Satan from kindling a fire under the 450 prophets' sacrifice, while Elijah's water drenched offering was magnificently consumed "that this people may know that Thou art the LORD God, and that Thou hast turned their heart back again" (18:37). The people responded in awe, "The LORD, He is the God; the LORD, He is the God" (1Kings 18:39). Elijah then directed the people to kill the prophets of Baal. "Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there" (18:40).

If the story ends there, Elijah has just succeeded in turning the people of Israel back to the Living God from the worship of Baal. But, Elijah receives a threat from the wicked Queen Jezebel, that she would have him killed "by to morrow about this time" (1Kings 19:2). Elijah succumbs to fear and flees for his life into the wilderness. Certainly, the LORD is not pleased with Elijah's fear, but He is gentle in restoring him to faith. The Angel of the LORD ministers to Elijah's physical needs, i.e., "Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee" (19:7). Then, the LORD interrogates Elijah. "What doest thou here, Elijah?" (19:9). Arguing that he has been jealous for the LORD, Elijah insists, "I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away" (19:10). The LORD responds with a strong wind, an earthquake, and a fire (19:11-12) to show His Power, but He chooses to speak through "a Still Small Voice" (19:12). Though Elijah repeats his defense, the LORD commissions Elijah to anoint a new king of Syria, a new king of Israel, and Elisha-- to be his replacement (19:15-16). Then the LORD-- the Still Small Voice (19:12)-- proceeds to take away the last vestige of Elijah's fear of being all alone. "Yet I have left Me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every

mouth which hath not kissed him" (19:18).

Later in Israel's history, the prophet Isaiah also dealt with the waywardness of the nation. "Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of Me" (Isaiah 30:1). After threatening the nation, the LORD woos them with the graciousness that He offers to bestow upon them. "And therefore will the LORD wait, that He may be gracious unto you, and therefore will He be exalted, that He may have mercy upon you: for the LORD is a God of Judgment: blessed are all they that wait for Him" (30:18). Then, the LORD alludes to the promised Spirit of the New Covenant. "And thine ears shall hear a Word behind thee, saying, This is The Way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left" (30:21). Like Elijah's Still Small Voice (1Kings 19:12), Isaiah's "Word behind thee" (Isaiah 30:21) is the Voice of God to His people.

Today, we have multitudes of people that claim to be hearing the Voice of God. And, to many, the LORD repeats that they have heard a word, "but not of Me" (Isaiah 30:1). Recently, I encountered an older gentleman, a retired military officer, who explained the concept of his Christianity with expletives. Though I pointed out to him that the New Testament was clear that our speech was not to be profane, i.e., "But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by Heaven, neither by the Earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation" (James 5:12), he proceeded unscathed to elaborate a prophetic scheme that would culminate in the return of Jesus Christ in 2003 to 2005 AD. Astonished that this seemingly irreligious man would have that much of an opinion about prophecy, I enquired how he arrived at this conclusion. "And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?" (Isaiah 8:19). He then informed me that he heard a voice speaking to him in the morning hours, and that he felt himself transported through time and space at immense speeds. I, then, referred him to the Scripture that guards us from communing with demons. "To the Law and to the Testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them" (8:20). Even the demons are aware that the time is short.

It is no mystery that the LORD Jesus Christ is the Living Word that "was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). He promised and gave His people the Holy Spirit of the New Covenant. "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever" (14:16). That Holy Spirit is the Divine Means to instruct the True Saints of the coming events of prophecy. "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all Truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come" (16:13). By simply comparing the known Word of God to whatever anyone professes to teach us, we may determine the validity of any teaching. "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with Spiritual" (1Corinthians 2:13). Whenever any proposed teaching disagrees with the known Scriptures, we must reject the teaching. "The Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). And, when Scripture *seems* to contradict Itself, then we must lean upon the Spirit to show us the resolution. "41 While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, 42 Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose Son is He? They say unto Him, The Son of David. 43 He saith unto them, How then doth David in Spirit call Him LORD, saying, 44 The LORD said unto My LORD, Sit thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool? 45 If David then call Him LORD, how is He His Son?" (Matthew 22:41-45).

The True Saints should invite the Spirit of God to introduce thoughts and ideas about the interpretation of Scripture, or *any matter*. "Teach me to do Thy will; for Thou art my God: Thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness" (Psalm 143:10). But, we must "try the spirits whether they are of God" (1John 4:1), by prayerful consideration of any suggestion in Light of the Infallible Word of God. "With my whole heart have I sought Thee: O let me not wander from Thy Commandments" (Psalm 119:10).

Maranatha!

There Shall Be Earthquakes

August 19, 1999

On August 18th 1999, the Associated Press reported on the recent earthquake near Istanbul, Turkey: "Terrified earthquake survivors sought the safety of open ground Tuesday as the enormity of Turkey's Monday night tragedy became clear: more than 2,000 people killed, thousands injured and 10,000 more missing, and incalculable damage after an overwhelming show of nature's power." This very event was predicted by the LORD Jesus Christ, more than 1,900 years ago. "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers [or, various] places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these are the beginnings of sorrows" (Mark 13:8). The U.S. National Earthquake Information Center reported that Turkey's earthquake was "one of the most powerful recorded in the 20th century", having been initially reported by U.S. scientists with a magnitude of 7.8 on the

Richter scale. The San Francisco earthquake of 1906 was a 7.9 temblor. "I will shake the heavens, and the Earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and The Desire of All Nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of Hosts" (Haggai 2:6-7).

Earthquakes have the reputation of causing the greatest amount of death and destruction in the least amount of time, i.e., landslides, mudslides, tsunamis, and collapsing man-made structures. "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Romans 8:22). An earthquake is "any abrupt disturbance within the Earth that is tectonic or volcanic in origin and that results in the generation of elastic waves. The passage of such seismic waves through the Earth often causes violent shaking at its surface" (from Britannica CD 99). "He looketh on the Earth, and it trembleth: He toucheth the hills, and they smoke" (Psalm 104:32). Scientists postulate that earthquakes are caused by plate tectonics, where the Earth's surface is composed of large, rigid plates that move relative to one another, often interacting violently at their boundaries. "Then the Earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, **because He was wroth**" (Psalm 18:7). Seismographs measure the oscillation of the ground using the Richter scale, where each increase in magnitude of one unit represents a 10-fold increase in earthquake size. "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31). An earthquake of magnitude 8 is 10,000 times as large as one of magnitude 4. But, "I will shake the heavens, and the Earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of Hosts, and in the day of His fierce anger" (Isaiah 13:13).

The following was written in my "[Commentary on the Book of Revelation](#)" --

<http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/The.Holy.Bible/Commentary.Revelations.1.html> --, concerning the Church of Philadelphia. That church was located in Asia Minor, which is modern day Turkey, in the region affected by Turkey's August 16th 1999 earthquake, whose epicenter was Golcuk (pronounced GULjik):

Revelation 3:7- "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;"

The Philadelphia of the Revelation, the city of brotherly love, is now a small village known as Alasehir. It is situated in modern Turkey, about 28 miles southeast of Sardis and 75 miles from the Aegean Sea coast. Numerous pagan temples dotted the skyline of the ancient city, with their columns dedicated to noteworthy citizens. An earthquake that devastated Sardis in 17 AD did the same to Philadelphia. During the ensuing years, Philadelphia was plagued with recurring quakes.

Revelation 3:12- "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of Heaven from My God: and I will write upon him My New Name."

Remembering the earthquakes of ancient Philadelphia, you can easily imagine the frightened citizens of Philadelphia scurrying out of the temples, whose pillars were inscribed with their names, with each after shock. By comparison, our LORD "will write upon" the esteemed inhabitants of the New Jerusalem, His "New Name"-- signifying His ownership, for we "are bought with a price" (1Corinthians 6:20), and signifying a New Chapter in our lives, for "He will dwell with" us forever (Revelation 21:3). And, the dwellers of New Jerusalem "shall go no more out". This is perfect tranquility. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee" (Isaiah 26:3).

While seismologists and geologists grapple with the scientific mechanics of earthquakes, we ought to consider the spiritual reasons for why God shakes the Earth. **God uses earthquakes to execute His Judgments.** "5 The mountains quake at Him, and the hills melt, and the Earth is burned at His presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. 6 Who can stand before His indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of His anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by Him. 7 The LORD is good, a Strong Hold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him. 8 But with an overrunning flood He will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue His enemies" (Nahum 1:5-8). The LORD of All the Earth (Joshua 3:13) uses all the power of His created planet to accomplish His purpose of Judgment. "19 The Earth is utterly broken down, the Earth is clean dissolved, the Earth is moved exceedingly. 20 The Earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again" (Isaiah 24:19-20).

How man responds to God's Judgments demonstrates his heart before God. The True Saints rejoice in God's Judgments. "It is joy to the just to do Judgment: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity" (Proverbs 21:15). The impenitent of Noah's day were irretrievably lost to any sense of repentance or appreciation of God's Judgments. "5 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... 7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the Earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth Me that I have made them" (Genesis 6:5, 7). But, some may actually pause to consider their ways, and turn to the Salvation that is in the LORD Jesus Christ. "Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God" (Matthew 27:54).

Maranatha!

Charles G. Finney on Christian Perfection

August 25, 1999

Let me share with you the yearnings of a great and good man, who like the Apostle Paul, travailed in birth until Christ was formed in his hearers (Galatians 4:19). Charles G. Finney (1792-1875) was an American lawyer who was converted to Christ at the age of 29. He preached in revivals throughout his life and spent many years as a teacher at Oberlin College. His early evangelistic messages can still be read from his book *Revival Lectures*. An account of his life is recorded in *Charles G. Finney: An Autobiography*; however, it lacks the last element, i.e., *Finney's Systematic Theology*, of how this man has been used of God to touch other generations with benefits without their "knowing the source whence they have sprung" (*Charles G. Finney: An Autobiography*, p.477).

The following have been excerpted from *Finney's Systematic Theology* (originally published in 1846).

"That this state [entire sanctification or Christian perfection] may be attained in this life, I argue from the fact, that provision is made against all the occasions of sin. Men sin only when they are tempted, either by the world, the flesh, or the devil. And it is expressly asserted, that, in every temptation, provision is made for our escape. Certainly, if it is possible for us to escape without sin, under every temptation, then a state of entire and permanent sanctification is attainable.

"Full provision is made for overcoming the three great enemies of our souls, the world, the flesh, and the devil.

- (1.) The world-- 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith' [1John 5:4]. 'Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Christ' [1John 5:5].
- (2.) The flesh-- 'If ye walk in the Spirit, ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh' [Galatians 5:16].
- (3.) Satan-- 'The shield of faith shall quench all the fiery darts of the wicked' [Ephesians 6:16]. And, 'God shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly' [Romans 16:20]." [p. 352]

"A denial of this doctrine has the natural tendency to beget the very apathy witnessed in the Church. Professors of religion [i.e., professing Christians] go on in sin, without much conviction of its wickedness. Sin unblushingly stalks abroad even in the church of God, and does not fill Christians with horror, because they expect its existence as a thing of course. Tell a young convert that he must expect to backslide, and he will do so of course, and with comparatively little remorse, because he looks upon it as a kind of necessity. And being led to expect it, you find him, in a few months after his conversion, away from God, and not at all horrified with his state. Just so, inculcate the idea among Christians, that they are not expected to abandon all sin, and they will of course go on in sin with comparative indifference. Reprove them for their sin, and they will say, '*O, we are imperfect creatures; we do not pretend to be perfect, nor do we expect we ever shall be in this world.*' Many such answers as these will show you the God-dishonoring, soul-ruining tendency of a denial of this doctrine.

"A denial of this doctrine [entire sanctification or Christian perfection] prepares the minds of ministers to temporize, and wink at great iniquity in their churches. Feeling as they certainly must, if they disbelieve this doctrine, that a great amount of sin in all believers is to be expected as a thing of course their whole preaching, and spirit, and demeanor, will be such as to beget a great degree of apathy among Christians, in regard to their abominable sins." [p.354]

"Total abstinence from sin must be every man's motto, or sin will certainly sweep him away as with a flood." [p.358]

"The great and fundamental sin, which is at the foundation of all other sin, is unbelief. The first thing is, to give up that-- to believe the Word of God. There is no breaking off from one sin without this. 'Whatsoever is not of faith is sin' [Romans 14:23]. 'Without faith it is impossible to please God' [Hebrews 11:6]. Thus we see, that the backslider and convicted sinner, when agonizing to overcome sin, will almost always betake themselves to works of law to obtain faith. They will fast, and pray, and read, and struggle, and outwardly reform, and thus endeavor to obtain grace. Now all this is vain and wrong. Do you ask, '*Shall we not fast, and pray, and read, and struggle? Shall we do nothing but sit down in antinomian security and inaction?*' I answer, you must do all that God commands you to do; but begin where He tells you to begin, and do it in the manner in which He commands you to do it; that is, in the exercise of

that faith that works by love [Galatians 5:6]. Purify your hearts by faith [James 4:8]. Believe on the Son of God [1John 3:23]. And say not in your heart, 'Who shall ascend into heaven, that is to bring Christ down from above; or who shall descend into the deep, that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead. But what saith it? The Word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that is, the Word of faith which we preach' [Romans 10:6-8]. Now these facts show, that even under the Gospel, almost all professors of religion [professing Christians], while they reject the Jewish notion of justification by works of law, have after all adopted a ruinous substitute for it, and suppose, that in some way they are to obtain grace by their works." [p.373]

"It is Christ, in the exercise of His different offices, and appropriated in His different relations to the wants of the soul, by faith, Who secures our sanctification. This He does by Divine discoveries to the soul of His Divine perfections and fulness. The condition of these discoveries is faith and obedience. He says, John xiv. 21-23: 'He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him. Judas saith unto Him, (not Iscariot,) LORD, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My Words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him.'" [p.376]

"I have often feared, that many professed Christians knew Christ only after the flesh; that is, they have no other knowledge of Christ than what they obtain by reading and hearing about Him, without any special revelation of Him to the inward being by the Holy Spirit. I do not wonder, that such professors [professing Christians] and ministers should be totally in the dark, upon the subject of entire sanctification [or, Christian perfection] in this life. They regard sanctification as brought about by the formation of holy habits, instead of from the revelation of Christ to the soul in all His fulness and relations, and the soul's renunciation of self and appropriation of Christ in these relations." [pp.380-381]

"When we sin, it is because of our ignorance of Christ. That is, whenever temptation overcomes us, it is because we do not know and avail ourselves of the relation of Christ that would meet our necessities." [p.382]

"It has been to my mind a painful and serious question, what I ought to think of the spiritual state of those who know so little of the blessed Jesus. That none of them have been converted, I dare not say. And yet, that they have been converted, I am afraid to say. I would not for the world 'quench the smoking flax, or break the bruised reed', [Matthew 12:20] or say anything to stumble, or weaken the feeblest lamb of Christ; and yet my heart is sore pained, my soul is sick; my bowels of compassion yearn over the church of the blessed God. O, the dear church of Christ! What does she in her present state know of the Gospel- rest, of that 'great and perfect peace' [Isaiah 26:3] which they have whose minds are stayed on God?" [p.413]

Maranatha!

Read More:

[An Urgent Call to Christian Perfection](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Exposition.Perfection.html) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Exposition.Perfection.html> --

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The New Millennium

September 13, 1999

As the last months, weeks, and days of 1999 slip away, many are looking forward to a New Millennium. But, it may come as a surprise that the next Millennium will not begin until January 1st **2001**-- at least, according to the World Almanac. "A century consists of 100 consecutive calendar years. The 1st century AD consists of the years 1 through 100. The 20th century consists of the years 1901 through 2000 and will end Dec. 31, 2000. The 21st century will begin Jan. 1, 2001" ("The World Almanac and Book of Facts 1995", p. 288). "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the Heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:1). But, to the popular understanding, when the last moment of 1999 expires on December 31st and the New Year is ushered in, that will be the New Millennium. "A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace" (3:8).

And, why should there be such anticipation about a mere date? Since Dionysius Exiguus' 525 AD invention of the usage of the BC (before Christ) and AD (*anno Domini*, "in the year of the LORD") chronological distinction of dates, this will be only the second time the world has marked a millennium. "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the LORD as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2Peter 3:8). The question remains whether the anticipators of the New Millennium will be rewarded with:

- (1) a new era of peace, i.e., "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them" (Isaiah 11:6),
- (2) an apocalyptic calamity, i.e., "Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about" (Joel 3:12), or
- (3) a non-event, i.e., "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9).

The ancient Jews looked forward to:

- (1) a sudden, dramatic, and cataclysmic intervention of God into human history, i.e., "1 Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me: and the LORD, Whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant, Whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the LORD of Hosts. 2 But who may abide the Day of His Coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap" (Malachi 3:1-2),
- (2) the judgment of mankind, i.e., "He cometh to judge the Earth: He shall judge the world with Righteousness, and the people with His Truth" (Psalm 96:13), and
- (3) the rule of God in a New Heaven and New Earth, i.e., "22 For as the New Heavens and the New Earth, which I will make, shall remain before Me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. 23 And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the LORD" (Isaiah 66:22-23).

The word "millennium" does not occur in the King James Version of the Bible. But, the phrase "thousand years" is employed in reference to that period of time when, in prophetic retrospect, Resurrected Saints "reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Revelation 20:4), a half a dozen times in as many verses in the Book of Revelation (20:2-7). However, the "chiliastic" (Greek, *chilioi* meaning thousand) hopes of Christendom for the thousand year, earthly reign of the LORD Jesus Christ are initially founded in the Old Testament Scriptures. "6 For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of His government and peace **there shall be no end**, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice **from henceforth even for ever**. The zeal of the LORD of Hosts will perform this" (Isaiah 9:6-7).

The LORD God promised David that He would establish David's house, kingdom, and throne forever. "12 And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom... 16 And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever" (2Samuel 7:12,16). Just how the LORD would accomplish this when Israel, in the future, would be captive in Babylon or when Israel would be under the iron fist of the *Pax Romana* (Latin, peace of Rome), may have been temporarily unclear; but, as with all Promises from God, it must be received by faith. "The just shall live by his faith" (Habakkuk 2:4). The LORD Jesus confessed both His Divinity and Humanity when He demonstrated that the Christ or the "Son of David" was identified as greater and superior to David (Psalm 110:1). "If David then call Him LORD, how is He his [David's] son?" (Matthew 22:45).

The significance of the LORD Jesus Christ returning at the height of the Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 16:16), i.e., "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the Earth shall wail because of Him" (1:7), at the close of a seven year Tribulation Week (Daniel 9:24-27), to "judge and make war" (Revelation 19:11), and then to "reign" for a "thousand years" (20:6), is that the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah or Christ, i.e., "What think ye of Christ? whose Son is He? They say unto Him, The Son of David" (Matthew 22:42), will be literally fulfilled in the Millennial Reign of the LORD Jesus Christ-- shortly. "Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this Book" (Revelation 22:7).

Two things of significance will occur during the Millennial Reign of the LORD Jesus Christ: (1) Jesus Christ, "Who is the Blessed and Only Potentate, the KING of kings, and LORD of lords" (1Timothy 6:15), will be personally, bodily present on Earth to rule for a "thousand years" (Revelation 20:6), and (2) Satan, the "tempter" (Matthew 4:3) will **not** be present, i.e., "And [an angel] laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years" (Revelation 20:2). If men sin when they are tempted of the devil, i.e., "And [the serpent] said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (Genesis 3:1), then the Millennium will be a holiday from this temptation to sin. And, if the LORD Jesus Christ embodies

all that His people need to live Godly apart from sin and sinning, i.e., "His Divine Power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and Godliness, through the knowledge of [Jesus Christ] that hath called us to glory and virtue" (2Peter 1:3), then the Millennium will be a delightful time of living with the Saviour apart from sin.

Whenever the "fulness of the time" (Galatians 4:4) actually comes for the Son of Man (Revelation 14:14) to return to finish the harvest of the Earth, and to set up His Millennial Kingdom, all of the Godly and the inanimate creation will sigh with gratitude and relief. "22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Romans 8:22-23). This will be that prophesied time of peace that **only** the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6) will bring in.

"Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, LORD Jesus" (Revelation 22:20).

Why Does the Wind Blow?

October 17, 1999

"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8).

I read of an account of a Creationist who lectured interested students from typically secular colleges. He attempted to give these students the understanding that the Biblical account of Special Creation as a supernatural act of God, occurred just as it is recorded in the Book of Genesis-- in six literal days. "And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made" (Genesis 2:2). This Creationist found that the students were persuaded that the scientific facts inescapably supported the position of Evolution-- or, "Evil-lution", as a respected British commentator enunciated-- not realizing that even in science, assumptions are used for interpreting data.

The Creationist lecturer, with a Ph. D. in physical chemistry, would then attempt to illustrate the point that the same scientific data can be interpreted with different assumptions; thus, not demanding the explanation of Evolution, and opening the way for Biblical Creation. "For in six days [Hebrew, yom-- 24 hour period] the LORD made heaven and Earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it" (Exodus 20:11). He illustrated his point by asking the question, "What is the scientific reason that the wind blows?" Invariably, someone would raise their hand and answer: Because air pressure is higher at one point on the planet than another point, the movement of air from the high pressure to the low pressure point accounts for the wind blowing. The Creationist would respond in mock surprise, "That's wrong! Do you know what makes the wind blow? It's the leaves wiggling on the trees."

The class would respond with an incredulous look that said, "Surely you don't expect us to believe that!" Without betraying a sign of emotion, he would continue, "I can tell by your reaction that you don't believe me. You don't believe that leaves wiggling on trees make the wind blow, but you are wrong. I have facts to back up my side. Have you ever seen the wind blow without leaves wiggling on the trees?" Though initially caught by surprise that the same data could be interpreted with different assumptions, some thoughtful soul would respond to attempt to prove the Creationist wrong. "In the winter, there aren't any leaves on the trees, and the wind still blows." Without missing a beat, the Creationist would respond, "That's exactly right. In winter there aren't any leaves on the trees and the wind still blows. I accept that fact. But it's winter here. Somewhere on Earth it's summer and trees there have leaves on them. Thus, where the wind got started, there were trees with leaves wiggling."

In a burst of inspiration, the Creationist would press his point even further. "You people only believe this old idea about high and low air pressure causing wind because you don't know modern science. Did you know that that our most recent investigations in science prove that I'm right? When our astronauts landed on the moon, they found no wind there. Do you know why?" And, the students would groan out in chorus, "There are no trees on the moon!"

Though scientific data can be interpreted with either the assumptions of Creationism or Evolution, the Holy Spirit can only prove His position to the one who has a truly willing heart. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself" (John 7:17).

"A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not: but knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth" (Proverbs 14:6).

"Through **faith** we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Hebrews 11:3).

The Power of Preservation

October 21, 1999

In modern food processing, any number of chemical additives, e.g., calcium propionate, sorbic acid, and BHT (butylated hydroxytoluene), are used to prevent or retard food spoilage. Traditionally, salt (sodium chloride) has been used both to flavor and preserve food; but, the Almighty wisely uses His Saints as preservatives for the planet. "Ye are the Salt of the Earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth **good for nothing**, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men" (Matthew 5:13). When margarine oxidizes, it becomes rancid, while rust is the oxidation of metals. The LORD Jesus, in warning about rust, counseled us to preserve or treasure up our riches in Heaven, i.e., to be "rich in faith" (James 2:5), "rich in good works" (1Timothy 6:18), and "rich toward God" (Luke 12:21). "19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon Earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: 21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:19-21).

Though the Saints are Jehovah's preservative for the world, the LORD Jesus is the Preserver of His Saints. "And the LORD shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly Kingdom: to Whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (2Timothy 4:18). In both the Old and New Testaments, the LORD has covenanted to preserve His Saints. "7 The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: He shall preserve thy soul. 8 The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore" (Psalm 121:7-8). Those most in need of deliverance, will best appreciate Heaven Sent Preservation. "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a Rock, and established my goings" (40:2). It is a sanctifying thought that the LORD preserves us, i.e., "the LORD preserveth the Faithful" (Psalm 31:23), "the LORD preserveth all them that love Him" (145:20), and "[He] preserveth the way of His Saints" (Proverbs 2:8).

Not surprisingly, the Pre-Tribulation Rapture will demonstrate that the Power of Preservation for this planet has resided in large measure in the Godly influence of Spirit Indwelt Saints. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1Corinthians 3:16). Since the purpose of the upcoming Tribulation Week is judgment of sin in the Professed Church, judgment of sin in the world, and judgment of sin in Unbelieving Israel, i.e., "even so, LORD God Almighty, true and righteous are Thy Judgments" (Revelation 16:7), the Judge of All the Earth will manifest especial attention to how He preserves and delivers the Faithful. Before the Tribulation Week begins, the LORD Jesus delivers "from The Hour of Temptation" (3:10) those who are "accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass" (Luke 21:36) because they are "those servants, whom the LORD when He cometh shall find watching" (12:37). Contrary to the common belief that the Scriptural Salvation of "being justified by faith" (Romans 5:1) allows for our calling ourselves "children of God" (8:16), even when "we **continue** in sin" (6:1); only those that "walk worthy" (Ephesians 4:1; Colossians 1:10; 1Thessalonians 2:12) of Christ, have the **privilege** of calling themselves Christians. "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His Commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is **not** in Him" (1John 2:4). And, this is proper, because we understand that "it is **God** which worketh in [us] both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live **by the faith of the Son of God**, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

It is a great mistake to underestimate how the Almighty uses His Spirit Indwelt Saints as the "Salt of the Earth" (Matthew 5:13). *It goes well with the world because of the presence of the Saints.* "And Laban said unto [Jacob], I pray thee, if I have found favour in thine eyes, tarry: for I have learned by experience that the LORD hath blessed me **for thy sake**" (Genesis 30:27). God was even willing to hold off the Judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah, if there were enough Righteous therein. "25 That be far from Thee to do after this manner, to slay the Righteous with the Wicked: and that the Righteous should be as the Wicked, that be far from Thee: Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right? 26 And the LORD said, If I find in Sodom fifty Righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place **for their sakes**" (Genesis 18:25-26). In the time of Jeremiah the prophet, the "Ever Merciful" (Psalm 37:26) God was willing to spare Jerusalem from its well deserved punishment, if only one Right Doer could have been found. "Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth Judgment, that seeketh the Truth; and I will pardon it" (Jeremiah 5:1).

Ungodly men flatter themselves that their prosperity and preservation come from their own hand. "But God said unto him, Thou fool,

this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" (Luke 12:20). God preserves secular governments because of the intercession of the Saints. "[Pray] for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all Godliness and honesty" (1Timothy 2:2). As with Abraham, "who is the father of us all" (Romans 4:16), so with us, which are of the "faith of Abraham" (4:16), the "Promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith" (4:13). But, particularly, "all the nations of the Earth shall be blessed in him" (Genesis 18:18) and through us. Thus, the Living God has revealed that *we who also receive the Abrahamic Covenant of Faith, are responsible for the world being blessed by God.* "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the Earth be blessed" (12:3).

As with sin, it takes only a small number or amount to affect the whole, i.e., "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Galatians 5:9), so it is with righteousness. The Wisdom of God does not need to Pre-Tribulationally Rapture enormous numbers of people to make the world feel the effect of the Holy Spirit's restraining influence "taken out of the way" (2Thessalonians 2:7), when the Spirit Indwelt Saints are "caught up to the Third Heaven" (2Corinthians 12:2). The world will then know the terror, agony, and judgment of what it is to be without the Power of Preservation, which they had been benefited by the former presence of the Saints of God. "10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the Love of the Truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the Truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2Thessalonians 2:10-12).

And, for all those that "love His appearing" (2Timothy 4:8), remember these Promises for Preservation at the Pre-Tribulation Rapture. "For the LORD loveth Judgment, and forsaketh not His Saints; they are preserved for ever" (Psalm 37:28). "Ye that love the LORD, hate evil: He preserveth the souls of His Saints; He delivereth them out of the hand of the Wicked" (Psalm 97:10).

Maranatha!

Read More:

[An Urgent Call to Christian Perfection](http://WhatSaihtTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Exposition.Perfection.html) -- <http://WhatSaihtTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Exposition.Perfection.html> --

An Exposition of the Doctrine of Christian Perfection

by Tom Stewart

Call it perfection. Call it sanctification. Call it holiness.

The issue isn't what you call it. What's important is that you do it.

[Charles G. Finney on Christian Perfection](#)

From the Editor's Desktop / August 25, 1999

Gideon and the Pre-Tribulation Rapture

October 25, 1999

In the early days of Israel's history, the people often rebelled against the LORD and were subsequently punished with subjugation to foreign powers. "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years" (Judges 6:1). Just as the LORD delivered Israel "out of the hand of the Egyptians" (6:9), He was again quite willing to deliver them again, if they would only return to obedience. Thus, Gideon was chosen as Israel's fifth judge to deliver Israel from its oppressors. "12 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour... 14 And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?" (6:12,14).

After Gideon was thoroughly convinced of his calling, Gideon fielded a small army of 32,000 against the Midianites. "And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude" (Judges 7:12). The LORD God desired that the people would not confuse their deliverance as simply an act of their own hands, so He reduced the size of Gideon's army to 10,000 (7:3), and then to 300 (7:7). "And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against Me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me" (7:2).

Today, with the blood of Jesus shed to give us the New Covenant's reconciliation, and especially the Holy Spirit of Promise

(Ephesians 1:13)-- "I will put My Spirit within you, and **cause you to walk** in My Statutes, and ye shall keep My Judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:27)-- our obedience is even more assured, and our disobedience all the more inexcusable. "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Galatians 3:14). Not only did the Gospel give us the assurance of the "forgiveness of sins" (Ephesians 1:7) past, but the prophecies give us the confidence of "things to come" (John 16:13). Our trust in being kept from the "hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the Earth" (Revelation 3:10), is opportuned by the soon Judgment of this world. "Now is the Judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world [Satan] be cast out" (John 12:31). Our deliverance is founded upon the New Covenant's Spirit working in us, causing us to walk worthy of the promise of a Pre-Tribulational Rapture deliverance. "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21:36).

As in the days of Gideon, the LORD is saying that the "people that are with thee are too many" (Judges 7:2), because the Professed Church has been given the impression that all that call Jesus Lord will be Pre-Tribulationally Raptured. "And why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). The removal of the Restraining Influence occurs when the Spirit Indwelt Saints are Raptured. "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only He who now letteth [restrains sin and Satan] will let [continue to restrain], until He be taken out of the way [suddenly through the Pre-Tribulational Rapture]" (2Thessalonians 2:7). The LORD desires to make His point and His impact upon the Earth by the removal of only those who walk in obedience, i.e., "we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him" (Acts 5:32). Salvation has always been for only those who obey Him. "And being made perfect, [Jesus] became the Author of Eternal Salvation unto all them that obey Him" (Hebrews 5:9). For this reason, "many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14) for the Pre-Tribulational Rapture.

If the Professed Body of Christ had learned the blessedness of the New Covenant's Spirit, the "obedience of faith" (Romans 16:26) would not have been stumbled over, and a "root of bitterness" (Hebrews 12:15) would not have sprung up, defiling many. "4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the Heavenly Gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5 And have tasted the Good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance [i.e., repentance is impossible while presently continuing in their sinning]; seeing they crucify [literally, are crucifying] to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put [literally, are putting] Him to an open shame" (Hebrews 6:4-6). Many-- calling themselves Christians-- who truly "received not the love of the Truth" (2Thessalonians 2:10), will be sent "strong delusion, that they should believe a lie" (2:11), after the Pre-Tribulational Rapture.

"1 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. 2 For if the Word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; 3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so Great Salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the LORD, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him" (Hebrews 2:1-3).

The Betrayal of Martin Luther

October 30, 1999

Martin Luther, a symbol of the historic remonstrance against Rome's franchise on Eternal Salvation, escaped betrayal and death after Babylon the Great (the Church of Rome) interdicted him for his stubborn refusal to recant of his "heretical" opinions; however, he will be again betrayed on Halloween 1999-- and, this time officially by Lutherans. "But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" (Luke 22:48). Sunday, October 31st 1999 coincides with the modern celebration of Halloween, which historically is the pagan celebration of the *Witches' Sabbath* on All Hallows Eve. "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness" (Isaiah 5:20). This inauspicious time was also preceded 70 years earlier by the devastation of the Stock Market on what is now remembered as Black Friday or the Crash of '29 (October 29th 1929). "He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him" (Proverbs 28:22). And, 400 some years earlier, on October 31st 1517, Martin Luther posted his *95 Theses*, objecting to the papal sale of indulgences, i.e., the right to sin without punishment, on the church door in Wittenburg. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our LORD Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1).

On October 31st 1999 in Augsburg, Germany, representatives of the 58 million members of the Lutheran World Federation will sign a *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* with papal emissaries of the 1.4 billion strong Roman Catholic Church, officially ending the doctrinal separation between Lutherans and the Church of Rome over the "faith vs. works" controversy concerning Eternal Salvation. "It is God that justifieth" (Romans 8:33). The Declaration's purpose is to demonstrate ecumenical unity in the essential area

of the Doctrine of Justification, between Catholicism's traditional opponent, the Lutheran Church, and the Church of Rome; as they stated: "Thus it becomes clear that the mutual condemnations of former times do not apply to the Roman Catholic and Lutheran doctrines of justification as they are presented in the joint declaration." "But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in" (Matthew 23:13).

Why all this concern over a seemingly innocuous attempt to bring unity to Professed Christianity? "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the LORD deceitfully" (Jeremiah 48:10). As the Roman Pontiff, John Paul II, vies for the headship of the world's religions, e.g., the United Religions Initiative, the soon possibility of the False Prophet or beast "out of the Earth" (Revelation 13:11) arising to direct the worship of the Antichrist, is imminent. Consequently, Rome must find ecumenical union with its traditional foes, i.e., Lutherans, to bring about this goal. Those who do not "discern the signs of the times" (Matthew 16:3) and "are at ease in Zion" (Amos 6:1), cannot fully appreciate that this ecumenical *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* represents the final stage(s) of preparation before the Antichrist will unify the world through political, economic, and military treaties. "And [Antichrist] shall confirm the covenant with many for one week [the Tribulation Week]" (Daniel 9:27). Only shortly thereafter, will Antichrist reveal his real intention of forcing the world to worship him as God. "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (2Thessalonians 2:4).

Ostensibly, the statements made in the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* complement the salvation by faith of the traditional Lutherans with that of the salvation by works of Rome. "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works" (James 2:18). However, both Lutherans and Catholics seem to miss the underlying point that though faith saves, i.e., "8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9), and faith is always accompanied by works, when given the opportunity, i.e., "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" (James 2:20), **it is Jesus-- and, Jesus only-- that saves!** "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy **He saved us**, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5).

The question is not so much if faith or works are necessary for Eternal Salvation, but **who** saves us from our sins? "Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy" (Micah 7:18). Both the Old and New Testaments agree that God alone saves. "Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside Me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside Me" (Isaiah 45:21). And, Jesus is the prophesied "Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6), that came nearly 2,000 years ago to redeem mankind by His sacrificial death on the Cross. "And without controversy great is the Mystery of Godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1 Timothy 3:16). And, if Martin Luther were yet alive today, he, too, would be fervently awaiting the soon appearing of the LORD Jesus Christ to judge the world; and, he would not be making appeasements with Babylon the Great (Revelation 17:5). "Looking for that Blessed Hope, and the Glorious Appearing of the Great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13). Though Luther is betrayed by this *Joint Declaration*, it is the LORD Jesus Christ Who is the truly Offended Party. "Seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame" (Hebrews 6:6).

Brethren, be watchful! "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our LORD Jesus Christ unto Eternal Life" (Jude 21).

[Please see our "[Babylon the Great](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/WStS.Timeline.html#Babylon)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/WStS.Timeline.html#Babylon> -- series of articles to better understand the historical circumstances of the tragedy of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*. Also, our "[Topical Links On Sound Doctrine](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Topical.Links.On.Doctrine.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Topical.Links.On.Doctrine.html> -- series of articles may aid your understanding of the "wonderful works of God" (Acts 2:11).]

The Vicious Cycle of Prosperity

November 9, 1999

Never did the Almighty intend His prospering of the Righteous to be a curse. "The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it" (Proverbs 10:22). Prosperity and success have always been attached to the performance of the will of God. "This Book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do

according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Joshua 1:8). The Psalmist described the Blessed Man as a man whose "delight is in the Law of the LORD; and in His Law doth he meditate day and night" (Psalm 1:2), with the result that "whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (1:3).

Prosperity only becomes a vicious cycle when we forget God. "Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient [literally, appointed as my portion] for me" (Proverbs 30:8). Sadly, we often respond to the extremes of poverty or riches adversely. "Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the Name of my God in vain" (30:9). Only by a continual fear of the LORD can we be delivered from the sin of these wrong responses to riches or poverty. "Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith" (Proverbs 15:16). Come what may, we must reverentially fear and trust God. "Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the LORD all the day long" (23:17).

Moses placed before the Israelites both the conditions for success or failure, prosperity or destitution, blessing or cursing. "26 Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; 27 A blessing, if ye obey the Commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: 28 And a curse, if ye will not obey the Commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known" (Deuteronomy 11:26-28). Trusting the LORD and obedience are impossible to separate. "Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed" (Psalm 37:3). Further, Moses warned: "18 Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood; 19 And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: 20 The LORD will not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD and His jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this Book shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his name from under Heaven" (Deuteronomy 29:18-20).

Simply read the Old Testament Book of Judges, and you will find the phrase "the children of Israel did evil" (Judges 2:11; 3:7,12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1) often followed closely by the phrase "the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel" (2:14, 20; 3:8; 10:7). Jehovah's judgment of wayward Israel was invariably coupled with His deliverance of Israel from the very chastisements that their sin constrained Him to devise. "14 And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and He delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and He sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies... 16 Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them... 18 And when the LORD raised them up judges, then the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the LORD because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them" (Judges 2:14,16,18). Thus, the LORD used the Spoiler Nations to test Prospering Israel's faithfulness that He "may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not" (2:22).

The LORD's testing of the Saints is essential, because:

- (1) The Perfect God, i.e., "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48), must have a Perfected People, i.e., "But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1:4).
- (2) The Love of God is divinely poured out within our hearts, when we are afflicted. "3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; 4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope: 5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans 5:3-5).
- (3) God's faithfulness must be continuously demonstrated to us in our testings to encourage us to imitate Him. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is Faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1Corinthians 10:13).
- (4) Our spiritual growth is stimulated by reconfirmations of what we have been taught of Christ, as demonstrated through His periodic tests. "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2Peter 3:18).
- (5) The Saints cannot be happy without the sanctification that comes through the tests of suffering, i.e., "Blessed [happy] are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake" (Matthew 5:11). "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin" (1Peter 4:1).

- (6) Man's depraved flesh so often occasions our stumbling into sin, that God must test us through the flesh **to encourage us to reject** the attractions of the flesh for the immortality of the Spirit. "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Romans 8:13). And,
- (7) God is worthy to be glorified by the successful testing of His Saints. "Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" (Revelation 4:11).

May this season of Thanksgiving find you truly grateful to God, from Whom comes "every good gift and every perfect gift" (James 1:17). "Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us **Thanksgiving to God**" (2Corinthians 9:11).

Maranatha!

Thanks Be Unto God

November 19, 1999

Recently, I was speaking to an acquaintance about the mercies of God, that "it is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not" (Lamentations 3:22). My acquaintance seemed oblivious to the Merciful God's lovingkindness in delivering his life repeatedly from certain death. "Oh that men would praise the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!" (Psalm 107:8, 15, 21, 31). As we conversed, he attempted to compliment my intellect by remarking that my work was unworthy of me, as I am a mechanic. "And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful" (Titus 3:14). To this, I replied that, to the contrary, I was treated better than I deserved. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1Timothy 1:15).

Later in the day, I began to reflect upon the conversation, and especially, my acquaintance's seemingly limitless lack of grasp of the Mercy of God. "Know therefore that the LORD thy God, He is God, the Faithful God, which keepeth Covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His Commandments to a thousand generations" (Deuteronomy 7:9). It is not mere poetic speech to ascribe to God unlimited praise for being the Source of All Good, because the LORD Jesus Christ verified that very fact in the Gospel of Mark. "There is none good but One, that is, God" (Mark 10:18). That God is the Source of All Good is assumed entirely throughout the New Testament. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from Above, and cometh down from the Father Of Lights, with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17).

Also, it is not a figment of our imagination that a grateful, forgiven sinner, would look upon his former estate, and truthfully remark "that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1Timothy 1:15), because the most odious crime committed against the LORD, is that which was committed by the truly penitent. "3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. 4 Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight: that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest" (Psalm 51:3-4). Jacob proclaimed his sense of unworthiness of God's mercies and truth. "I am not worthy of the least of all the Mercies, and of all the Truth, which Thou hast shewed unto Thy servant" (Genesis 32:10). John the Baptist announced Christ's worthiness, by contrasting his own sense of unworthiness. "But, behold, there cometh One after me, Whose shoes of His feet I am not worthy to loose" (Acts 13:25). And so, the examples can be multiplied, where the Saints have acknowledged our complete sense of unworthiness of all the mercies and grace of God. "Thanks be unto God for His Unspeakable [Indescribable] Gift" (2Corinthians 9:15).

Neither my acquaintance nor we, can really feel grateful to God "for His Unspeakable Gift" of the LORD Jesus Christ, unless the LORD has humbled us to notice that we are "but dust and ashes" (Genesis 18:27), and that He is the "High and Lofty One That Inhabiteth Eternity" (Isaiah 57:15). When we rightly understand our unworthiness in light of God's Worthiness, then God can move mightily, as He did for the Godly Roman centurion. "6 Then Jesus went with them. And when He was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying unto Him, LORD, trouble not Thyself: for I am not worthy that Thou shouldest enter under my roof: 7 Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto Thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed... 10 And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick" (Luke 7:6-7, 10).

True Thanksgiving gushes from the hearts of the Saints to the Worthy God for everything that we have so bountifully received. "I will call on the LORD, Who is Worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies" (2Samuel 22:4). As we "grow in grace, and

in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2Peter 3:18), we can better and better appreciate just how Worthy the LORD is. So much will we recognize our LORD's Worthiness, that the more we contemplate it, the more we break out in praise and thanksgiving. "Thou art Worthy, O LORD, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" (Revelation 4:11).

Thanksgiving Day is a national holiday, celebrated in the United States on the fourth Thursday of November, since 1863, for blessings received during the year. In Canada, it is celebrated on the second Monday in October. Traditionally, the practice of setting aside a day of Thanksgiving, can be traced back to the Pilgrims, the colonists of Plymouth, Massachusetts in 1621. But, the Seven Feasts of Israel (Leviticus 23) are the source for the later practice of thanksgiving feasts. [See our article, "[The Appointed Times](#)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/The.Appointed.Times.html> --, for more background on these feasts.] "And ye shall proclaim on the selfsame day, that it may be an holy convocation unto you: ye shall do no servile work therein: it shall be a statute for ever in all your dwellings throughout your generations" (Leviticus 23:21).

May this Thanksgiving Season remind us that "in every thing [to] give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1Thessalonians 5:18), for He alone is Worthy of praise!

Maranatha!

Lincoln's Thanksgiving Proclamation

"It has seemed to me fit and proper that God should be solemnly, reverently and gratefully acknowledged, as with one heart and one voice, by the whole American people. I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November as a day of Thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens." --*Abraham Lincoln - October 3, 1863*

[Lincoln's Thanksgiving Proclamation](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Stories/Lincoln.Thanks.Proclam.html) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Stories/Lincoln.Thanks.Proclam.html> --

Hugh Latimer: Example of Christian Courage

November 29, 1999

In this age of machismo, what do the "meek and lowly in heart" (Matthew 11:29) have to do with Christian Courage? "The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion" (Proverbs 28:1). Throughout the ages, the Saints have been blessed by examples of selfless courage of those who have followed in the steps of the Saviour to do the will of God. "And [Christ] made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death; because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth" (Isaiah 53:9). "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me,) to do Thy will, O God" (Hebrews 10:7). But, then, who is Hugh Latimer? In short, Hugh Latimer (1485-1555) was a leader of English Protestantism, who followed in the steps of Martin Luther in leading England to depart from the errors of the Church of Rome. "And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT-- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/Babylon.The.Great.Part.1.html> --, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Revelation 17:5).

Hugh Latimer was the son of an English farmer, educated at Cambridge University, and ordained as a Roman Catholic priest in 1510. "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jeremiah 1:5). Though reputed as a preacher prior to his conversion to Christ in 1525, after contact with Thomas Bilney-- another Cambridge scholar who had come to accept the preeminence of the Scriptures over the preeminence of the Pope-- Hugh Latimer was transformed into a mouthpiece for the claims of Christ over the claims of Romanism. "We have also a More Sure Word of Prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a Light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the Day Star arise in your hearts" (2Peter 1:19). Armed with faith in the LORD Jesus Christ for his Eternal Salvation, Latimer used the position of influence that had come to him for the faithful declaration of the Word of God. "10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Whom ye crucified, Whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole. 11 This is the Stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the Head of the Corner. 12 Neither is there Salvation in any other: for there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:10-12).

It is said that Hugh Latimer, with the courage of a lion, approached his immoral sovereign-- Henry VIII-- with a New Year's Day gift,

a Bible with the leaf turned down to the passage, "Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4). "Then said [John the Baptist] to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" (Luke 3:7). At another time, Henry VIII called Latimer to preach before his court. With towering unction and the plainest language, Hugh Latimer faithfully denounced the king and his courtiers, like John the Baptist before King Herod. "For John said unto [Herod], It is not lawful for thee to have her" (Matthew 14:4). Enraged, the king demanded that Latimer retract his denunciations upon the next LORD's Day. "For though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel!" (1 Corinthians 9:16).

Entering the pulpit, Latimer announced the same text. Then he paused and said:

"Hugh Latimer, dost thou know before whom thou art this day to speak? To the high and mighty monarch, the King's most excellent majesty, who can take away thy life if thou offendest; therefore take heed that thou speakest not a word that may displease! And then consider well, Hugh, dost thou not know from whence comest thou; upon whose message thou art sent? Even by the great and mighty God! Who is all present! and Who beholdeth all thy ways! and Who is able to cast thy soul into hell! Therefore take care that thou deliverest thy message faithfully."

Speaking thus, to the amazement of all the court, Latimer renewed his preaching with even greater zeal and strength. "O Earth, Earth, Earth, hear the Word of the LORD" (Jeremiah 22:29). All present were certain that Henry would have Hugh Latimer beheaded; but, the king, subdued by Latimer's earnestness, exclaimed, "Blessed be God, I have so honest a servant!" And, though Henry VIII is still identified with the debauchery and treachery that brought him to divorce or behead nearly six wives-- Catherine Parr, his sixth wife, outlived him-- he was instrumental in divorcing the influence of the Church of Rome over what would become Protestant England. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee: the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain" (Psalm 76:10).

And, what became of Hugh Latimer? Henry VIII was succeeded to the throne in 1547 by his sickly young son, Edward VI, whose short reign ended with his death by tuberculosis and the ascension to the throne of the Roman Catholic, Mary Tudor, later vilified as Bloody Mary. "When the wicked rise, men hide themselves: but when they perish, the righteous increase" (Proverbs 28:28). Immediately, Latimer was arrested for treason, tried, and consigned to execution. On October 16th 1555, he and fellow Reformer, Nicholas Ridley, were burned at the stake; and, while at the stake, Latimer exhorted Ridley with the prophetic encouragement,

"We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England as I trust shall never be put out."

"13 I give thee charge in the sight of God, Who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, Who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; 14 That thou keep this Commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our LORD Jesus Christ: 15 Which in His times He shall shew, Who is the Blessed and Only Potentate, the KING of Kings, and LORD of Lords; 16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; Whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to Whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen" (1 Timothy 6:13-16). *May God grant to us a like Christian Courage!*

Maranatha!

Christ's Human Sinlessness Proves the Justice of God's Demand for Man's Sinlessness

December 6, 1999

It is a forthright point of Biblical theology to state that Jesus is truly God Almighty and that He was truly born as a human baby nearly 2,000 years ago; but, the uniqueness of His person has caused many in the study of theology **to discount the value of His human sinless life**. "And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin" (1 John 3:5). "Sure," they may say, "Jesus did not sin while in human flesh, but that's because He is God." But, this misses the point entirely of why the Almighty had to resort to such a daring move as to allow His Eternally Begotten Son to become a defenseless babe in a manger. "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth" (1 Peter 2:22). You can nearly see in your mind the picture of the Father discussing with the Son that mankind would object to His demand of sinless living as unreasonable and unobtainable because no one could live without sin while in human flesh. But, then the Son said, "Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me.) to do Thy will, O God" (Hebrews 10:7). The Son of God was willing to undergo all the difficulties, humiliations, and sufferings of the human condition, **if only the attainability of a sinless walk from man could be proved, then the Father's wisdom and justice of requiring it would**

be justified. "5 But whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him. 6 He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked" (1John 2:5-6).

The Son of God volunteered to become a man, because He desired to justify the Father's demand of loving obedience from all the children of men. "For this is the love of God, that we keep His Commandments: and His Commandments are not grievous" (1John 5:3). Since "grievous" Commandments are unbearable and impossible to obey, the Son had to demonstrate that man in human flesh **could** obey everything that the Father commanded of all men. "37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and Great Commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:37-39). And, if Satan could stumble Jesus into sinning, then Satan would justify himself for his rebellion, *as well as humiliate the Father* for requiring more than He ought from His creation. "**If** ye love Me, keep My Commandments" (John 14:15).

If one must be the Son of God to obey completely the Father, then no one needs to feel himself rebellious for giving only the semblance of partial obedience. But, "whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10). Jesus came to destroy the arguments of self-justification that allow man to **hide behind physical flesh as his excuse for sinning**. Instead, the Son of God's manifestation in human flesh was to obliterate man's arguments of self-justification for why he sins, which arguments are the "works of the devil". "He that committeth sin **is** of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1John 3:8). Sin is so rampant in this world, and in the Professed Church, because excuse is found everywhere that our flesh made us to sin. "And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat" (Genesis 3:12).

Man has transposed sin away from his **willful disobedience** of God and metaphysically made human flesh the residence of sin, as evidenced by the misunderstanding many have of the Apostle Paul's inspired reference to "sinful flesh". "For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:3). **Flesh can only be sinful by how we use it**, else wise Christ could not have "condemned **sin** in the flesh" (8:3) without obliterating flesh entirely-- which He did not. "19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1Corinthians 6:19-20). Brother Paul goes on to **disabuse us of any misconception we have that flesh, by itself, is sinful**, by further informing us that:

(1) it is only how we mind or treat the flesh, that makes it sinful, i.e., "6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be Spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:6-7), and

(2) we are no longer minding the flesh, if we are walking after the Spirit, i.e., "8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (8:8-9).

If we desire to honor God for His Love, Truth, Mercy, and Grace, then **we ought to give the Son of God the "glory and honour and power"** (Revelation 4:11) **for walking in human flesh without sinning, without having to resort to miraculous or supernatural advantages normally unavailable to mortal man**. "Though He were a Son, yet **learned He obedience** by the things which He **suffered**" (Hebrews 5:8). Instead of calling for the assistance of angels to stand in for Him when obedience was difficult and sinning was easy, i.e., "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matthew 26:53), **Jesus chose to be humanly perfected and matured by His human sufferings**. "For it became Him [the Father], for Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to **make** the Captain of Their Salvation [Jesus] **perfect through sufferings**" (Hebrews 2:10).

The sinless obedience of Christ while in human flesh magnifies the wise choice of God to create man and to wisely and certainly expect that man must perfectly obey Him, "as unto a Faithful Creator" (1Peter 4:19). "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His Judgments, and His ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33). If the Son of God was the only man to ever obey the Father, then God would still be praised for the wisdom and justice of His decision to require loving and sinless obedience from man. "Let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That Thou mightest be justified in Thy Sayings, and mightest overcome when Thou art judged" (3:4). But, the truth is that any time that any man ever does obey the Father, it is because the New Covenant's gift of the Spirit of Christ is working in us to "will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). And, that working in us comes **only** when we trust Him. "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9:23).

Maranatha!

Alone, But Not Lonely

December 12, 1999

God's people must learn "how to be abased" and "how to abound" (Philippians 4:12). It was so with their Master, and it must be true of His disciples. "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matthew 11:29). **IF Jesus was unwilling to stand alone** bearing the reproach for our sins on Calvary, then we would have to be as those predestined to destruction, i.e., "wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever" (Jude 13). Unlike our LORD Christ, "who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth" (1 Peter 2:22), we have earned and do deserve all of the suffering and distress that our sin deserves. "Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in Thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son" (Luke 15:21). Though our perfection is justly demanded by our LORD, i.e., "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48), and our perfectibility is presently attainable in this world, i.e., "The disciple is not above his Master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his Master" (Luke 6:40), we have sinned, and justly deserve the reproach of God. "5 We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from Thy precepts and from Thy judgments: 8 O LORD, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against Thee" (Daniel 9:5, 8).

But, for the Penitent, we have been called to wholeheartedly follow the LORD Jesus, "esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt" (Hebrews 11:26). **To stand alone for Christ means to stand apart from man, but with Christ, our Emmanuel**-- "which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matthew 1:23). The Almighty God desires to stand with us, but we hinder Him by our unwillingness to stand alone with Him. "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded" (James 4:8). His willingness to "make all grace abound toward" (2 Corinthians 9:8) us, is well documented in the Annals of the History of the Saints, e.g., "32 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: 33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens" (Hebrews 11:32-34). The blessedness and peace of God's presence is ours **only if we prefer His company to all else**. "The LORD is with you, while ye be with Him; and if ye seek Him, He will be found of you; but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you" (2 Chronicles 15:2).

Possibly, the prophets can be called upon to best illustrate the concept of standing alone for the LORD against the sins of man. Jeremiah "suffered rebuke" (Jeremiah 15:15) for the LORD's sake by his faithful delivery of an unpopular message of repentance to God's professed people. "I sat not in the assembly of the mockers, nor rejoiced; I sat alone because of Thy hand: for Thou hast filled me with indignation" (15:17). Understanding that he was prophesying against the Chosen People of God (Deuteronomy 7:6), Jeremiah's willingness to stand with Jehovah meant standing alone, even in the midst of the only people that he knew. "Therefore thus saith the LORD, If thou return, then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before Me: and if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as My mouth: let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them" (15:19). We, like the prophets, need to have the utmost confidence that our God will deliver us, when we stand alone for Him, even when we do not know how to deliver ourselves. "7 For the LORD GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. 8 He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to me. 9 Behold, the LORD GOD will help me; who is he that shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up" (Isaiah 50:7-9).

The test of a tree is its fruit. "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:20). **Loneliness is impossible to the one who walks with God**. "Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me" (John 16:32). Our difficulty is not whether God is willing to stand by a willing people, but it is whether or not we are willing to stand with God. "19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: 20 But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it" (Isaiah 1:19-20). Our worthiness to stand before God is based upon our acceptance in the person of the LORD Jesus Christ. "He hath made us accepted in the Beloved" (Ephesians 1:6). But, our acceptance in Christ is contingent upon continuing in that "faith which worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6). "21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled 22 In the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight: 23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under Heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister" (Colossians 1:21-23).

May God grant you the grace of His presence, if you are willing to stand alone with Him. "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

(Romans 8:31).

Maranatha!

The Mainspring of Moral Action

December 21, 1999

Love is the mainspring or Foundation of Moral Obligation-- why man should act as he ought. "37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt Love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the First and Great Commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt Love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two Commandments hang **all** the Law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:37-40). All that can be good about human action is briefly summarized in the word *Love*. "And now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity [Love], these three; but the greatest of these is Charity [Love]" (1Corinthians 13:13). Love has many human connotations, but **it is the foundational reason why man should do as he ought**. "For this is the Love of God, that we keep His Commandments: and His Commandments are not grievous [burdensome, i.e., impossible]" (1John 5:3). Too often, man has chosen to reject the highest good of God and of all moral beings, i.e., rejecting Benevolence or Love toward God and man, and choosing instead to selfishly seek his own interests-- disregarding man, but most especially, **rejecting God**. "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened" (Romans 1:21).

The Eternal God "created man in His Own image" (Genesis 1:27), elevating man **above** the Animal Kingdom, and making him capable of acting in a Benevolent or selfish way. "I call Heaven and Earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: **therefore choose** life, that both thou and thy seed may live" (Deuteronomy 30:19). Angels, also, have this God-given capacity of moral agency, in that the angels, who were the "morning stars" (Job 38:7), conspired with Lucifer against the Almighty, and a "third part of the stars of Heaven" (Revelation 12:4) fell, becoming the demons or "evil angels" (Psalm 78:49). The presence of sin and holiness in the universe indicates that God providentially presides over a Moral Government, with man as His rebellious or obedient subjects. "And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a Name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (Revelation 19:16).

Philosophers have long discussed why man acts as he does, often reducing man to the role of a sensual beast or elevating him to be a god, but God Only Wise (Romans 16:27) knows why He created man. "[Jesus] needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man" (John 2:25). God Himself acts as a Moral Agent, **choosing** His Own actions-- certainly unlike any mere creature or machine. "The LORD did not set His Love upon you [Israel], nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people" (Deuteronomy 7:7). But, the Creator is the Moral Governor of the Universe, seeing that "all power [authority] is given unto Me [Christ] in Heaven and in Earth" (Matthew 28:18), and that He directs or hinders, rewards or punishes all moral action, as evidenced by His conduct toward man. "I charge thee therefore before God, and the LORD Jesus Christ, Who shall judge the quick [living] and the dead at His Appearing and His Kingdom" (2Timothy 4:1).

Argumentative philosophizers have unjustly accused the Almighty of selfishness, in that God seeks the highest good of His Own Being, consulting only Himself for His actions. "Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being His counsellor hath taught Him?" (Isaiah 40:13). But, what right does mere man have to call God to account for His actions? "4 Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the Earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. 5 Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?" (Job 38:4-5). It just so happens that **the highest good of God's Being is man's highest good**, for who would dispute that God, in seeking His own happiness, did wrongly or inappropriately in **choosing** to make an Atonement for the sins of mankind? "For God so Loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life" (John 3:16). Certainly, there was nothing good in man that caused God to suffer and die on the Cross for the forgiveness of our sins. "But God commendeth His Love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). It must be entirely an act of choosing His Own happiness that He atoned for our sins. "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross" (Hebrews 12:2).

Likewise, our obedience to the Gospel, i.e., "repent ye, and believe the Gospel" (Mark 1:15), renders to us the eternal benefit and reward of Salvation, Sanctification, and Glorification, yet Christ still "insists that it is not virtue in which the reward is the motive to the action" (from Charles G. Finney's "Skeletons of a Course of Theological Lectures" [1840], Lecture 23 "Moral Government", a.k.a. "Finney's Lectures on Theology" or "The Heart of Truth"). The LORD Jesus insisted that the hypocrites would **not** both receive their satisfaction for their sanctimonious conduct before men **and** their prayers answered. "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the

hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward" (Matthew 6:5). In other words, prayer from the hypocrite is not virtuous, because they truly, only seek the reward of man and not of God. "For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:43). But, when any man truly **chooses** to do as he ought, to "repent" and "believe the Gospel" (Mark 1:15), then he may truly receive the temporal blessings of the present, as well as, the eternal blessings of the hereafter. "According as His Divine Power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto Life and Godliness [both here and hereafter], through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (2Peter 1:3). Again, **Love must be the Foundation of our Moral Obligation** toward the Gospel of our LORD Jesus Christ. "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our LORD Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21).

As this Church Age draws to a conclusion, we are witnessing a degeneration of man's submission to God and His Moral Law. "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2Timothy 3:13). This lawlessness indicates that wicked men are merely acting in concert with their "father the devil" (John 8:44), who is waiting for the Restraining Influence of the Holy Spirit Indwelt Saints to be removed at the Pre-Tribulational Rapture (2Thessalonians 2:7). Satan, the Antichrist, and unregenerate men act upon this principle of selfishness or self-seeking as the guiding light for their existence. "31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things" (Matthew 6:31-32). In contrast, those who are trusting in the Name of the LORD Jesus Christ will not engage in such self-seeking, but they seek the wealth and edification of others. "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth" (1Corinthians 10:24). This principle, the opposite of selfishness, is the Love or Benevolence that characterizes all those who seek "first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33).

May the "Love of God" be "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans 5:5). And, may the spirit of self-love and self-seeking be banished from this planet-- "world without end" (Isaiah 45:17).

Maranatha!

For more on doctrine: "[Topical Links On Sound Doctrine](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Topical.Links.On.Doctrine.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Topical.Links.On.Doctrine.html> --

What Is Mercy?

December 28, 1999

A common adage says that Grace gives what we do not deserve, i.e., Eternal Life, while Mercy withholds what we do deserve, i.e., Eternal Punishment; but, Mercy goes much deeper, in that it is the Lovingkindness of God. "Shew Thy marvellous lovingkindness [Hebrew, *cheched*, meaning mercy], O Thou that savest by Thy Right Hand them which put their trust in Thee from those that rise up against them" (Psalm 17:7). In the Old Testament, of the 248 times that the Hebrew word *cheched* is found in the Authorized Version (KJV), 149 times it is rendered *mercy*, 40 times it is rendered *kindness*, and 30 times it is rendered *lovingkindness*. "How excellent is Thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings" (36:7).

Of the two Greek words in the Authorized Version that are translated as *mercy* in the New Testament, *eleeo* and *eleos* are used 59 times. Mercy is not simply the withholding of punishment, but it is the act of giving help or having compassion on someone who is afflicted. "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy [Greek, *eleeo*]" (Matthew 5:7). The lovingkindness of Jesus Christ gives to us Eternal Life. "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy [Greek, *eleos*] of our LORD Jesus Christ unto Eternal Life" (Jude 21). Our Salvation is an act of the mercy of God, completely unwarranted by our past actions. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5). Not only are we the objects of God's mercy, but we are enjoined to be the givers of mercy. "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful" (Luke 6:36). Only as we demonstrate mercy, do we receive God's mercy. "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matthew 5:7).

But, is our motivation in showing mercy merely a ploy to receive mercy from God? "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me" (Malachi 3:8). If we do not love God simply because He is God, and not because of what He can do for us, then our service to God is based upon fear of punishment or hope of reward. "32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: 33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?" (Matthew 18:32-33). Likewise, to truly love our fellow man and to demonstrate True Mercy, we are willing to put ourselves out, to the extent we are able, that we may demonstrate the same lovingkindness to our neighbour that God has to us. "27 Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it. 28 Say not unto thy

neighbour, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee" (Proverbs 3:27-28).

Mercy is not always within our power to give. "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10). For instance, God will not show mercy to Satan, because Satan's judgment has already been prepared and ordained. "Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into Everlasting Fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41). So, though we may be bound to will mercy to all, we may not be bound to will *to do or perform* that mercy, as God may providentially limit us. "And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against Me" (Genesis 20:6).

God's lovingkindness was demonstrated in giving His Only Begotten Son to die for us. "16 For God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life. 17 For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:16-17). It is Christlike to extend mercy to the undeserving, if we are in the position of foregoing judgment-- and, God has not providentially limited us to the execution of judgment. "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment" (James 2:13). Not always can the governor stay the execution of the convicted murderer, without turning the law against murder into only a suggestion not to murder, without the possibility of punishment. "Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the Law of the LORD of Hosts, and despised the Word of the Holy One of Israel" (Isaiah 5:24).

Though we are not saved by the keeping of the Law, we are saved that we might keep the Moral Law of Supreme Love of God and an equal Love of our neighbour as ourselves (Matthew 22:37-39). "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8). May the mercy that caused the Father to send the Son, be found in us to break the cycle of retribution for offenses received at the hands of those who hate us. "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful" (Luke 6:36). And, may we always remember that mercy is more than the withholding of punishment, but it is the Lovingkindness of God. "Because Thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise Thee" (Psalm 63:3).

Maranatha!

God's Strange Work

January 5, 2000

Generally, the concept of God's judgment of man's sin is difficult for man to comprehend; but, the LORD "repayeth them that hate Him to their face, to destroy them: He will not be slack to him that hateth Him, He will repay him to his face" (Deuteronomy 7:10). A prime example of this concept is the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah. "But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly" (Genesis 13:13). Obviously, Sodom and Gomorrah failed their probationary period with the LORD-- having been given a chance-- they were finally judged. "24 Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of Heaven; 25 And He overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground" (19:24-25).

It is a more agreeable thought that God should fight for His people, as when David was promised the victory over the Philistines at Baalperazim. "For the LORD shall rise up as in mount Perazim [or, Baalperazim], He shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that He may do His work, His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act" (Isaiah 28:21). Though the LORD enabled David to smite the host of the Philistines from Mount Perazim to the Valley of Gibeon; here, instead, the LORD promised through the prophecy of Isaiah to do a "strange work" and "strange act" by fighting **against** His people Israel! "Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine!" (Isaiah 28:1). Ephraim represented the drunkenness and sin of the Ten Tribes of Israel, that had "erred through wine, and through strong drink"-- the "priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment" (28:7).

Judah, as well, had also rebelled in heart against Jehovah, seeking refuge from the Assyrian scourge through the assistance of Egypt, and not from the LORD. "Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves" (Isaiah 28:15). Now, instead of fighting against the enemies of His Chosen People, the LORD was promising to do the

previously unknown, unfamiliar, and "strange work" (28:21) of fighting against His Own People in judgment for their sins. How like today is God's promise of doing "His work, His strange work; and bring[ing] to pass His act, His strange act" (Isaiah 28:21) in judging His Wayward Church! "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God?" (1Peter 4:17).

How oblivious is the Professed Church to its own worldliness and sin, not recognizing the nearness and certainty of God's judgment! "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" (1Corinthians 11:31). We have become **too familiar with the ritual of sinning to recoil in horror at the offense and transgression against a Holy and Loving Father**. "Yea, all Israel have transgressed Thy Law, even by departing, that they might not obey Thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the Law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against Him" (Daniel 9:11). **Because we have allowed ourselves to be lulled into expecting that we cannot help but find ourselves sinning against God, we have given the Almighty every cause to have to judge and chasten us**. "30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep... 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the LORD, that we should not be condemned with the world" (1Corinthians 11:30, 32). [Please, see our article, "[Must We Then Sin?](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Must.We.Then.Sin.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Must.We.Then.Sin.html> --, for "A Clarification of What is Sin, Why We Sin, and How Not to Sin".]

As much as the soon return of the LORD Jesus Christ is a Sanctifying Hope for the Saints, i.e., "2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. 3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1John 3:2-3), the necessity that the LORD must perform the "strange work" (Isaiah 28:21) of judging His Wayward People, no doubt will be the reason that many will miss the Pre-Tribulational Rapture. "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36). And, since our Worthiness "to escape" (21:36) is entirely dependent upon our leaning in faith upon the Worthiness of our LORD, i.e., whose "righteousness is of Me, saith the LORD" (Isaiah 54:17), then our lack of a "faith which worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6) indicates that we have **deceived ourselves into thinking that we can be accounted righteous by a faith that does not work**. "21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? 22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? 23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God" (James 2:21-23).

God must purify unto Himself a holy people. "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1Peter 1:16). And, since a prime reason for the upcoming Tribulation Week is to "make an end of sins" (Daniel 9:24), then what sins we do not judge ourselves for through the introspection of the Holy Spirit-- "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1John 1:9)-- we will remain here until we get it right, as He performs "His strange work" (Isaiah 28:21) of judgment upon us.

May the Spirit of Christ make a quick but thorough work in us of repentance, faith, and holiness, that we "may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass" (Luke 21:36), "according to the Power that worketh in us" (Ephesians 3:20).

Maranatha!

Sir Robert Anderson and the Seventy Weeks of Daniel

January 14, 2000

The significance of Sir Robert Anderson's book, "The Coming Prince" (1895), should not be underestimated by modern students of Bible prophecy, in that Anderson not only ably defended Daniel's authorship of the Book of Daniel from the "scholarship" of unbelief of the Higher Criticism of his day, but he clearly established the historical accuracy of the fulfillment of the time oriented prophecy for the First Advent of the LORD Jesus Christ. "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself" (Daniel 9:24-26).

Anderson wrote:

"The Julian date of that 10th Nisan was Sunday the 6th April, A.D. 32. What then was the length of the period intervening between the issuing of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem and the public advent of 'Messiah the Prince,' -- between the 14th

March, B.C. 445, and the 6th April, A.D. 32? THE INTERVAL CONTAINED EXACTLY AND TO THE VERY DAY 173,880 DAYS, OR SEVEN TIMES SIXTY-NINE PROPHETIC YEARS OF 360 DAYS, the first sixty-nine weeks of Gabriel's prophecy."

The very fact that Anderson, in retrospect, was able to demonstrate with mathematical accuracy the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy for the First Advent of the LORD Jesus Christ, indicates that the Father is completely pleased and willing that His Saints and Angels be occupied with labor, study, and anticipation for the Second Advent of His Dear Son. "Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven; which things the angels desire to look into" (1Peter 1:12).

Born into the Christian home of Irish Presbyterians of Dublin, Ireland in 1841, Robert Anderson did not come into "full assurance of faith" (Hebrews 10:22) until he was nineteen years old, during the Irish Revival (1859-1860). One Sunday, after listening to Dr. John Hall preach, he remained behind to argue with the minister. Dr. Hall solemnly appealed to Robert, "I tell you as a minister of Christ, and in His name that there is life for you here and now, if you will accept Him. Will you accept Christ or will you reject Him?" To this, Robert Anderson paused, but finally exclaimed, "In God's name I will accept Christ!" "And," he said, "I turned turned homeward with the peace of God filling my heart." "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7). Though he was enrolled at Trinity College (Dublin)-- from which he graduated in 1862-- he became active as a lay-preacher, bringing many to Christ. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing Precious Seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Psalm 126:6).

Becoming a member of the Irish Bar in 1863, Anderson was introduced to police work, when he prepared legal briefs and interrogated prisoners that had attempted to overthrow British rule in Ireland. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and He delighteth in his way" (Psalm 37:23). Moving to London in 1877, Robert Anderson joined the staff of the Home Office, developing his investigative skills through the detective department. Promoted to Assistant Commissioner of Metropolitan Police and Chief of the Criminal Investigation Department of Scotland Yard in 1888, the records indicate that crime decreased in London during that period-- when Jack the Ripper infamously terrorized London and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes pursued his nemesis, Moriarty. "6 For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. 7 But God is the Judge: He putteth down one, and setteth up another" (Psalm 75:6-7).

Serving with Scotland Yard until his retirement in 1896, he was knighted by Queen Victoria. His many friends included Handley G. Moule, Henry Drummond, James M. Gray, and C. I. Scofield. "I am a companion of all them that fear Thee, and of them that keep Thy precepts" (Psalm 119:63). It was Horatius Bonar who first taught Anderson the precious truths concerning the Second Coming of the LORD Jesus Christ. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto Salvation" (Hebrews 9:28). As a Christian writer, he authored seventeen major books, among them his "Human Destiny" was accounted by C. H. Spurgeon as the "most valuable contribution on the subject" that he had ever seen. Sir Robert Anderson remained active and useful to his LORD until his death in 1918. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2Timothy 4:7).

Anderson's "Coming Prince" was written many years before the Balfour Declaration (1917) made plain Britain's guarantee of a Jewish national home in Palestine; thus, establishing the modern framework for Israel to not only be re-birthed as a modern nation (1948), but a nation which will have a Temple to be prophetically desecrated by the "prince that shall come" (the Antichrist), who "shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate" (Daniel 9:26-27). Even though the subject matter and title of the book dealt mainly with the Antichrist, it was the Second Advent of Messiah the Prince (Daniel 9:25) for Whom Sir Robert Anderson longed and anticipated. "10 That at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in Earth, and things under the Earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:10-11).

Concluding "The Coming Prince", Anderson wrote:

"It was a calamity for the Church of God when the light of prophecy became dimmed in fruitless controversy, and the study of these visions, vouchsafed by God to warn, and guide, and cheer His saints in evil days, was dismissed as utterly unprofitable. They abound in promises which God designed to feed His people's faith and fire their zeal, and a special blessing rests on those who read, and hear, and cherish them. One of the most hopeful features of the present hour is the increasing interest they everywhere excite; and if these pages should avail to deepen or direct the enthusiasm even of a few in the study of a theme which is inexhaustible, the labour they have cost will be abundantly rewarded."

May the reading of Sir Robert Anderson's book, encourage us to keep the words of our LORD's prophecy. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand" (Revelation 1:3).

Maranatha!

Read:

[The Coming Prince](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/The.Coming.Prince.html)

-- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/The.Coming.Prince.html> --

by Sir Robert Anderson (1841-1918)

Undoubtedly, Sir Robert Anderson intended the title of his book, "The Coming Prince", to refer to the Antichrist, who is noted as the "prince that shall come" (Daniel 9:26). In Chapter 15, also entitled "The Coming Prince", Anderson wrote:

"If the book of Daniel might be read by itself no question whatever could arise. 'The Coming Prince' is there presented as the head of the revived Roman empire of the future, and a persecutor of the saints."

On the other hand, his "Introduction" (Chapter 1) begins with a defense of the prophetic fact that the LORD Jesus Christ will most certainly return to judge the world. Anderson wrote:

"But the day is coming when 'our God shall come and *shall not keep silence*' [Psalm 50:3]. This is not a matter of opinion, but of faith. He who questions it has no claim whatever to the name of Christian, for it is as essentially a truth of Christianity as is the record of the life and death of the Son of God. The old Scriptures teem with it, and of all the writers of the New Testament there is not so much as one who does not expressly speak of it. It was the burden of the first prophetic utterance which Holy Writ records; ['And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the LORD cometh with ten thousands of His Saints' (Jude 1:14)] and the closing book of the sacred Canon, from the first chapter to the last, confirms and amplifies the testimony."

"The Coming Prince" is a classic interpretation of the prophecies of Daniel, especially the ninth chapter. Concerning Daniel's Seventy Weeks, Anderson wrote:

"The only inquiry, therefore, which concerns us relates to the nature of the crisis [i.e., the Judgment of the Earth] and the time of its fulfilment [i.e., the duration of the Tribulation and especially the Second Coming of the LORD Jesus Christ]. And the key to this inquiry is the Prophet Daniel's vision of the seventy weeks."

Christian Separation

January 29, 2000

There is such a thing as Christian separation. Just read Paul's epistle to the Romans. "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God" (Romans 1:1). Unfortunately for many, the very idea of Christian separation evokes the image of a Pharisee with a "holier than thou" (Isaiah 65:5) attitude; but, whenever a stand is taken for the LORD, something must be stood "for", while something must be stood "against". "He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad" (Matthew 12:30). As much as we desire to live peaceably "with all men" (Hebrews 12:14), we will inevitably find ourselves standing apart from the world-- and, from the professedly religious. "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our LORD Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (2Thessalonians 3:6).

The difficulty with the lack of practicing Christian separation, is that Professed Christianity has not been grounded with a Scriptural concept of being set apart unto God from the world. "But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is Godly for Himself" (Psalm 4:3). Our election by God has separated us from the sinfulness of the world. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the LORD, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2Corinthians 6:17). Even as the LORD Jesus is "separate from sinners" (Hebrews 7:26)-- hating the sin, but loving the sinner-- we ought to conduct ourselves as those who "love not the world" (1John 2:15). "15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (2:15-16).

As Pilgrims in this world, we ought to walk in the understanding that we are "not of the world" (John 17:14), though we still live in it. "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (1Peter 2:11). The world and the worldly are only becoming increasingly worse. "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2Timothy 3:13). While the Saints do all possible to pull the Lost "out of the fire" (Jude 23), the Christian must be careful to "keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). The only means by which the Christian can maintain his separation unto the LORD from the world is by his abiding in the Word of God. "Now ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you... Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth" (John 15:3; 17:17).

In Christian separation, the problem arises with the necessity to separate, even from other Professed Christians, when they prove to walk disorderly, i.e., in open and known sin. "And if any man obey not our Word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed" (2Thessalonians 3:14). But, it is with the intention of loving restoration of the backslider, that we are to separate from them, i.e., "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Galatians 6:1). If we would only let the Spirit of God remind us that our "ministry of reconciliation" (2Corinthians 5:18) includes our dealing with the backslidden, then we would be more willing to employ Christian separation from them. "1 It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. 2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you... 5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the Day of the LORD Jesus" (1Corinthians 5:1-2, 5). The result of the Corinthian Christians' separation from this erring brother was his repentance-- and their necessity and opportunity to restore fellowship with him. "So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow" (2Corinthians 2:7).

If we would remember that our fellowship and companionship is with those who walk in loving obedience to the LORD Jesus, Christian separation would be entirely "un-burdensome". "I am a companion of all them that fear Thee, and of them that keep Thy precepts" (Psalm 119:63). The Spirit of God must guide our fellowship and direct our separation. "Thou shalt guide me with Thy Counsel, and afterward receive me to glory" (Psalm 73:24). Far better that we would separate from sinful and disobedient man than to lose the fellowship of God. "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him... By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God" (Genesis 5:24, Hebrews 11:5).

May we, like Enoch, please God by our faithful walk with Him, and like Paul, by our separation "unto the Gospel of God" (Romans 1:1).

Maranatha!

Related Topic:

[How to Deal With Backsliders](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/How.to.Deal.with.Backslide.html)

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by Tom Stewart

God has a plan of action that you may follow with Promise to restore the backslider.

Our Rare Earth

February 21, 2000

An article appeared in the newspaper on February 8th 2000 by William J. Broad of the *New York Times New Service*, entitled "Maybe we are alone in the universe". Two noted scientists from the University of Washington, Peter D. Ward-- a paleontologist specializing in mass extinctions-- and Donald C. Brownlee-- astronomer and chief scientist of NASA's \$166 million Stardust mission to capture interplanetary and interstellar dust-- have challenged the "belief that myriad alien civilizations dot the universe." Though Broad's article makes no attempt to support the Biblical position that God created the "heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1), nor does it represent Ward or Brownlee as Christians, it is understandable that Christians would receive Ward and Brownlee's argument favorably, that "humans might be alone-- at least in the stellar neighborhood, and perhaps in the entire cosmos." "3 When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; 4 What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? 5 For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with

glory and honour. 6 Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet" (Psalm 8:3-6).

Brownlee and Ward have authored a book, "Rare Earth" (Springer-Verlag), that came out last month. William J. Broad comments on the book:

"Most everywhere else, radiation levels are too high, the right chemical elements too rare, hospitable planets too few in number and the rain of killer rocks too intense for life to have evolved into advanced communities. Alien microbes may survive as a kind of cosmic shower scum, they say, but not extraterrestrials civilized enough to be rich in technology."

"For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20).

Since modern scientific cosmology-- bulwarked by Albert Einstein's work in special relativity and further applied by Edwin Hubble's 1929 measurement of the value of the red shift of distant galaxies-- views the universe as expanding, equivalent to a period of 10 to 20 billion years; the scientific community would most likely view the possibility of another planet like Earth, as quite probable-- and, even pedestrian. And yet, as insignificant as the Earth and man is, Scripture testifies that the Creator condescended with Almighty Love and Omniscient Attention to atone for the sins of all mankind. "But we see Jesus, Who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9).

Even recent Christianity has viewed the cosmos as having the age of approximately 6,000 years, rather than tens of billions of years. For instance, in the latter half of the 1800's, D. L. Moody wrote in his evangelistic book, "[The Way to God](#)": --
<http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Moody.The.Way.to.GOD.html> --

"I know of no truth in the whole Bible that ought to come home to us with such power and tenderness as that of the Love of God; and there is no truth in the Bible that Satan would so much like to blot out. For more than **six thousand years** he has been trying to persuade men that God does not love them."

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life" (John 3:16). [See an article, "[World Population Reaches 6 Billion](#)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/Be.Fruitful.and.Multiply.html> --, for a discussion of the 6,000 year concept.] Philip H. Gosse (1810-1888), a British ornithologist, Christian, and author of the book, "Omphalos: An Attempt to Untie the Geological Knot", put forth the theory that God gave His creation the appearance of age, i.e., Adam was created with the appearance of a mature adult capable of procreation. Hence, God's command to "be fruitful, and multiply" (Genesis 1:28) was potentially doable. "By the Word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth" (Psalm 33:6).

All True Saints ought to magnify the Power and Wisdom of God that created the universe. "Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" (Revelation 4:11). Brownlee and Ward point out that the conditions for the Earth's placement in a "Life Zone", are so complicated, that Earth may be the only home of complex life in the universe. This "Habitable Zone" is dramatically a "Garden of Eden" compared to the vastness of the "Dead Zones" in the universe. The Earth, and man in particular, is "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14).

Consider the following points made by Ward and Brownlee:

- (1) The Sun has the "right mass", not emitting "too much ultraviolet", and is the "right distance from Earth", allowing "liquid water, not vapor or ice."
- (2) Earth's neighboring planets have unchaotic and "stable planetary orbit[s]", while the Earth has the "right planetary mass" to retain its atmosphere and ocean. Also, the Earth has "enough heat for plate tectonics".
- (3) Earth's Jupiter neighbor "clears out killer comets and asteroids".
- (4) Earth's ocean has the liquid water "essential for life". "Plate tectonics" build up land and "enhance biodiversity". Earth's "large moon" stabilizes the planet's tilt, allowing for mild seasons. Earth's atmosphere is the right "temperature, composition and pressure". And,
- (5) Earth's "elements" are of the right composition, i.e., just enough oxygen and carbon dioxide to preserve life and prevent a "runaway greenhouse effect". LIFE IS NOT AN ACCIDENT. "Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of His Mercy and His Truth: I being in the way, the LORD led me" (Genesis 24:27).

William J. Broad's article concluded with the remark, "Some advocates of the search for extraterrestrial intelligence, known as SETI, see the new book as a heretical assault that could endanger the financing of the hunt." "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called [i.e., SETI]" (1Timothy 6:20). As we have pointed out in another article, the extraterrestrial phenomenon-- which are demonic "lying wonders" (2Thessalonians 2:9)-- is being promoted for the express purpose of giving a so-called scientific explanation for the Pre-Tribulational Rapture to those who are left behind. "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie" (2:11). On the other hand, the Godly know that we are alone in the universe. But, we are secure in the hands of God! "28 And I give unto them Eternal Life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. 29 My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand" (John 10:28-29).

Maranatha!

United Religions (2000): A Tower Unto Heaven

March 12, 2000

Unbeknownst to many, will be the June 26th 2000 inauguration of the United Religions (UR), whose purpose is "to promote enduring, daily interfaith cooperation" (from the Preamble of the United Religions Initiative Charter). "And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto Heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole Earth" (Genesis 11:4). The "United Religions Initiative (URI) is a growing global community" that, "in time, aspires to have the visibility and stature of the United Nations" (from the introductory remarks to the United Religions Initiative Charter). "5 And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. 6 And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do" (11:5-6). June 26th is also significant, in that it is the anniversary for the signing of the charter of the United Nations. "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished: but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered" (Proverbs 11:21).

Likewise, the month of June will see the official Catholic celebration of Pentecost (on Sunday, the 11th), during the "Jubilee of the Year 2000", hosted by Pope John Paul II. "24 He that hateth dissembleth with his lips, and layeth up deceit within him; 25 When he speaketh fair, believe him not: for there are seven abominations in his heart" (Proverbs 26:24-25). The Roman Catholic Church will observe a "Day of Reflection on Interreligious Dialogue", which is an "invitation to prayer and reflection addressed particularly to Catholics... fixed for Pentecost Sunday in the year 2000... Pentecost is a sign **that Babel can be overcome**, that harmony can be achieved, and this finally is the goal of interreligious dialogue... for Christians to remember that they are not Christians just for themselves alone, but that they are called to relate to other believers and indeed to all members of humanity" (from the Vatican website). "A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin" (Proverbs 26:28).

Why such negativity to the demonstration "that Babel can be overcome, that harmony can be achieved"? "10 Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. 11 Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?" (James 3:10-11). The duplicity of the Papacy can be seen in its March 1st 2000 publication of a Vatican document on the past faults of Catholic leaders, entitled "Memory and Reconciliation: The Church and the Faults of the Past" (as reported in "Vatican Releases Document on Past Faults" from Catholic World News). The document's release, in an effort of the Pontiff to prepare for the celebration of the Jubilee, is a "request for pardon on behalf of the Church"; meanwhile, the document insists that "'the purification of memory' **should not be misinterpreted as a suggestion that the Church has erred on questions of faith and morals**, or has failed in her task of 'proclaiming the revealed truth which has been confided to her.'" "7 Have ye not seen a vain vision, and have ye not spoken a lying divination, whereas ye say, The LORD saith it; albeit I have not spoken? 8 Therefore thus saith the LORD GOD; Because ye have spoken vanity, and seen lies, therefore, behold, I am against you, saith the LORD GOD" (Ezekiel 13:7-8).

The Papacy may seek "Dialogue" and "Reconciliation" in this proclaimed year of celebration of the Jubilee. But, the "repentance" of Pope John Paul II for the condemnation and martyrdom of John Huss (1370-1415) by the Ecumenical Council of Constance (1414-1418)-- *infallibly* convened by Pope John XXIII, where Pope Martin V *infallibly* condemned Huss-- is **not** allowed in this admission of faults. Again, "Memory and Reconciliation" specifically **denies** that the "Church has erred on questions of faith and morals". "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (James 3:17). John Huss of Bohemia (also spelled Jan Hus), a priest of the Church of Rome, was proclaimed as a heretic, i.e., divisive away from the faith and morals of the Catholic Church, because he "had transferred his

allegiance from the Church [of Rome] to God speaking in his Word. This was his great crime" (from "Imprisonment and Examination of Huss" in J. A. Wylie's "[The History of Protestantism](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/James.A.Wylie.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/James.A.Wylie.html> --). "But the Anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same Anointing teacheth you of all things, and is Truth, and is no lie, and even as It hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him" (1John 2:27).

Such are the encumbrances to the Papal attempt for religious harmony this June (2000). But, if the Pope ultimately manifests himself in the role of the False Prophet of the Apocalypse, then his eventual headship in the union of all religions, i.e., United Religions (UR), will be his greatest achievement. "And he [the False Prophet] exerciseth all the power of the first beast [the Antichrist] before him, and **causeth the Earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast**, whose deadly wound was healed" (Revelation 13:12). This editorial only desires to warn those that hear the voice of the Holy Spirit through His Word to "keep [yourselves] unspotted from the world" (James 1:27) by keeping yourselves "in the Love of God" (Jude 21) through prayerful obedience to His command to "come out from among them, and be ye separate" (2Corinthians 6:17).

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (Revelation 3:22). "Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision" (Philippians 3:2). "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy Crown" (Revelation 3:11).

Maranatha!

[For further study, please see the "Babylon the Great Manifests Itself As The Global Religion: United Religions (2000)" section of our article, "[The Final Judgment of the Great Whore](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/Babylon.The.Great.Part.6.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/Babylon.The.Great.Part.6.html> --, in our series, "[Babylon the Great](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/WStS.Timeline.html#Babylon)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/WStS.Timeline.html#Babylon> --.

Also

[Lest We Forget](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Lest.We.Forget.html) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Lest.We.Forget.html> --
A WStS Prologue to J.A. Wylie's "The History of Protestantism"
by Tom and Katie Stewart

"Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men" (1 Corinthians 7:23).

Martyrs have added their testimony to the foundation laid by our LORD. "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward" (1Corinthians 3:14). They have given us an heritage unto the LORD, a lineage of faith. They have given us their testimonies of a Love that the flames could not burn out. For example,

"These homilies [religious writings-- testimonies] were golden cups, filled with living waters, and when the people of England pressed them to their parched lips, it well became them to remember whose were the hands that had replenished these vessels from the Divine fountains. The authors of the homilies—Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer—though dead, were yet speaking. They had perished at the stake, but now they were preaching by a thousand tongues to the people of England. Tyrants had done to them as they listed; but, risen from the dead, these martyrs were marching before the nation in its glorious exit from its house of bondage" (excerpted from "[The History of Protestantism](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/History.Protestant.v3.b23.html)", Volume 3, Book 23, Chapter 15 -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/History.Protestant.v3.b23.html> -- by J. A. Wylie).

The word "protestant" is a reactionary word. It objects to the errors of the Church of Rome. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (2Corinthians 6:14). In 1755, Samuel Johnson's dictionary defined a Protestant as "one of those who adhere to them, who, at the beginning of the reformation, protested against the errors of the church of Rome." Error-- in the name of Christ-- is to be separated from and reprov'd. "Have **no fellowship** with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather **reprove** them" (Ephesians 5:11). To passively abide in the darkness of Roman Catholicism is to take sides against the LORD Jesus Christ...

"It is that ignorance which paralyses the arm of the Church of Christ, and makes the glorious word "Protestant" senseless, almost a dead and ridiculous word. For who does really protest against Rome today? where are those who sound the trumpet of alarm?" (excerpted from "[Fifty Years in the Church of Rome](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Fifty.Years.Church.Rome.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Fifty.Years.Church.Rome.html> -- by Charles Chiniqy).]

Who Has the Right to Judge?

April 4, 2000

Scripture is plain that God is the Judge of All the Earth (Genesis 18:25), and implicitly has the right to judge. When the LORD Jesus

Christ declared that "all power [or, authority] is given unto Me in Heaven and in Earth" (Matthew 28:18), we were given the foundation of the understanding that He is the KING of Kings, and LORD of Lords (Revelation 19:16) that will soon return to judge the Earth. "And I saw Heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war" (19:11). Jesus testified that the Father "hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John 5:22). Therefore, it is correct to say that the Son of God has the right to judge. "I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear, I judge: and My judgment is just; because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me" (5:30).

But, what mere man has the right to judge? "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" (Isaiah 2:22). Unless the Son of God authorizes a man to exercise judgment, that man is a pretender and usurper, much like the Antichrist. "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (2Thessalonians 2:4). However, if the LORD Jesus Himself decrees the circumstances in which a man can and ought to exercise judgment over another man, then that judgment is righteous judgment. "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24).

"Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matthew 7:1) is the commonly quoted verse for why Christians aren't supposed to judge. But, remember that the LORD Jesus COMMANDED us to "judge RIGHTEOUS judgment" (John 7:24). "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matthew 7:1) was spoken to those who had "beam[s]" in their own eyes. They were "hypocrites", meaning that they were guilty of the sins they judged in others. "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not THE BEAM THAT IS IN THINE OWN EYE? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, A BEAM IS IN THINE OWN EYE? Thou HYPOCRITE, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and THEN SHALT THOU SEE CLEARLY TO CAST OUT THE MOTE OUT OF THY BROTHER'S EYE" (Matthew 7:3-5). Notice that the LORD is NOT saying we should not judge by casting the mote out of thy brother's eye, but that we need to see clearly when we judge, and not be hypocrites. The LORD is warning us about judging others when we are guilty ourselves, "for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Matthew 7:2). It is ONLY the righteous that can judge righteous judgment, because only the righteous can SEE clearly. They have no "mote[s]", or sins, to block their vision.

"God's people are to imitate God in the exercise of holy judgment, i.e., 'Judge not, that ye be not judged... Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you' (Matthew 7:1, 6). Lest an improper interpretation of verse one (i.e., that Christians should not judge) hinders us from exercising GODLY judgment, verse six reminds us that God's people MUST DETERMINE THE DIFFERENCE between 'holy' and 'dogs', 'pearl' and 'swine'. The very concept that Christians should not judge, flies in the face of the teachings of the New Testament. The Apostle Paul gave us the example of readiness to judge, i.e., 'For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed' (1Corinthians 5:3)" (excerpted from our more comprehensive article, "[Judge Righteous Judgment](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Judge.Righteous.Judgment.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Judge.Righteous.Judgment.html> --).

"But HE THAT IS SPIRITUAL JUDGETH ALL THINGS, yet he himself is judged of no man" (1Corinthians 2:15). A Spiritual man is a man who follows the Spirit-- he is righteous. A righteous man is not judged by any man because he hasn't done anything wrong that needs judging. He follows the Spirit, not the flesh. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:1). There is "condemnation" to them who walk "after the flesh", and that is why righteous judgment is needed. It is our duty to "judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24). "He that is Spiritual judgeth ALL things" (1Corinthians 2:15). Because righteous judgment is God's COMMAND to the "Spiritual" man, our obedience to Him is joyfully given. "It is JOY to the just to do judgment: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity" (Proverbs 21:15). God wants judgment, and we must want what God wants or else we can't walk WITH God. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3).

In conclusion, remember these two powerful verses showing the authority we are to have in judging righteous judgment.

- "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on Earth shall be bound in Heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on Earth shall be loosed in Heaven" (Matthew 18:18).
- "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John 20:23).

Maranatha!

The Most Negative Verse in the Bible

April 23, 2000

Negative is that which indicates opposition; but, perish the thought that any part of the inspired Scripture is in opposition to God. "The Words of the LORD are pure Words: as silver tried in a furnace of Earth, purified seven times" (Psalm 12:6). And, it is a Scriptural fact that the *negative* word "ungodly" appears four times in a single verse of the Authorized Version (KJV)-- four times that of any other verse. "To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are **ungodly** among them of all their **ungodly** deeds which they have **ungodly** committed, and of all their hard speeches which **ungodly** sinners have spoken against Him" (Jude 15). A novice Christian may find such earnest statements to be strangely zealous and negative; but, like much of the Scripture that depicts the Last Days, *negative is appropriate*. "1 This know also, that in the Last Days perilous times shall come. 2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, 4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (2Timothy 3:1-5).

When spiritual life has truly begun in the hearts of the former "children of the devil" (1John 3:10), our understanding of the world we live in, now becomes illuminated by the light of the Word of God. "We have also a more sure Word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a Light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the Day Star arise in your hearts" (2Peter 1:19). And, since each of us comes from different circumstances, our response to the Truth must overcome the unique difficulties that would keep us from growing into the mature body of Christ. "But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold" (Matthew 13:8). Before long, we invariably begin to notice that the world is "no friend to grace", and that the antagonism seems only to increase. "13 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. 14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; 15 And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto **Salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus**" (2Timothy 3:13-15).

As we mature in Christ, we find that the strength of the Christian's opposition to ungodliness is the measure of his devotion to Christ. "He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad" (Matthew 12:30). It is an impossibility to act neutrally toward the One who is the "True Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9). The half measures of the world's commitment to Christ, deceive only the world, but never Christ. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the One, and love the other; or else he will hold to the One, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24). As the LORD Jesus hated the sin but loved the sinner, we must attempt to imitate His love by reaching out to a sinful world, with the Gospel of the "redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24). [See a brief presentation of the Gospel, "[Who Then Can Be Saved?](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Jehovah/Who.Then.Can.Be.Saved.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Jehovah/Who.Then.Can.Be.Saved.html> --] But, we must resist the understandably easy error that has plagued the Church of these Last Days, that "Christians aren't perfect, just forgiven", which has had the *tendency* to excuse sin in the Church. "5 And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin. 6 Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him" (1John 3:5-6). [See our article, "[Must We Then Sin?](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Must.We.Then.Sin.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Must.We.Then.Sin.html> -- Or, A Response to the Doctrine of Sin Nature or the Doctrine of Original Sin, Or, A Clarification of What is Sin, Why We Sin, and How Not to Sin", for a Scriptural attempt to make sense of the problem of sin.]

Approaching the finish line of our sojourn upon this planet, whether by death or Rapture, it becomes more apparent that the ungodliness of the Last Days that Jude protested so vehemently, has been the illegitimate child of Laodicea's attempt to clothe its sinful nakedness with miserable excuses of her inability to lay hold of practical holiness. "11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, Godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. 12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on Eternal Life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses" (1Timothy 6:11-12). Without succumbing to the fear that we, ourselves, will fall prey to Laodicea's nakedness, we commit ourselves in faith to the Faithful Creator (1Peter 4:19), trusting "that He is able to keep that which [we] have committed unto Him against that day" (2Timothy 1:12). "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1Timothy 4:16). May we, like the Apostle Paul, be able to say at the end, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2Timothy 4:7).

Maranatha!

The Necessity of Suffering

May 1, 2000

To be human is to hate pain and suffering. "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the LORD the Church" (Ephesians 5:29). Yet, suffering is inescapable for humanity, and especially for the Saints. "Yea, and all that will live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2Timothy 3:12). Perhaps you have not thought of suffering as part of the life of the ordinary Christian, but the Apostle Peter was inspired to write of the suffering and glory of his readers. "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin" (1Peter 4:1). What Christian would not desire to follow in the steps of the LORD Jesus, even though it means suffering? "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps" (2:21). It may be thought strange, but the humanity of our divine LORD Jesus actually learned Godly obedience by His sufferings. "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered" (Hebrews 5:8). Why would we think ourselves so privileged that we should avoid the plight of our fellow "Strangers and Pilgrims" (11:13), "knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world" (1Peter 5:9)?

Isaac Watts (1674-1748) wrote of the Christian's warfare and suffering in his hymn, "Am I a Soldier of the Cross?".

"Must I be carried to the skies
On flowry beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize
And sailed thru bloody seas?"

Though Watts referred primarily to the suffering for righteousness that the Saints have endured at the hands of the ungodly, i.e., "15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. 16 Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf" (1Peter 4:15-16), *even more fundamentally*, suffering was necessitated because of the introduction of sin into the world.

(1) Physical death (or, physical depravity) was promised, along with the spiritual death (or, moral depravity) of the First Sin, i.e., "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17).

(2) The circumstances that aggravate mankind, which culminate in physical death, were immediately introduced at the First Sin, i.e., "And unto Adam He said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life" (3:17). And,

(3) Even from the beginning, the LORD God planned the benefit to man of using physical suffering and death to motivate him to seek God and spiritual life, i.e., "22 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of Us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: 23 Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken" (3:22-23).

Unlike the medieval monk, the True Saints do not need to go out of their way to devise means to chasten their flesh, for God will wisely devise all the necessary means and circumstances to promote holiness in His willing Saints. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is **common** to man: but God is Faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1Corinthians 10:13). If we truly abide in the LORD Jesus Christ, He has promised to prune us to increase our fruitfulness. "2 Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth [literally, prunes] it, that it may bring forth more fruit... 4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me" (John 15:2, 4). We have been guaranteed specific answer to our prayers based upon our abiding in Him, i.e., "If ye abide in Me, and My Words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (15:7); but, it has been divinely revealed that we can never ask God to tie His hands by keeping Himself from disallowing **every** kind of physical suffering or pruning. "9 And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2Corinthians 12:9-10).

Christians more need to spend their time seeking greater Christlikeness, than to imitate the world in seeking to promote their physical longevity and enjoyment. "For bodily exercise profiteth [a] little: but Godliness is profitable unto all things, having Promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1Timothy 4:8). As much as long life is a blessing from God, a *Godly life* is His preeminent blessing. "5 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the Truth, supposing that gain is Godliness: from such withdraw thyself. 6 But Godliness with contentment is great gain" (6:5-6). It is not wrong of us to ask the LORD to remove a "thorn in the flesh" (2Corinthians 12:7). And, we ought to attempt to pray the prayer of faith for deliverance from physical suffering or temporal persecutions. "Many are the afflictions of the Righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all" (Psalm 34:19). But, we must not lose sight of the eternal values and gain that the Almighty seeks for us and His Kingdom. "And they that be wise shall

shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Daniel 12:3). May all the pain and suffering of our short sojourn upon this planet be turned into the "gold, silver, precious stones" (1Corinthians 3:12) of our reward, that we may "cast [our] crowns before the Throne" (Revelation 4:10), and join the heavenly throng in praising God. "Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" (4:11).

Maranatha!

China's Future is Written in Scripture

May 31, 2000

Evening of May 24th 2000. The People's Republic of China (PRC) may soon be enjoying the benefits of the United States lifting trade restrictions with China's "miracle economy"-- giving the PRC Permanent Normal Trade Relations status with the U.S., as well as U.S. support for membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO)-- now that the House of Representatives has 237 to 197 passed a crucial trade bill. "And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the Kings of the East might be prepared" (Revelation 16:12). Though Americans may have formerly viewed the economic benefits of the Far East to have been the product of Japanese electronics and automobiles, it is increasingly apparent to the average consumer that mainland China is the source of more and more of what Americans use. "A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is His delight" (Proverbs 11:1). American labor unions-- traditional allies of President Clinton's Democratic Party-- joined ranks with conservative Republicans, as they attempted to stop President Clinton's strange coalition of defecting Democrats and mainstream Republicans, from passing the China trade bill, which the labor unions felt would give up more of their jobs to Chinese workers than they would receive in increased jobs for goods exported to China's "vast untapped" consumer base. "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh" (Ephesians 5:29).

Though the pro-business stance of the Republican Party was employed in support of this strategic trade bill, Republicans had to give grudging support to the communist government of the People's Republic of China-- with its well-known record of human rights repression, e.g., the loss of untold lives when the People's Liberation Army (PLA) suppressed the pro- democracy demonstrations of students in Beijing's Tiananmen Square on June 3-4, 1989-- while continuing to oppose normalized trade relations with the similarly repressive government of Castro's Cuba. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, **hypocrites!** for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness" (Matthew 23:27). The euphoric condition of the American stock market has projected a "never-ending-party" atmosphere to the American public, and undoubtedly has contributed to their Representatives' vote on the China trade bill. "19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. 20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" (Luke 12:19-20).

According to a May 24th 2000 article by Paul Sperry (WorldNetDaily.com), entitled, "China's dirty little secret: Hard-liners need trade status to hold onto power amid growing unrest", "unrest comes as China's unemployment rate hits a 30-year high and its economy nears collapse." PLA troops have put down the worst industrial rioting in years in a depressed mining town of mainland China. The father of China's democracy movement, dissident Wei Jingsheng, told Paul Sperry that angry, jobless farmers have staged "a record 2,000 riots against local communist authorities." He adds that Beijing "desperately needs money for the PLA to retake Taiwan, but also to smash uprisings." Further, economist Peter Brain of the National Institute for Economic and Industrial Research in Melbourne, Australia, says that unemployment has risen to 20 percent in China's cities. Brookings Institution economist Nicholas Lardy says that "China's debt is five times higher than it was in 1995", where 70 percent of current borrowing is going to service existing debt. Why the fiscal morass? Paul Sperry writes that China's current fiscal problems have come from the "biggest military buildup on the planet", where the Chinese Communist Party has ordered eight years of double-digit hikes in military spending. Since the PLA controls about 15,000 companies with some \$10 billion in sales, and since the PRC government also runs the banks, Western loans are easily put towards the military. And, U.S. technology from companies like Boeing and Motorola, would be readily applied to develop new weapons systems, such as the satellite and missile technology that the PRC brandishes against the West Coast of the U.S. as a threatened response to American military interference with Mainland China's retaking of Taiwan. In short, contrary to the package sold to the House of Representatives by the Clinton White House, the China trade bill will serve more to attempt to rescue China's failing economy for its totalitarian masters, than to provide a boon to American workers' exports to China.

To the undiscerning, the fulfillment of Bible prophecy does not seem to have anything to do with the decisions made by the economic and political powers of the world, but the "king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever

He will" (Proverbs 21:1). "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee: the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain" (Psalm 76:10). The Saints are required by God to pray for the fulfillment of the prophecy that they understand to be necessary to come to pass for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, i.e., "Thy Kingdom come" (Matthew 6:10). "Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them" (Ezekiel 36:37). Though China is mentioned only in passing in the Apocalypse, the Sixth Vial Judgment (Revelation 16:12) represents the Kings of the East as vital to the last conflagration that will be fought at Armageddon, before the Second Advent of the LORD Jesus Christ. "12 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the Kings of the East [including China] might be prepared. 13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon [Satan], and out of the mouth of the beast [the Antichrist], and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the Earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. 15 Behold, I [Jesus] come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. 16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue **Armageddon**" (Revelation 16:12-16).

For those who believe the testimony of God, the Scripture is plain concerning the destiny of the Kings of the East, i.e., including the People's Republic of China. Jesus Christ, Whose "Name is called The Word of God" (Revelation 19:13) and who is truly the "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (19:16), is prophesied by Scripture to vanquish certainly, totally, and eternally the Kings of the East, and all that oppose Him at Armageddon. "17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the Great God; 18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. 19 And I saw the Beast [the Antichrist], and the kings of the Earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him [Jesus] that sat on the horse, and against His army [the Saints and angels]. 20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the Mark of the Beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a Lake of Fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him [Jesus] that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh" (Revelation 19:17-21).

To those that look for the soon appearing of Jesus Christ, "Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1Peter 1:13). And, to those that have not seriously looked at the coming events from the perspective of Scripture, "The time is at hand" (Revelation 22:10). Turn from your sin and selfishness, and trust Jesus Christ to save, sanctify, and keep you for time and Eternity. "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24).

Maranatha!

Survival of the Fittest

July 20, 2000

"Natural selection conceived of as a struggle for life in which only those organisms best adapted to existing conditions are able to survive and reproduce" is the dictionary entry for "survival of the fittest". "27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29 That no flesh should glory in His presence" (1Corinthians 1:27-29). The mechanism that drives Darwin's Theory of Evolution is Natural Selection or Survival of the Fittest; and therefore, Survival of the Fittest is the evolutionist's agent of change, just as God is the Christian's agent of change. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the LORD, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the LORD" (2Corinthians 3:18).

Survival of the Fittest is accepted as a first truth by most people, just as they would accept the Law of Gravity; but, instead of proving Evolution-- that man descended from less complex life forms, such as apes-- Survival of the Fittest only proves that wicked men are depraved, and getting worse. "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2Timothy 3:13). Since the process of Natural Selection is supposed to choose or adapt the best fitted organism for survival and procreation, then the fact that Christ will not find faith on Earth when He returns, i.e., "when the Son of Man [Jesus Christ] cometh, shall He find faith on the Earth?" (Luke 18:8), indicates that the process of the Survival of the Fittest is antagonistic to Christ, Christianity, and faith, because it leaves only the faithless, in the end. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1Corinthians 2:14).

In replacing God as the agent of change, Survival of the Fittest has allowed man to become his own agent of change, i.e., modern "science falsely so called" (1Timothy 6:20), has enshrined man as his own god. "Who changed the Truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, Who is blessed for ever. Amen" (Romans 1:25). When we see those around us competing for survival in life, sports, gambling, career, and business, someone *must* lose in order that the other might gain. "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and **ran greedily** after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core" (Jude 11). The world around us knows no other way than Survival of the Fittest; and, *anything other than* the Supreme Love for God and an Equal Love for our neighbour as ourself, is the selfish maxim ruling the world. But...³⁶ Master, which is the great commandment in the Law? ³⁷ Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. ³⁸ This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. ⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:36-40).

Perfect Love is the opposite of the Survival of the Fittest; and, all men owe it to one another. ⁴³ Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. ⁴⁴ But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; ⁴⁵ That ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. ⁴⁶ For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? ⁴⁷ And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? ⁴⁸ Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:43-48).

Since Perfect Love, which is the "Law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2), is the antithesis of the Survival of the Fittest, rather than beating, defeating, besting, overcoming, or vanquishing our neighbour, we should seek their benefit. "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth" (1Corinthians 10:24). And, without the benefit of the New Birth, i.e., "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God" (John 3:3), man cannot truly look upon God as his Father, neither can he treat a Christian as a brother, and certainly will he not be willing or able to "love his neighbour as himself" (Mark 12:33). But, for the Saints: ³⁴ A New Commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. ³⁵ By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34-35). So then, "we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2Corinthians 5:10). [See our article, "[The Judgment Seat of Christ](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Judgment.Seat.of.Christ.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Judgment.Seat.of.Christ.html> -- , for further Scriptural development of what to expect at Christ's judgment seat.]

Maranatha!

But Where Are the Nine?

July 27, 2000

One of the first *visible* signs that a Christian has backslid from his "First Love" (Revelation 2:4), i.e., fallen away from the LORD Jesus Christ, is that the "backslider in heart" (Proverbs 14:14) is again full of his old, unconverted, selfish ways; namely, the Backslider is **ungrateful** to God *and* man. "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, **neither were thankful**; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened" (Romans 1:21). Christ's healing of the ten lepers illustrates the **Sin of Ingratitude**. ¹² And as [Jesus] entered into a certain village, there met Him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: ¹³ And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. ¹⁴ And when He saw them, He said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. ¹⁵ And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, ¹⁶ And fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷ And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? **but where are the nine?** ¹⁸ There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. ¹⁹ And He said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole" (Luke 17:12-19).

Jesus encountered ten lepers, who begged for mercy from the Messiah to heal them. "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us" (Luke 17:13). They said the right things; and just so, when we first came to Christ, we said the right things, i.e., "God be merciful to me a sinner" (18:13). Even though the Omniscient Son of God knew that we would later backslide, He forgave us, just as He cleansed the lepers. "And when He saw them, He said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed" (17:14). But, the part of the story that shows us that **even the Son of God expects to be thanked** for His mercy and grace, is where one of the cleansed lepers, a Samaritan, returned to glorify and thank the LORD Jesus. ¹⁵ And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, ¹⁶ and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks: and he

was a Samaritan" (17:15-16). "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1Thessalonians 5:18). "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God" (Psalm 50:23). Jesus immediately exclaimed, "Were there not ten cleansed? **but where are the nine?**" (17:17). "Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" (Revelation 4:11).

We may blame the Nine Ungrateful Lepers for their neglect in thanking the LORD for their healing; but, are we any different from them when we demonstrate gross ingratitude for the many kindnesses demonstrated to us by those whom God has sent our way? "45 Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me. 46 And these shall go away into Everlasting Punishment: but the Righteous into Life Eternal" (Matthew 25:45-46). Just as we are pleased to hear a "Thank you", the LORD Jesus has made us eternally indebted to Him for the "Great Love wherewith He loved us" (Ephesians 2:4). If we desire to continue our Love Relationship with Jesus, our Heavenly Bridegroom, i.e., "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh" (Matthew 25:6), then we ought to cultivate a continual atmosphere of worship and thanksgiving for all the blessings that have flowed from Him, i.e., "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our LORD Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 5:20). "18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the Saints, 8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all Saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the Unsearchable Riches of Christ" (Ephesians 1:18; 3:8).

If we cannot demonstrate gratitude and thankfulness for the kind acts of people that God has sent our way, then how can we claim to be grateful to the LORD Jesus Christ for saving us? "4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Titus 3:4-6). The Apostle John was inspired to show by comparison the ridiculousness of anyone, who would claim to love God, while hating his brother. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God Whom he hath not seen?" (1John 4:20). Just as we can tell that a man does not love God, when he despises his brother; we can see that a man is not grateful to God, when he demonstrates gross ingratitude to his neighbour. "And He answering said, Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself" (Luke 10:27).

Remember to thank God for all things at all times. "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His Name" (Hebrews 13:15). And, let us "be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love" (Romans 12:10) for the small kindnesses that have been shown to us by others. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). Our gratitude to God will be seen in our obedience as well as in our praise. "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His Commandments" (1John 5:2).

LORD, ever make us to "walk in Thy Truth" (Psalm 86:11), that we, like the Psalmist, whose heart stood "in awe of Thy Word" (119:161), may always walk in gratitude to Thee, and would never by our lips walk in hypocrisy, by demonstrating ingratitude to those whom Thou hast brought our way.

Amen, and Amen.

Baby Boomers: Why Shall We Then Live?

August 6, 2000

In the United States of America, a steep increase in the birthrate following World War 2, produced about 78 million babies, which eventually accounted for close to one-third of America's population in 1980. "Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom He hath chosen for His own inheritance" (Psalm 33:12). In the 1970s, the birthrate dropped, leaving an uneven age distribution, which affected education, jobs, Social Security, etc. "Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is His reward" (127:3). This American demographic phenomenon is commonly referred to as the Baby Boom, with its statistical population of Boomers presently (c. 2000) between 36 and 54 years of age. As of June 1st 2000, the U.S. Census Bureau recorded the population of the United States as 274,912,000. The material prosperity of the Boomers-- 28% of the total population-- is so much greater than their parents, that the median family income of a household headed by someone between 36 and 54 has risen from \$3,440 in 1947 to \$61,833 in 1998. Adjusted for inflation, that 1947 household income would still be only equated to \$23,170 in 1998 dollars. "But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the Earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD" (Jeremiah 9:24).

What is the significance of the American Baby Boom? To many, if not most, of the Boomers, the significance of the Baby Boom, is MATERIAL PROSPERITY. "And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth" (Deuteronomy 8:17). The accumulated security of property, possessions, savings, pensions, retirements, annuities, and health plans, position the Boomers to focus less on finishing putting their children through school, and more upon leisurely pursuits. "But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day" (8:18). With more of a tendency to be in financial debt, e.g., credit cards, mortgage, and children's college tuition, Boomers are looking forward to their "empty nest" years as a time to reap the benefits of their lifetime of work. In a word, they are looked upon by the marketing researchers as the "power consumers" of this new millennium. "13 Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: 14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. 15 For that ye ought to say, If the LORD will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (James 4:13-15).

This writer-- also, a Baby Boomer-- recently was told about another prosperous looking, middle class Boomer, who described, with much satisfaction, the success of her 27 year old son in managing a grocery store in the Pacific Northwest of the US. In essence, she advised her son to do whatever he had to do to succeed. "Step on their heads, and don't look back," was her worldly-wise advice. I was dismayed at this recounting, because I had also met the individual, but was not aware, at that time, of this sadly wicked advice. "1 And I said, Hear, I pray you, O heads of Jacob, and ye princes of the house of Israel; Is it not for you to know judgment? 2 Who hate the good, and love the evil; who pluck off their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones; 3 Who also eat the flesh of My people, and flay their skin from off them; and they break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron" (Micah 3:1-3). Unfortunately, the ungodly advice of this woman, flies in the face of the Law of God-- which enjoins, "Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself" (Luke 10:27). Multiplying such instances throughout the population of America, only increases the need of God judging the land. "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34).

The question needs to be asked, "Why should we then live?" For what reason do we live? The answer of those who know the forgiveness of sins that the Father gives, i.e., "13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the Kingdom of His Dear Son: 14 In Whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:13-14), is that we ought to live for God and not for self. "That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God" (1Peter 4:2). The only truly unselfish individual is the one who truly loves God. "If any man love God, the same is known of Him" (1Corinthians 8:3). The evidence of that love of God can be seen in:

(1) our obedience to God, i.e., "For this is the love of God, that we keep His Commandments: and His Commandments are not grievous" (1John 5:3), and

(2) our love of the Brethren, i.e., "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God Whom he hath not seen?" (4:20).

Only through the forgiveness available through the Gospel of Jesus Christ, can any Baby Boomer escape the trap of materialism, i.e., "supposing that gain is Godliness" (1Timothy 6:5). The Gospel assumes that love is the one debt that can never be fully discharged, i.e., "14 I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. 15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also" (Romans 1:14-15). However, our past neglect of not loving God supremely and not loving our neighbour equally as ourselves (Matthew 22:36-40) has accumulated a sinful debt that can never be repaid. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Our sin has justly earned for us the punishment of Eternal Death. "For the wages of sin is death" (6:23). But, the "gift of God is Eternal Life through Jesus Christ our LORD" (6:23). Strangely, to our minds, Eternal Life and the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ, comes through the simple act of repenting (willingly turning away from our sins) and believing the Gospel. "11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us Eternal Life, and this Life is in His Son. 12 He that hath the Son hath Life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not Life" (1John 5:11-12). Exactly who has the Son of God in their life? Those who put their trust in Him to save them. "9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the LORD Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto Salvation" (Romans 10:9-10).

May Jesus Christ be your reason for living.

Amen, and Amen.

A Little Leaven

September 5, 2000

Church history has seen innumerable controversies concerning all of its major doctrines, from the Divinity of Christ to the Second Coming of the Messiah; but, *the neglect of the Church to return to its First Love is our most serious failure*. "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy First Love" (Revelation 2:4). Falling away from a loving obedience of the LORD Jesus Christ is evidence that we are close to the appearing of the Antichrist. "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that Man of Sin be revealed, the Son of Perdition" (2Thessalonians 2:3). Rejecting our necessity to love our neighbour as ourself, has caused so much confusion that the Church resorts to the world's psychology rather than the Word of God for answers to the problems of human relationships. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (1John 4:20). Our doctrine will soon betray our deficiency of a "faith which worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6), if when the Saviour returns, our claim to orthodoxy outweighs our proof of loving obedience. "If ye keep My Commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's Commandments, and abide in His love" (John 15:10).

Doctrine is important, because it is the encapsulation of our understanding of the things "which are most surely believed among us" (Luke 1:1). *It is necessary to defend the doctrines that ought to be believed*. "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the Common Salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints" (Jude 3). Each generation is commissioned, not only to "teach all nations" (Matthew 28:19), but to pass "Sound Doctrine" (Titus 2:1) on to the succeeding generations, in its purest form. "6 And these Words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: 7 and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them

when thou sittest in thine house,
and when thou walkest by the way,
and when thou liest down,
and when thou risest up"

(Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

The only true method of maintaining pure doctrine, is to live it before our children; and ensure that they likewise live what they profess to have received. "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2Timothy 2:2).

In geometry, two lines on the same plane that do not intersect are said to be parallel. When attempting to draw two parallel lines with a straightedge, the slightest amount of error will eventually see the two lines intersect, if extended far enough. The same is true of doctrine that is not backed by a "living-loving" faith, i.e., *hypocritical practice will collide with dead doctrine*. "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1Corinthians 11:1). In truth, we must guard ourselves from receiving or introducing the **slightest amount** of error in the doctrine that we believe. "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Colossians 2:8). **Only the Spirit of Truth can preserve us from the leaven of error**. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Galatians 5:9). We, then, should rest confident that the Holy Spirit can address us from His Word, teaching us "Sound Doctrine" (Titus 2:1), if we are willing. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself" (John 7:17). A willing heart is the only pupil that the Holy Spirit can teach. "But the Anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same Anointing teacheth you of all things, and is Truth, and is no lie, and even as It hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him" (1John 2:27).

That Anointing (1John 2:27) is the Blessed Paraklete Himself, Who is the Teacher that the Father and the Son have appointed to instruct us. "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all Truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come" (John 16:13). More than an emanating power from the Son or Father, the Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Godhead, being of the same Divine Essence. "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you Another [Greek, allos, another of the **same kind**] Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever" (14:16). If we stumble, when dealing with the doctrines of the Divinity and Personality of the Holy Spirit, we rob ourselves of our Divine Instructor, as well as, our Divine Protection From Error. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, Whom the Father will send in My Name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (14:26).

Another basic doctrine, such as the Doctrine of the Trinity, when refused and denied, can yield all kinds of negative consequences, i.e., denial of the Divinity and Personality of the Holy Spirit, denial of the Divinity of Christ, etc. "Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to **lie to the Holy Ghost**... thou hast **not lied unto men, but unto God**" (Acts 5:3-4). Historically, the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD made a formal statement of the doctrine of the Trinity; and, today, we understand the Doctrine of the Trinity to mean that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, comprising the Godhead, are of the same Substance or Essence, but are distinctly Three

Persons. "The grace of the LORD Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen" (2Corinthians 13:14). We have been graced with the childlike simplicity of the Trinity in the Gospel picture of the baptism of Jesus. "And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a Dove upon Him, and a voice came from Heaven, which said, Thou art My Beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased" (Luke 3:22).

A denial of such a doctrine as the Trinity, is sufficient to fuel the way for the Antichrist; and, is consistent with most of the major cults, e.g., Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, etc. "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I Am" (John 8:58). Comparing the Scriptures with the teachings of the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormons, we have found that anti-Christian movements most often will deny the Trinity. "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son" (1John 2:22). But, the New Testament plainly teaches the Doctrine of the Trinity. It reveals that the Godhead is One in Essence, but Triune in Personality. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are represented as equally Divine. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19). Both the Father and the Son make their abode with the Saints through the Spirit, i.e., "And he that keepeth His Commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us" (1John 3:24). "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My Words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him" (John 14:23). The New Testament teaches the Unity of God, that the Godhead is One in Its intrinsic properties of Divinity, but It further reveals the Tri-Unity of God as also being distinctly separate in Personality. "For there are Three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are One" (1John 5:7).

Both the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormons deny the Doctrine of the Trinity. The Jehovah's Witnesses say:

"...Such doctrine is not of God... The obvious conclusion is... that Satan is the originator of the trinity doctrine" (from "Let God Be True" [1952], Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, pp. 100, 101).

The Mormons testify:

"God was once as we are now, an exalted man... We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea, and take away the veil, so that you may see... he was once a man like us, yea, that God Himself, the Father of us all, dwelt on earth the same as Jesus Christ did... Here then is eternal life-- to know the only wise and true God, and you have got to learn how to be gods yourselves..." (from Joseph Smith's "Times and Seasons", August 1, 1844).

Further, the Mormons contradict the very concept of the Omnipresence of the Holy Spirit:

"It has been said, therefore, that God is everywhere; this does not mean that the actual person of any one member of the godhead can be physically present in more than one place at one time..." (from James Talmage's "Articles of Faith", p. 42).

In conclusion, "keep thyself pure" (1Timothy 5:22). "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our LORD Jesus Christ unto Eternal Life" (Jude 21). The Doctrine of the Second Coming of the LORD Jesus Christ is designed specifically to keep the Body of Christ **pure** until He comes for us. "Looking for that Blessed Hope, and the glorious appearing of the Great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13). A constant abiding in expectation and readiness is our LORD's method of maintaining our purity. "2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. 3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is Pure" (1John 3:2-3). Then, a corollary teaching, such as the Doctrine of the Pre-Tribulational Rapture of the Church, is eminently designed to secure the purity of the Saints, as well as their doctrine, until He calls, "Come up hither" (Revelation 4:1). "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36).

Maranatha!

The Cold War and Spiritual Warfare

September 10, 2000

Most likely, an American Baby Boomer (1946-1964) has recollections of life under the threat of nuclear war, especially that drill in the public schools, which conditioned our young minds to accept the hope that sheltering ourselves under our desks would insure our safety during a thermonuclear exchange between the USA and the former USSR (Russia). "The horse is prepared against the day of

battle: but safety is of the LORD" (Proverbs 21:31). Statements such as those of Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, who promoted "peaceful coexistence" with the West, characterized the mentality of the Cold War days: "In a nuclear war-- the living will envy the dead." "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell" (Matthew 10:28). We were molded as clay on a potter's wheel with images of mushroom clouds from atomic bomb and hydrogen bomb testing, to accept the new realities of the Cold War (post-WW2 to 1991), that anything that prevented an exchange of ICBMs (intercontinental ballistic missiles) with their nuclear warheads, is acceptable. "For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jeremiah 8:11).

This brought into the collective consciousness of America the idea that war can and must be waged only in a limited fashion, or suffer the consequences of total nuclear annihilation. "He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad" (Matthew 12:30). Undoubtedly, the capacity of modern Russia and America to jointly destroy life on this planet, is more than propaganda, because the Scriptures authoritatively measure that capability with the words, "except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved" (Matthew 24:22); but, how does the modern Christian live with the spiritual implications of the Cold War? "How should we then live?" (Ezekiel 33:10).

The Internet Generation-- Netscape Navigator's predecessor, Mosaic, with the first graphical user interface (GUI) for the World Wide Web (WWW) only emerged in 1993-- has no firsthand knowledge of the Cold War, and may have only seen archival footage of the end of the Cold War, with the demolition of the Berlin Wall, which began on November 9th 1989. Like a bad dream, the Cold War ceased, only to be replaced by the threat of nuclear terrorism. "There is no new thing under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9). However, to the Christian, what is the legacy of the Cold War? The apocalyptic notions of a world ending war has been clearly inscribed on our minds. But, of greater importance, the concept that war must be conducted in a limited fashion in light of greater consequences, e.g., American military involvement in the Vietnam War (from the early 1960s to the spring of 1975) was never allowed by the politicians to escalate into a nuclear war with North Vietnam's allies (the People's Republic of China or the former Soviet Union), may have persuaded Christians that our warfare against sin, as valiant a fight as it is, can never reach the scale of the total warfare that achieves ultimate victory, until we get to Heaven. "19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do... 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:19, 24).

However, what else can the Scriptures mean, but total victory over sin? To be kept "unspotted from the world", must mean a Christian can have total victory over sin. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). The faith wrought in our hearts by the "power of the Holy Ghost" (Romans 15:13), is more than sufficient to overcome the sin in this world. "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1John 5:4). Since the Father's commandments are "not grievous" (5:3), then Christ's command, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48), can only mean that total victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil is achievable in this life. If we lower our expectation to anything less than total victory over sin, then we ensure our failure. "According to your faith be it unto you" (9:29). Our confidence that we can have total victory over sin by abiding in Christ, gives us great assurance that we will be ready to meet the LORD Jesus when He returns for us. "And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His Coming" (1John 2:28).

In the modern era, the Union general, William Tecumseh Sherman, in his famous March to the Sea (1864-1865) during the American Civil War, was the first to make secular employment of the concept of total warfare. "43 For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, 44 and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation" (Luke 19:43-44). Of greater importance, spiritual warfare for the Christian is and must be total warfare. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24). The Christian is called upon to engage in a total warfare against sin with the total expectation of victory, while still living in this world. "5 This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the Truth: 7 but if we walk in the Light, as He is in the Light, we have fellowship one with another, and the Blood of Jesus Christ His Son **cleanseth us from all sin**" (1John 1:5-7).

We may recall and agree with the words of General Douglas MacArthur, "In war there is no substitute for victory"-- after which President Harry Truman relieved him of his command on April 11th 1951 for insubordination and unwillingness to conduct a limited war in Korea-- but, we may still feel reluctant to claim such an attitude over vanquishing sin and sinning in our own lives. "What saith the Scripture?" (Romans 4:3). The Apostle Paul taught the possibility of total victory over sin, which men such as American evangelist [Charles G. Finney](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html) -- (1792-1875) called Entire Sanctification [See Finney's lectures on "[Sanctification](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin_1840/OE1840.Sanctification.html)" --]. "And the very God of Peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the Coming of our LORD Jesus Christ" (1Thessalonians 5:23). Unlike some positions of theology that may merely dismiss the capability of sinning, Finney taught the necessity of the Holy Spirit to make us "willing in the day of [His] power" (Psalm 110:3), making the overcoming of sin, and its consequential holiness, a moral choice made possible by the New Covenant. "I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk

in My Statutes, and ye shall keep My Judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:27). This total victory over sin is made possible "through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the Promise of the Spirit through faith" (Galatians 3:14). And, the methodology of the Holy Spirit to teach us "to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13) is to use our circumstances and consequent sufferings to teach us entire obedience. "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered" (Hebrews 5:8). The crowning jewel of our total victory over sin, is that we have been given "Exceeding Great and Precious Promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2Peter 1:4). [See our article, "[Exceeding Great and Precious Promises](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Promises/Exceeding.Promises.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Promises/Exceeding.Promises.html> --, to further explore the sanctifying possibilities of the Promises.]

Maranatha!

When Will the Violence Cease?

October 15, 2000

Without great insight into the news, violence of all descriptions is reported from seemingly every turn-- with no need to graphically recount all that can be casually gleaned from the media. "The Earth also was corrupt before God, and the Earth was filled with violence" (Genesis 6:11). Turning from the local or regional reports of abuse of the helpless, we are confronted with headlines of terror, fear, anger, and hatred worldwide. "And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the End is not yet" (Matthew 24:6). It is plain that the vehement desires and strongly held beliefs of its adherents force the violence to take place, with no end in sight. "They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jeremiah 6:14).

The violence of the Earth speaks of cruelty, injustice, and oppression, which no child of God has any desire to embrace. "1 This know also, that in the Last Days perilous times shall come. 2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, 4 traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 5 having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (2Timothy 3:1-5). In fact, the True Saints have no appetite to fill up their minds with the savage details of the world's reality. "For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil" (Romans 16:19). Rejecting the position of the world, that the more graphic and vivid the description of violence and evil is, the better; instead, the "children of the Light" (1Thessalonians 5:5) attempt to focus their minds and hearts on "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report" (Philippians 4:8). "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Philippians 2:15).

Violence will cease for the dwellers of this planet when they despair of themselves and cry out to God, rather than turning themselves to oppression or suicide. "Seek ye the LORD while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near" (Isaiah 55:6). The trouble is not that God does not love mankind enough to seek them out as a Shepherd would go after Lost Sheep, but that *man does not feel himself able to find help from anyone*. "4 What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? 7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance" (Luke 15:4, 7). Personal peace has been guaranteed to "whosoever will" (Revelation 22:17) by the Prince of Peace Himself. "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

But, the violence will only cease for the Impenitent World, when the Almighty declares that His willingness to strive with mankind ceases. "And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years" (Genesis 6:3). The days of Noah preceding the Flood, found the Earth embroiled in much the same circumstances as today. "5 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. 6 And it repented the LORD that He had made man on the Earth, and it grieved Him at His heart" (6:5-6). The God Who "is love" (1John 4:16) was pained in his heart about the wickedness of man. In Noah's day, He determined to do something about the wickedness. "And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the Earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth Me that I have made them" (Genesis 6:7). The violence will cease when God forces man from freely choosing to do his wickedness; but, that speaks of judging the world in righteousness in the fashion of the Second Coming of the LORD Jesus Christ. "37 But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. 38 For as in the days that were before the Flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that

Noe entered into the Ark, 39 and knew not until the Flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matthew 24:37-39).

What hope is there for those who really do love the LORD, for those who do no violence? "Thus saith the LORD; Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place" (Jeremiah 22:3). God knows how to deliver His people from personal temptations, i.e., "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is Faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1Corinthians 10:13), and from worldwide temptation, i.e., "Because thou hast kept the Word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the Earth" (Revelation 3:10), because He is the Saints' Mighty Deliverer. "The LORD knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (2Peter 2:9). The Pre-Tribulational Rapture is both an event and a promise worthy of the Saints' examination and trust, for when the LORD Christ commands, "Come Up Hither" (Revelation 4:1), the Watching and Waiting Saints will be delivered from this planet of violence. "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36).

Maranatha!

Love and Vengeance

October 20, 2000

John the Beloved informs us that "He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the Earth; and the Earth was reaped" (Revelation 14:16). It may be difficult for the human mind to imagine, but the Almighty's judgment of the Earth is in keeping with the Eternal Law of Love. "If ye fulfil the Royal Law according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well" (James 2:8). Not so strange to say, but the Eternal God only demands of man what He is willing to give Himself. And, the righteous demand of God's Moral Law has always been supreme love and consideration for God (for it is only right and fitting) and an equal love of our neighbour as ourselves. "Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind... and... thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:37, 39). So then, when Christ the Judge harvests the Earth, He may, without divorcing Himself of Perfect Love, say, "Vengeance is Mine; I will repay" (Romans 12:19).

A great failure of Professed Christianity, is not to properly distinguish between the two kinds of love-- *disinterested benevolence* and *complacent love*-- that God employs in the administration of His vast Moral Government. The nineteenth century American evangelist Charles G. Finney used the terms *disinterested benevolence* and the *love of complacency* to make the distinction. [See Finney's "[Lectures on Systematic Theology](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Systematic.Theology.html)"-- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Systematic.Theology.html> -- for a thorough discussion of these two terms.]

Disinterested benevolence would be represented in the Scriptures with the love that God demonstrates to all men, regardless of their character-- evil or good. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life" (John 3:16). The good will of God towards man is *disinterested* (free of bias or self-interest) *benevolence* in that "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

Further, the term *complacent love* or the *love of complacency* has virtually lost its meaning in the 21st Century. *Complacent* or *complacency* now has the negative connotation of being self-satisfied or unconcerned, while the nineteenth century used the term *complacent* to encompass the **positive** idea of resting in a satisfied way upon something. Scripturally, God manifests *complacent love* towards *only* the godly, i.e., He rests in a satisfied way upon the right character of the righteous. "He that hath My Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him" (John 14:21). And, when man demonstrates True Obedience to God, it is the *love of complacency*, for man is then demonstrating his satisfaction with the character of the God that he obeyed. "If ye love Me, keep My Commandments" (14:15). It is appropriate, then, to say that God *loves complacently* only those who love and obey Him. "23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My Words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him. 24 He that loveth Me not keepeth not My Sayings: and the Word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's which sent Me" (John 14:23-24). Then, to equate the love of God, i.e., the love man ought to have toward God, with our obedience to God, is to describe why God can approve and rest in our character, which is *complacent love*. "For this is the love of God, that we keep His Commandments: and His Commandments are not grievous [i.e., unbearably burdensome]" (1John 5:3).

So then, how can the God of Love be also the "LORD God to Whom Vengeance Belongeth" (Psalm 94:1), reaping the Earth in the

Apocalypse? Since the Almighty has manifested Himself in His Son as the "Saviour of the World" (1John 4:14), it is unequivocal that "God so loved the world" (John 3:16) with a *disinterested benevolence*, giving to the good and to the evil the Gift of His Son. But, since "all men have not faith" (2Thessalonians 3:2) and "many" (Matthew 7:13), ultimately, will be cast "into outer darkness" (22:13), then God *does not cease* to love the damned with a *disinterested benevolence*. **But**, He *never did* love these finally damned with the *love of complacency*, because there was never anything in them, in which He could approve of their character, i.e., these wicked never repented. "37 But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed NOT on Him: 38 that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, LORD, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the LORD been revealed? 39 Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, 40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them" (John 12:37-40).

What is the Difference Between the Gospel and the Great Commission?

October 25, 2000

[Charles G. Finney](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Revival.Lectures.html> -- remarked in his "[Revival Lectures](#)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Revival.Lectures.html> -- that it "is the great business on earth of every Christian, to save souls". "A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a Word spoken in due season, how good is it!" (Proverbs 15:23). And since, Wisdom teaches us the most efficient application of the means to the end of saving our neighbour's soul, it would be more appropriate to find the right time and words than to multiply our words with little thought. "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver" (Proverbs 25:11). Balancing our Gospel message with the Spirit's leading, will give us the greatest joy of knowing that our Christian witness has done as much good as the Spirit intended. "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the Earth" (Acts 1:8). The Laodicean Church, characterized by profuse professions of knowing Christ, while oblivious to their spiritual nakedness, will never produce the Philadelphian fruit for which we yearn. "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" (1Corinthians 3:6). However, this does not mean that we do not have great expectation of a still greater harvest of souls, because of the impending Pre-Tribulational Rapture, i.e., the salvation and reclamation of those who are left behind after the First "Come Up Hither" (Revelation 4:1). "That the spirit may be saved in the day of the LORD Jesus" (1Corinthians 5:5).

Honest hearted Christians often mistake the Gospel Message of John 3:16 as the Great Commission itself, instead of it being only the vital spearhead of the message to be preached in "all the world... to every creature" (Mark 16:15). "For God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life" (John 3:16). The Great Commission, on the other hand, is clearly given by the LORD Jesus in Matthew 28. "19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:19-20). As you can see, the Gospel Message is necessary for the New Birth of lost sinners, for the reclamation of the backslidden, and for the rededication of laboring Christians; but, the Great Commission itself enjoins that we "teach all nations... to observe ALL things whatsoever [Jesus has] commanded" us (28:19-20). And, we need not be mystical about the substance of His Commandments, for they have always been with us in His Moral Law, i.e., the "Law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2). That Law is not a special interpretation of Sabbath keeping, tithing, or fulness of the Spirit (which all are right in their place), but the Law is the holy and just requirement of the Living God that all men love Him supremely, and that we love our neighbour as ourselves. "37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the First and Great Commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:37-39).

What is the Gospel? The Apostle Paul gave us the inspired answer. "1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the GOSPEL [Greek, euaggelion, or the Good News] which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 2 by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. 3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1Corinthians 15:1-4). The Gospel is the Good News that "Christ died for our sins" (15:3), and "that He was buried" (15:3), but also "that He rose again" (15:3) to certify the Divine Power of His Finished Work of Atonement, to "whosoever believeth in Him" (John 3:16). If mankind had not individually and completely trampled upon God's Moral Law, it would be unnecessary to proclaim the Good News that God has granted amnesty and forgiveness to whosoever "repent[s].. and believe[s] the Gospel" (Mark 1:15).

And, what is the sin for which all men need forgiveness? "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the Law: for sin is the transgression of the Law" (1John 3:4). The sin for which all men need forgiveness, then, is the transgression of God's Moral Law. When

man does not love God supremely and does not love his neighbour with equal consideration as he has for himself, then he has sinned. "12 Wherefore the Law is holy, and the Commandment holy, and just, and good. 13 Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the Commandment might become exceeding sinful" (Romans 7:12-13). The Moral Law cannot save anyone; rather, it can only condemn those who disobey, or praise those who do obey. "20 Therefore by the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the Law is the knowledge of sin... 3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same" (3:20; 13:3). Unfortunately, the dismal truth is that all have transgressed God's Moral Law and have merited God's just condemnation. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (3:23).

Why does God save men? He saves us because He loves us. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His Only Begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him" (1John 4:9). For what purpose, then, does God save us? He saves us that we might magnify Him in fulfilling our created function of loving Him supremely, and our neighbour as ourselves. "If ye love Me, keep My Commandments" (John 14:15). Just as the Son of God was born to die for our sins, we have been given New Life to obey Him. "9 As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you: continue ye in My love. 10 If ye keep My Commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's Commandments, and abide in His love. 11 These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. 12 This is My Commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. 13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. 14 Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (15:9-14).

Should we witness to our neighbour of the love and forgiveness of God because we would feel condemned if we neglected our duty? No. It is from the abundance of our heart that we should speak, i.e., "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matthew 12:34), for a "good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good" (Luke 6:45). It would be mere legalism that we would "witness for Christ", if we do it more to appease our conscience, than to share His love. "Verily I say unto you, They have their reward" (Matthew 6:16). The Holy Spirit leads us. He does not push us. "Teach me to do Thy will; for Thou art my God: Thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness" (Psalm 143:10). The Law compels us to obey with punishments for disobedience, i.e., the "soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20). But, when we have a good thought, a good desire, or a good intention to share the Gospel, then we are being led by the Spirit of God. "Every Good Gift and every Perfect Gift is from Above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights, with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17). A Spirit led witness for Christ may not yield a convert for Christ, but it most certainly will yield the fruit of Great Peace to the one who obeyed the Spirit. "Great Peace have they which love Thy Law: and nothing shall offend them" (Psalm 119:165).

Maranatha!

Do Not Litter

October 30, 2000

You probably need to be a Baby Boomer to remember the national emphasis that Americans used to place on keeping America clean of litter. That was back in the economic boom days of the Cold War, when we had the luxury to be more concerned about beautifying America, planting oleander bushes alongside the freeways, etc., rather than preventing teen pregnancy, stopping teen suicide, saying no to drugs, or teaching young children awareness to keep from being abducted. An old television commercial-- a public service announcement-- showed a traditional American Indian getting out of a canoe, but only to be confronted with litter, trash, and rubbish pitched at his feet. A tear trickles from his eye as we view the contrast between his traditional respect for the land and the callous disregard of modern humanity for something as simple as properly disposing of litter. Today, litter means kitty litter for house trained cats, not the trash blowing down the street. "How are the mighty fallen!" (2Samuel 1:19).

What is the significance of littering? Why has the subject of litter become a non-issue by the 21st century? The dictionary still defines litter as "carelessly discarded refuse". In the beginning, man has always been taught of God that our consideration for one another should be equal and only secondary to our consideration for God. "36 Master, which is the great Commandment in the Law? 37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the First and Great Commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:36-40). An equal love or consideration for our fellow man would mean that we would not treat our neighbour differently than we would desire to be treated in return. "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise" (Luke 6:31). If we do not want trash, refuse, and litter piled at our feet, then we should not pile it at someone else's feet. This equal consideration for the good of one another is the concept of the General Welfare; and, it is more than a phrase

from the preamble to the United States Constitution.

"We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

What happened to the General Welfare? Apparently, whatever sense that we had of such a concept, has evaporated into Society's demand that everyone owes us something. And actually, everyone does owe everyone else-- and to God, most of all-- a perpetual debt that never can be fully discharged. That is the debt of love, which we all have so miserably failed in its discharge and application. "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10). Simply renewing our intentions to return to doing the right thing is to humanistically neglect the fact that God marks it down that we have sinned against Him and need His forgiveness. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is Eternal Life through Jesus Christ our LORD" (6:23). Why would God be *so small* as to hold such a thing against us? God the Creator knows better than we that rebellion from His Moral Law of Love, even in the smallest thing, i.e., littering, translates into the revolution that Lucifer fomented in Heaven that caused a third of the angels to be cast out. "And his [the devil's] tail drew the third part of the stars [the angels] of Heaven, and did cast them to the Earth: and the dragon [Satan] stood before the woman [Israel] which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her Child [Jesus] as soon as It was born" (Revelation 12:4).

And, even after "God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:32) for trampling His Law of Love, what is to prevent us from returning to our old, rebellious ways? Even at this late stage of human history, God has covenanted to His people the gift of His Holy Spirit, which the LORD Jesus Christ gave to man as:

- (1) the means by which He "worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13), to secure us in loving obedience to His Moral Law, i.e., "26 A New Heart also will I give you, and a New Spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My Statutes, and ye shall keep My Judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:26-27), and
- (2) a reminder of the love of God that Jesus is to all men, "especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10), i.e., "7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. 8 Wherefore He saith, When He [Jesus] ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts [the Holy Spirit] unto men" (Ephesians 4:7-8).

In light of all this, littering, as much of a non-issue as it is today, represents the carelessness of the human heart and disdain for the Eternal Law of supreme love for God and an equal love for our neighbour; and, it can be cured by the right application of the Love of God. First, the Love of God must be applied to our hearts by our individual reception of His Son. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life" (John 3:16). Then, we, by the grace of God, must apply the Love of God to our relationship to God and man. To God, we will obey. "For this is the Love of God, that we keep His Commandments: and His Commandments are not grievous [literally, burdensome]" (1John 5:3). And, to our neighbour, we will treat with the same consideration as we would want for ourself. "20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God Whom he hath not seen? 21 And this Commandment have we from Him, That he who loveth God love his brother also" (4:20-21).

Will obeying the Law of Love clean up all the litter? No, but it will prevent the litter that would have come from you. When Jesus soon returns, He will clean up the trash. "And out of His mouth goeth a sharp Sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a Rod of Iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (Revelation 19:15). And, ere long, Jesus will make all things new. "For, behold, I create New Heavens and a New Earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind" (Isaiah 65:17).

Maranatha!

Charles G. Finney on the Blasphemy Against the Holy Spirit

October 30, 2000

It should come as a matter of great concern to any convicted sinner that it is possible to commit a sin which God has promised that He will never forgive-- sometimes long before physical death. That is the Sin of Blasphemy Against the Holy Spirit. "And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven" (Luke 12:10). Stubbornness of any convicted sinner to heed the warning that there may be no tomorrow to repent, is real. "15 While it is said, To day if ye will hear His Voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. 16 For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. 17 But with whom was He grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcases fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom sware He that they should not enter into His rest, but to them that believed not?" (Hebrews 3:15-18).

If we could hypothetically have the luxury of borrowing God's Omniscient Foreknowledge, we could observe the exact moment that a sinner had violated his conscience with an unpardonable act. Then could we truly understand why God could and would give "them over to a reprobate mind" (Romans 1:28). "And the LORD said, My Spirit shall NOT always strive with man" (Genesis 6:3). The critical instant in a person's life, in which a sin is committed (and it could be, by nature, ANY sin)-- but is a specific sin, in that the sinner SHALL NEVER REPENT of this sin-- signifies to the Divine One that saw it take place, that this sinner has committed the unpardonable sin of "blasphemy against the Holy Ghost" and is forever sealed in the "danger of hell fire" (Matthew 5:22). For "there is a sin unto death: I do NOT say that he [the intercessor] shall pray for it" (1John 5:16). The Holy Spirit will not lead you to pray for this person. "Pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to Me: for I will not hear thee" (Jeremiah 7:16). He knows that this person has hardened himself in this one point, and he will NEVER repent. There is "a sin which is NOT unto death" (5:16), that can be interceded for, and "he [the intercessor] shall ask, and He [the LORD] shall give him [the intercessor] life for them that sin NOT unto death" (5:16). It takes the leading of the Holy Spirit to know when your intercession should "not... pray for it" (5:16). [Charles G. Finney](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html> -- admonishes:

"...just in proportion as light increases, sinners are in danger of committing the unpardonable sin. It is plain from what the Bible says of this sin that only those commit it who have great light and who resist and abuse that light. Those Pharisees who blasphemed the Holy Ghost, knew full well that Christ's miracles were wrought by the finger of God, and yet they impiously ascribed them to the devil. They had great light, and they greatly abused it.

Now we may ultimately see that more persons commit the unpardonable sin in Oberlin than anywhere else in all the land, for the reason that great light is enjoyed here, and by some is greatly and impiously resisted.

This is the climax of all sin. To know enough of God to make you an angel and then resist it madly and malignantly enough to make you a devil--what can be a greater sin? What can be greater folly and shame and madness?

Yet we are not wont to estimate guilt according to these plain principles of the Bible and of reason. We see a pirate-- we are shocked; we cry out--'He is a pirate! Horrible! He has murdered a hundred men! Oh, such a wretch! Surely he is not fit to live.' Indeed he is a wretch, a horrible and wicked wretch; but there perhaps, sits another impenitent sinner who could not see blood spilt without having his own blood creep in his veins, who yet is the guiltier sinner of the two. This sinner, here in Oberlin, has been brought up religiously, has heard preaching enough to have converted a thousand souls, but has heard it only to harden his own heart--this sinner may be a hundred fold more guilty than any pirate, and much more likely to have committed the unpardonable sin. Let the gospel-hardened soul take warning!" -- from "[The Nature of Impenitence and the Measure of Its Guilt](#)" -- http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin_1846/OE1846.Impenitence.Guilt.html -- by C. G. Finney, in the "[The Oberlin Evangelist](#)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Finney.Oberlin.Evangelist.html> -- , [1846](#) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin.Evangelist.1846.html> -- .

An excerpt from Charles G. Finney's "[Autobiography](#)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Finneys.Autobiography.html> -- (1792-1875) ("[Chapter 19: Revival at Reading, Pennsylvania](#)" -- [http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Finneys.Autobiography.3.html#CHAPTER 19](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Finneys.Autobiography.3.html#CHAPTER_19) --) illustrates a mistake about the Sin of Blasphemy Against the Holy Spirit, during a revival:

"I said that in this place a circumstance occurred, that illustrated the influence of that old school teaching of which I have complained. Very early one morning a lawyer, belonging to one of the most respectable families in the town, called at my room, in the greatest agitation of mind. I saw he was a man of first-rate intelligence, and a gentleman; but I had nowhere seen him, to know him. He came in and introduced himself, and said he was a lost sinner--that he had made up his mind that there was no hope for him. He then informed me that when he was in Princeton College, he and two of his classmates became very anxious about their souls. They went together to Dr. Ashbel Green, who was then president of the college, and asked him what they should do to be saved. He said the doctor told them he was very glad to have them come and make the inquiry; and then told them to keep out of all bad company, to read their Bible stately, and to pray God to give them a new heart.'Continue this,' he said, 'and press forward in duty; and the Spirit of God will convert you; or else He will leave you, and you will return back to your sins again.' 'Well, I inquired, how did it terminate?' 'Oh,' said he, 'we did just as he told us to do. We kept out of bad company, and prayed that God

would make us a new heart. But after a little while our convictions wore away, and we did not care to pray any longer. We lost all interest in the subject; and then bursting into tears he said, 'My two companions are in drunkard's graves, and if I cannot repent I shall soon be in one myself.' This remark led me to observe that he had indications of being a man that made too free use of ardent spirits. However, this was early in the morning; and he was entirely free from drink, and in terrible anxiety about his soul.

I tried to instruct him, and to show him the error that he had fallen into, under such instructions as he had received, and that he had resisted and grieved the Spirit, by waiting for God to do what He had commanded him to do. I tried to show him that, in the very nature of the case, God could not do for him what He required him to do. God required him to repent, and God could not repent for him; required him to believe, but God could not believe for him; God required him to submit, but could not submit for him. I then tried to make him understand the agency that the Spirit of God has in giving the sinner repentance and a new heart; that it is a divine persuasion; that the Spirit leads him to see his sins, urges him to give them up and to flee from the wrath to come. He presents to him the Savior, the atonement, the plan of salvation, and urges him to accept it.

I asked him if he did not feel this urgency upon himself, in these truths revealed in his own mind; and a call, now to submit, to believe, to make himself a new heart. 'Oh yes!' he said, 'Oh yes! I see and feel all this. But am I not given up of God? Is not my day of grace past?' I said to him, 'No! It is plain the Spirit of God is still calling you, still urging you to repentance; you acknowledge that you feel this urgency in your own mind.' He inquired, 'Is this, then, what the Spirit of God is doing, to show me all this?' I assured him that it was; and that he was to understand this as a divine call, and as evidence conclusive that he was not abandoned, and had not sinned away the day of grace, but that God was striving to save him still. I then asked him if he would respond to the call, if he would come to Jesus, if he would lay hold upon eternal life then and there.

He was an intelligent man, and the Spirit of God was upon and teaching him, and making him understand every word that I said. When I saw that the way was fully prepared, I called on him to kneel down and submit; and he did so, and to all human appearance, became a thorough convert right upon the spot. 'Oh!' he afterwards said, 'if Dr. Green had only told us this that you have told me, we should all have been converted immediately. But my friends and companions are lost; and what a wonder of mercy it is that I am saved!'

And finally, one last excerpt from Charles G. Finney's "Autobiography" ("[Chapter 3: Beginning of His Work](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Finneys.Autobiography.1.html#CHAPTER%203)" -- [http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Finneys.Autobiography.1.html#CHAPTER 3 --](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Finneys.Autobiography.1.html#CHAPTER%203)) which demonstrates the reality of the Sin of Blasphemy Against the Holy Spirit, early in Finney's Christian life:

"Soon after I was converted, the man with whom I had been boarding for some time, who was a magistrate, and one of the principal men in the place, was deeply convicted of sin. He had been elected a member of the legislature of the state. I was praying daily for him, and urging him to give his heart to God. His conviction became very deep; but still, from day to day, he deferred submission, and did not obtain a hope. My solicitude for him increased.

One afternoon several of his political friends had a protracted interview with him. On the evening of the same day I attempted again to carry his case to God; as the urgency in my mind for his conversion had become very great. In my prayer I had drawn very near to God. I do not remember ever to have been in more intimate communion with the Lord Jesus Christ than I was at that time. Indeed His presence was so real that I was bathed in tears of joy, and gratitude, and love; and in this state of mind I attempted to pray for this friend. But the moment I did so, my mouth was shut. I found it impossible to pray a word for him. The Lord seemed to say to me, 'No; I will not hear.' An anguish seized upon me; I thought at first it was a temptation. But the door was shut in my face. It seemed as if the Lord said to me, 'Speak no more to me of that matter.' It pained me beyond expression. I did not know what to make of it.

The next morning I saw him; and as soon as I brought up the question of submission to God, he said to me, 'Mr. Finney, I shall have nothing more to do with it until I return from the legislature. I stand committed to my political friends to carry out certain measures in the legislature, that are incompatible with my first becoming a Christian; and I have promised that I will not attend to the subject until after I have returned from Albany.'

From the moment of that exercise the evening before, I had no spirit of prayer for him at all. As soon as he told me what he had done, I understood it. I could see that his convictions were all gone, and that the Spirit of God had left him. From that time he grew more careless and hardened than ever.

When the time arrived he went to the legislature; and in the Spring he returned an almost insane Universalist. I say almost insane, because, instead of having formed his opinions from any evidence or course of argument, he told me this: He said, 'I have come to that conclusion, not because I have found it taught in the Bible, but because such a

doctrine is so opposed to the carnal mind. It is a doctrine so generally rejected and spoken against, as to prove that it is distasteful to the carnal, or unconverted mind.' This was astonishing to me. But everything else that I could get out of him was as wild and absurd as this. He remained in his sins, finally fell into decay, and died at last, as I have been told, a dilapidated man, and in the full faith of his Universalism."

God Is In the Details

November 7, 2000

It must be a fearful thing for the inhabitants of this world to have no one to trust but themselves! "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool" (Proverbs 28:26). Life is much too complicated for man to be able to attend to all the details without making a sorry mess of things. "Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD" (Jeremiah 17:5). Imagine a performer attempting to keep several plates spinning on their sides on top of a table. It is hard enough to keep one plate spinning; but, while running between the plates, as another plate is added, then two, three, or more-- the difficulty increases immensely-- until so many plates are added that they all come crashing down! "Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity" (Psalm 39:5). As difficult as it is for man to understand or admit, man is only a limited being, when compared to the Unsearchably Great God (145:3). "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" (Isaiah 2:22).

A man has not yet discovered himself, who has not found himself to be thoroughly untrustworthy. "A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself" (Proverbs 18:2). The Master's parable of the Prodigal Son shares with us Divine Insight into how God brings a man to the realization that he cannot save himself, by allowing him to experience his limitations. "11 And [Jesus] said, A certain man had two sons: 12 and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. 13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. 14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. 15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. 17 And **when he came to himself**, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and before thee, 19 and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants" (Luke 15:11-19).

A story is told about Leonardo da Vinci's painting in Milan, Italy, "The Last Supper" (1495-1497), where the figures of Christ and the twelve apostles were depicted upon a fresco on the wall of the refectory of the monastery of Sta. Maria delle Grazie. Beginning a labor of years of painting, da Vinci chose a man to model for Christ, whom he felt outwardly embodied the virtues that he desired to represent in his work. Choosing others to pose for the apostles, he finally came to the model for Judas Iscariot, the betrayer of Christ. Searching through the dregs of society, he found a ragged, wretched, bloodshot drunkard with a haunted look upon him, a wreck of a man, whom he felt best represented the evil that would sell Christ to the Cross. As da Vinci finished with his model for Judas Iscariot, he mentioned to him that he felt like they had met before. The man replied that he had most certainly met da Vinci previously. In fact, he had been da Vinci's model for Christ only years earlier! "Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity" (Psalm 62:9).

However, when man has achieved a thorough disgust for himself, then he has the opportunity of translating that aversion into Evangelical Repentance for sinning against God, i.e., taking sides with the Almighty against himself for any and all offenses committed. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1Timothy 1:15). If our heart represents anyone else's sin as worse than our own, then we have not yet truly repented. The marvel of the Gospel is that God is willing to reclaim us from our sins and Eternal Punishment, when we give up our rebellion against Him through a definite act of faith in Christ. "Believe on the LORD Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). Only then can He begin to fashion the details of our life into the image of Christ. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2Corinthians 5:17). What then God pronounces to be new, is new indeed-- as fresh as any canvas upon which an artist can begin to paint! "Hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" (Numbers 23:19).

So complete is the transformation of the sinner into the Saint, that God infallibly says that "His Divine Power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto Life and Godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (2Peter 1:3). The secret of the Saints is in the new found Promises of God. "Whereby are given unto us Exceeding Great and Precious Promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (1:4). [See our article,

["Exceeding Great and Precious Promises"](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Promises/Exceeding.Promises.html) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Promises/Exceeding.Promises.html> --.] Any who desire the sanctification that brings us Home to Heaven, i.e., "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the Coming of our LORD Jesus Christ" (1Thessalonians 5:23), must be sanctified by the Word of God, and especially the Promises. "Sanctify them through Thy Truth: Thy Word is Truth" (John 17:17). The Promises of God knit the heart of man to God with the confidence that alone pleases God. "But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6). May the Heavenly Father bless with Christ's likeness in the details of your life, all those that seek Him in faith. "Faithful is He that calleth you, Who also will do it" (1Thessalonians 5:24).

Maranatha!

All Things New

November 13, 2000

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2Corinthians 5:17).

A sinner who is renewed in Christ is the greatest testimony to the power of God to transform a living being from the power of selfishness to the love of God. "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the Law, but under Grace" (Romans 6:14). Many Would-Be Christians-- Lost Sinners, who admit the theoretical superiority of Christ's philosophy and message, yet doubt that Christianity would work for them, because they see selfishness so powerfully alive in Professed Christians-- if they could actually see the Gospel of Christ transform a Selfish Sinner into a Selfless Saint, would surrender themselves to the claims of Christ. "Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the LORD Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:30-31). The devil delights in persuading Would-Be Christians that a truly honest man does not exist, who can imitate the example of Christ. But, this contradicts the Apostle Peter's injunction "that ye should [and, therefore, could] follow [Christ's] steps" (1Peter 2:21).

If the Saints have truly been transformed from the "power of darkness" (Colossians 1:13) into the "Children of Light" (1Thessalonians 5:5), then Scripture dictates that they are living proof that an entirely sanctified walk is attainable in this life. "And the very God of Peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the Coming of our LORD Jesus Christ" (5:23). Conventional wisdom may demand that only the example of a derelict, transformed from the dregs of society into respectability and usefulness, can exemplify a change so dramatic as to validate the possibility that the Gospel is sufficient to "make all things new" (Revelation 21:5). True, the Gospel can transform the most outwardly unlovely, but it is also the "Power of God unto Salvation **to every one** that believeth" (Romans 1:16)-- even the least outwardly objectionable. The very fact that there exists a Living Saint in the Universe that loves God supremely and loves his neighbour equally to himself, is a testimony to the power of God to transform us by the Gospel of Christ. "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the Power [Greek, *dunamis*, i.e., dynamite] of God unto Salvation" (1:16).

Any who would object to the possibility that the Saints may be entirely sanctified in this life, i.e., walk without known sin, must find themselves in contention with the declarations of the New Testament. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2Corinthians 5:17). A "new creature" (5:17) results from the confession of sin. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1John 1:9). Since regeneration by faith in Christ makes us a "new creature" (2Corinthians 5:17), it should not be thought strange that we may be entirely sanctified through the same faith. "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to Light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me [Christ]" (Acts 26:18). ***The Love demanded by Christ in His Moral Law is the same as the Love of First Corinthians Thirteen; and, it is the same as the Entire Sanctification of the Saints.*** "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity" (1Corinthians 13:13).

Understanding that we are made new through the Love of God by the God Who "is Love" (1John 4:16) that we might love one another, and especially love God, is the point of our living. "Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an Offering and a Sacrifice to God for a Sweetsmelling Savour" (Ephesians 5:2). It is impossible to separate our love from our faith. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love" (3:17). In fact, the motivation for our faith is our love. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1John 4:10). Because He first loved us, we respond with confidence in Him. "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor

uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6). Love will cause us to endure one another's non-sinful idiosyncrasies and eccentricities. "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love" (Ephesians 4:2). A meekness to helpfully tell the Truth-- not to hatefully wound or injure through exposing someone's erroneous past-- is a characteristic of the Love of God that is Entire Sanctification. "But speaking the Truth in Love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ" (4:15). When Jesus turned the tables on the accusers of the women who was caught in adultery, He did not hide the Truth that she was an adulteress, but He attempted to reclaim her from her sin-- that is "speaking the Truth in Love" (4:15). "10 When Jesus had lifted up Himself, and saw none but the woman, He said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? 11 She said, No man, LORD. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (John 8:10-11).

Simply living a life of love demonstrates that we have been made a "new creature" (2Corinthians 5:17) in Christ and are being "kept by the Power of God through faith unto Salvation" (1Peter 1:5). Though we desire to "be strong, and do exploits" (Daniel 11:32) for our LORD in souls won and Saints encouraged, we are happy "that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ" (1Peter 4:11) in whatever we may do. Knowing that our continual intercession that Christ's "Kingdom [would] come" (Matthew 6:10) and that His will would "be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven" (6:10), is our chief joy. "I delight to do Thy Will, O my God: yea, Thy Law is within my heart" (Psalm 40:8). Our desire, then, is to "run with patience the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1). Through the Spirit working in us "to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13), we will continue to "count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ" (Philippians 3:8) that we may continue to experience all things new, living in Selfless Love, as new creatures in Christ. "That I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (3:8-9).

May the "LORD direct your hearts into the Love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ" (2Thessalonians 3:5).

Maranatha!

A Crisis in America?

November 26, 2000

In the United States of America, why are national elections held on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November? In 1845, the Tuesday after the first Monday was established for the appointment of Presidential electors every fourth year (3 U.S.C. 1). At that time, America was an agrarian society that finished its harvest in the fall. Farmers and rural workers could still travel to the polls over the unimproved roads in early November. The first Tuesday insured that the settling of merchants' books at the 1st of the month would not interfere with voting. And, it prevented the necessity of having to begin travel on Sunday (interfering with Church services and Sunday worship) to reach a polling place. "Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom He hath chosen for His own inheritance" (Psalm 33:12).

But, what happened in America on November 7th 2000? The President of the United States of America was to be selected in a national election that would have most probably chosen Vice President Al Gore (Democrat) or Texas Governor George Bush (Republican) by the early morning hours of the following day. Both America and the world have been watching the news for the last few weeks, without either candidate making the traditional, final concession speech, indicating their agreement with the results of the vote count. The State of Florida has been the focus, since they would apparently cast the deciding vote that would elect either Bush or Gore. Florida has been engaged in a vote recount that has kept Bush ahead by only a slim margin. Absentee ballots would have been tabulated by Saturday, November 18th. Theoretically, everyone would have known who should have been at the helm of America at that time, unless further judicial challenges or vote recounts in other states, tipped the election in favour of the other candidate. Could we still be in doubt of the leadership of America by January 20th 2001, Inauguration Day? "O LORD, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against Thee" (Daniel 9:8).

The virtual stalemate of the American Presidential election has been variously described as a validation of the precept that every vote counts, further proof that the Electoral College must be reformed, as well as the suspicion that vote count fraud takes place in the absentee ballot. Has any other American Presidential Election yielded a similar result? Yes, in the election of 1876 the Republican Party ran Ohio Governor Rutherford B. Hayes on a platform of an unblemished public record and high moral tone in contrast to the scandals of President Ulysses S. Grant's administration, receiving 165 of the necessary 185 electoral votes to win. The Democratic Party ran Samuel J. Tilden successfully against Hayes, capturing the popular vote for a Democratic candidate for the first time since the end of the Civil War, and receiving 184 electoral votes. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power

but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God" (Romans 13:1).

Hayes was about to concede the election, when it was noticed that the 19 electoral votes of three states-- Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina-- were still in doubt. Oregon also had a question about one electoral vote awarded already to Tilden. This total of 20 questionable electoral votes would give Hayes a total of 185 electoral votes and the presidency. Quickly, lawyers from both parties descended upon the three Southern states, hoping to influence the official canvass. Two further sets of ballots were submitted from the three states, but by December 6th 1876, the date the Electoral College met to tabulate their votes, the impasse still existed. After six more weeks of stalemate and threats of civil war, on January 29th 1877, Congress appointed a special Electoral Commission-- composed of 7 Republicans, 7 Democrats, and a mutually acceptable Moderate Republican. Oregon was clearly legitimately awarded to Hayes; but, starting with Florida, which Hayes had almost certainly lost, the Commission voted down party lines 8-7 ruling in favor of Hayes. The Commission's results were reported to Congress on February 23rd. And, a week later, Congress convened to count the electoral vote, declaring Hayes the President of the United States. The Republicans had made secret assurances during the compromise negotiations to withdraw Federal troops from the South that was still occupied, ending Reconstruction, and promises were made to cease interference in the elections of the former Confederacy, returning the states to their traditional white Democratic supremacy. "This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the basest of men" (Daniel 4:17).

The turmoil and uncertainty of the Election of 2000 seems to be affecting investors and international watchers more than the average American. Could this time of uncertainty for the leadership of the ostensibly remaining superpower nation of the world, cause an even greater loss of American influence in world diplomatic affairs? How will this affect the unrest in the Middle East, especially as Yasser Arafat petitioned the UN Security Council on November 10th 2000 for the establishment of a UN protection force to be stationed on the West Bank and Gaza for Palestinian civilians? Will the loss of American influence for Israel, give rise to European leadership in the Middle East "Peace Process", paving the way for the "covenant with many" (Daniel 9:27) negotiated by the Antichrist before the beginning of the Tribulation Week? Will Moscow and Beijing use America's stalemate leadership to promote their advantage to the detriment of America? "7 At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; 8 If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. 9 And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; 10 If it do evil in My sight, that it obey not My voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them" (Jeremiah 18:7-10).

True Christians need not fear the outcome of this election, for the "LORD God Omnipotent reigneth" (Revelation 19:6). Confidence in our Faithful Saviour to deliver the Saints "from all evil" (Psalm 121:7) will keep the waves from flooding our boat. "I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the LORD shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His Heavenly Kingdom: to Whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (2Timothy 4:17-18). This is nothing new "under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9). The Psalmist and our brethren in the Early Church witnessed the same potential disasters; but, they had the assurance that God is in Sovereign Control. "25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? 26 The kings of the Earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the LORD, and against His Christ. 27 For of a truth against Thy Holy Child Jesus, Whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, 28 For **to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy Counsel determined before to be done**" (Acts 4:25-28).

We have confidence in the LORD "Jesus Christ [Who is] the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8). Our certainty is in Jesus, His Word, and in His Promises. He promised, "I come quickly" (Revelation 22:20); and, we believe Him. "Amen. Even so, come, LORD Jesus" (22:20). He said, "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (3:11). We respond, "Yea LORD, make me to 'stand fast' (1Thessalonians 3:8) in Thee." He promised us a Pre-Tribulational Rapture (if we can receive it): "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36). And, we respond, "We 'desire to depart, and to be with Christ'" (Philippians 1:23); but, if the LORD tarries, "to abide in the flesh is more needful for you" (1:24). Father, grant us the patience that will cause us to exercise the "faith which worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6), that brings men to Christ and establishes the Godly. "Perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2Corinthians 7:1).

Maranatha!

The Treasure of True Christian Friendship

December 11, 2000

Greetings in the name of the LORD, "true yokefellow" (Philippians 4:3)! The Eternal God has been faithful in upholding you. "Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it" (5:24). It is never a question of His faithfulness, but of ours. Our many failures are occasioned by the "little foxes, that spoil the vines" (Song of Solomon 2:15). We become so engrossed with the mechanics of living and surviving, that we forget that the Father is actively and sovereignly using our circumstances to conform us "to the image of His Son" (Romans 8:29). It is difficult to imagine, but the LORD Jesus had to experience the frailties, limitations, and humiliations of the "body of this death" (7:24). But, unlike our often failings, He did what we also need to do. We need to learn our lessons of life in the School of Suffering, for "all that will live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer" (2Timothy 3:12). "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered" (Hebrews 5:8). In effect, we learn from God, only what we put into our lessons. "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you" (James 4:8).

Our assurance that we will always find the oasis of "streams in the desert" (Isaiah 35:6), is twofold.

- First, we must avoid the evil companionship of the world, wherever possible. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful" (Psalm 1:1).
- Second, it is our responsibility to seek out the counsel of the Word of God. "But his delight is in the Law of the LORD; and in His Law doth he meditate day and night" (1:2).

Remember, God never gives us commands or responsibilities that are impossible or grievous to be borne. "For this is the Love of God, that we keep His Commandments: and His Commandments are not grievous" (1John 5:3). If we fulfill our twofold responsibility, we will always be fruitful and prosper. "And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Psalm 1:3).

The Master said, "Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:14). True Christian friendship is based on sharing a common yoke of service to the LORD. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3). Christian friends share a common goal of reaching the Celestial City. "10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. 16 But now they desire a Better Country, that is, an Heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city" (Hebrews 11:10, 16). A common fellowship of the Word of God is shared in True Christian Friendship, to which the nominally professed Christian pays but lip service. "I am a companion of all them that fear Thee, and of them that keep Thy Precepts" (Psalm 119:63). Dwelling in the midst of a Laodicean Church, it is especially important that True Christian Friends keep the bonds of fellowship strong with those who are serving on the same front. "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the Common Salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints" (Jude 3).

Between Christian Friends, sharing the Word is the "joy and rejoicing of [our] heart[s]" (Jeremiah 15:16). Remember, our obligation to minister the Word to each other is a mutual bond of love. "Fellowlabourer[s] in the Gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith" (1Thessalonians 3:2)-- as much required of one as the other. "For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's" (Philippians 2:20-21). Seeking out the fellowship and friendship of the Godly helps to keep us from forming wrong attachments to the world. "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4). In fact, if our hope is placed firmly in the Word of God, True Christian Friendship is the ultimate result, when the Godly meet. "They that fear Thee will be glad when they see me; because I have hoped in Thy Word" (Psalm 119:74).

Regardless of the degree of success that we may experience in finding True Christian Friends, we can be assured that "there is a Friend [Jesus] that sticketh closer than a brother" (Proverbs 18:24). And, if True Christian Friends are worth keeping, then periodically, it *may* become necessary to lovingly reprove the wrong actions of a Christian Friend. "1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the Spirit of Meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. 2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ" (Galatians 6:1-2). Even the early apostles had to strive to keep the Unity of Friendship, attempting to set aside unnecessary, non-sinful differences. "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3). Just as a Christian husband and wife would not allow a non-sinful difference to become an issue to divide them, True Christian Friends will resolve their differences, likewise. "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath" (4:26).

Interceding in prayer for the spiritual and physical needs of especially our True Christian Friends is an obligation of love. "Brethren, pray for us" (1Thessalonians 5:25; 2Thessalonians 3:1; Hebrews 13:18). We may be unable to supply the physical needs of our True Christian Friends-- much less of ourselves-- but, we can intercede to the One Who owns the "cattle upon a thousand hills" (Psalms 50:10). Our agreement in prayer is especially powerful in securing blessing upon the Body of Christ-- and the world. "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on Earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in Heaven" (Matthew 18:19).

May God bless His people with True Christian Friendship. "Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour" (Ecclesiastes 4:9).

Maranatha!

The Excellence of Love

December 24, 2000

What would a chaste bachelor, Paul the apostle, know about love? Yet, by inspiration he informed us that "though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not [love], I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal" (1Corinthians 13:1). Reading the context of what has come to be known as the Love Chapter, it becomes readily apparent that Paul was using the term to mean more than a special way of feeling. "4 [Love] suffereth long, and is kind; [love] envieth not; [love] vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 5 doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; 6 rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the Truth; 7 beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (13:4-7). Love is so esteemed in the estimation of Paul that he valued it more than even faith or hope, making love the most sought after commodity. "And now abideth faith, hope, [love], these three; but the greatest of these is [love]" (13:13).

Our comprehension of who God is, demonstrates who we are. For example, a sinner may most likely view the Divine as an incomprehensible, not-always-fair Being, if He is to be thought of at all. But, "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God" (Hebrews 10:31). Christians, on the other hand, are privileged to understand that the true essence of "God is Love" (1John 4:8). "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is Love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (4:16). Did this revelation that "God is Love" only occur to Christians in the last two millennia? Even the ancient Jews, to whom the holy demands of the Law were made, understood the relation of love to the Holy God. "8 But because **the LORD loved you**, and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. 9 Know therefore that the LORD thy God, He is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy **with them that love Him** and keep His Commandments to a thousand generations... 13 And **He will love thee**, and bless thee, and multiply thee: He will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which He sware unto thy fathers to give thee" (Deuteronomy 7:8-9,13).

But, the understanding that the perpetual fulfilling of the Moral Law is Love, was made plain by the LORD Jesus Christ, i.e., "36 Master, which is the great Commandment in the Law? 37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the First and Great Commandment. 39 And the Second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:36-40). "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (5:17). Yea, LORD, Thou Who art Love, came to fulfill the Law of Love (Galatians 6:2). "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore Love is the fulfilling of the Law" (Romans 13:10). The centerpiece of the Gospel is that "God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life" (John 3:16). With great tenderness, the Saviour taught His disciples the Principles of Love by His Words, and especially by His Death. "Greater Love hath no man than this, that a man lay down His Life for His friends" (15:13). Our reciprocation of love to Him is also demonstrated by our words, but particularly by our obedience to Him. "If ye love Me, keep My Commandments" (14:15).

The Theme of Love continues throughout the New Testament, most notably in the writings of the Apostle John, the "disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20). Voluntary selflessness is an attribute of Love. "For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another" (1John 3:11). True Love only requires that we love our neighbour as much as we love ourselves, i.e., "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:39). For to love our neighbour more than we would love ourselves, would be to love him supremely, and that, True Love reserves for God alone, i.e., "Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matthew 22:37). Questions immediately arise about the nature of True Love. Since the Word of God declares that "God is Love" (1John 4:8, 16), does God voluntarily choose to love, or does His natural constitution involuntarily force Him to love? In answer, God's Love must be voluntary and uncoerced for His Love to have any moral character at all. "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you" (John 15:16). And, the majesty of God's Love is that He loved sinners, and not simply the lovable. "God commendeth His Love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). But, unless His Love is ultimately returned by Lost Sinners, as His Moral Law of Love requires, then the sinner-- "for sin is the transgression of the [Moral] Law [of Love]" (1John 3:4)-- must pay the Eternal Penalty for his hatred of God and man, i.e., "for the

wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23), in the Perpetual Prison of No Release, i.e., "And Death and Hell were cast into the Lake of Fire. This is the Second Death" (Revelation 20:14).

What is True Love? The Apostle John faithfully recorded, the "Love of God, [is] that we keep [God's] Commandments [the Moral Law of Love]: and His Commandments are not grievous [impossible or burdensome]" (1John 5:3). Though God has unconditionally given His Love to this world of Lost Sinners-- "God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son" (John 3:16)-- *only* when we repent, believe, and obey Him do we receive the conditional and special Love of Himself, Heaven, and all that follows. "He that hath My Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him" (14:21). It is no mystery why we *ought* to love God and man-- because His Moral Law of Love requires it-- but, when it comes down to it, why do we *actually* do it? "We love Him, because He first loved us" (1John 4:19). Though man is not constitutionally sinful at birth, it does *not* give us good reason to believe that man will naturally choose to love and obey God. Unfortunately, even our perfect parents, Adam and Eve, found themselves disobeying God, when they allowed Satan to pervert their faith in the Creator, i.e., "Yea, *hath* God said, Ye shall *not* eat of every tree of the Garden?" (Genesis 3:1), which confidence is placed in only those whom we love-- for it is our "faith which worketh by Love" (Galatians 5:6).

Only as the Living God would fulfill His Promise to "subdue our iniquities" (Micah 7:19), can He work in us "both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13), that we would choose to love the Almighty supremely and our neighbour equally as ourselves. The Father has given to us His Beloved Son in the ultimate display of Fatherly Love. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life" (John 3:16). In a magnificent demonstration of Selfless Love, Jesus-- our Elder Brother (Romans 8:29)-- laid down His life for His friends, "that He might destroy the works of the Devil" (1John 3:8). "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). The "Holy Spirit of Promise" (Ephesians 1:13) has covenanted to reveal the LORD Jesus Christ to our hearts-- "He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you" (John 16:14)-- causing us to love Him, cleave to Him, observe His Commandments, and "**do** those things that are pleasing in His sight" (1John 3:22). Thus, God's Spirit will fulfill the Ancient Promise of the New Covenant in us by giving us a heart of loving obedience. "26 A new heart also will I give you, and a New Spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My Statutes, and ye shall keep My Judgments, and **do** them" (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

In short, **Love comes from God through His Son by His Spirit to dwell in the willing hearts of those whom He has subdued by His example, humbled by His Word, and overcome by His Love.** "He brought me to the banqueting house, and His banner over me was Love" (Song of Solomon 2:4). God keeps no slaves to serve Him from selfish fear, but He seeks all to freely choose to serve Him from grateful hearts of Love. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth Him [the Father] that begat loveth Him [the Son] also that is begotten of Him [the Father]" (1John 5:1). The excellence of God's Love toward us is best seen in the "Manifold Grace" (1Peter 4:10) of His Cross, but the proof of His Love in us is that we voluntarily become like Him, Who "hath shined in our hearts, to give the Light of the Knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2Corinthians 4:6). "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world" (1John 4:17).

Maranatha!

Unlocking the Secret of Life

January 2, 2001

On June 26th 2000, Dr. Francis Collins, director of the Human Genome Project at the National Institutes of Health, and Craig Venter, CEO of the private company Celera Genomics, made a joint announcement that they have completed a draft of the master blueprint of a human being. A genome is all the DNA in an organism, including its genes, which determine the heritable characteristics of an organism. This database of the tens of thousands of genes in the human body was enthusiastically compared to "putting a man on the moon", by Dr. Michael Dexter, the director of the Wellcome Trust, which funded the British part of the Human Genome Project. "I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well" (Psalm 139:14).

The significance of the sequencing of the human genome was hailed by Dr. Steve Kay, a geneticist at the Scripps Research Institute in La Jolla, California as "comparable to Darwin's theory of evolution." President Bill Clinton announced jointly with British Prime Minister Tony Blair that the "basic information on the human genome is public property" (as reported by Carol Clark of CNN Interactive, in her article, "On the threshold of a brave new world"). Armed with this new genetic information, scientists may combat disorders such as diabetes, as well as develop "designer" babies. But, the potential of genetic discrimination may rear its ugly head

against the genetically disadvantaged, i.e., for employment screening or insurance purposes-- predicting who may become an excessive burden and, therefore, an unacceptable employment liability, insurance risk, etc. And, of course, a Hitler-like megalomaniac could engineer his super race. "And this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do" (Genesis 11:6).

Indeed, as monumental a scientific breakthrough as this is, *the human understanding of the Almighty is still infinitely more valuable*. "23 Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: 24 But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the Earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD" (Jeremiah 9:23-24). The Saints have already been privileged to discover that the True Secret of Life is that the Creator's "Divine Power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and Godliness, through the knowledge of [Christ Jesus] that hath called us to glory and virtue" (2Peter 1:3). Man's insufficiency is God's supply. "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God" (2Corinthians 3:5). When we were as Lost Sheep, apart from Christ's Saving Grace, the Good Shepherd sought us out and found us, ransoming us with His own life. "I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep" (John 10:11). Our overwhelming sense of sin could not be met by anyone but Christ, Who became "sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2Corinthians 5:21). Thus, the Secret of Life will benefit an Awakened Sinner, who does not see how his sin can ever be overcome by God or himself, *only when the Holy Spirit discovers* to him that the "Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the Devil" (1John 3:8).

This pattern of man's deficiency and God's sufficiency is the Secret of Life. "Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive: Thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them" (Psalm 68:18). The recurring pattern must first identify the human lack, then the Spirit of God must reveal to us God's supply. "1 In the year that King Uzziah died I saw also the LORD sitting upon a Throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the Temple. 2 Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. 3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of Hosts: the whole Earth is full of His glory. 4 And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of Hosts. 6 Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: 7 And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged" (Isaiah 6:1-7).

Again, the Secret of the Christian's Life is tied up in our trusting the Almighty for whatever our lack is. "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2Corinthians 12:10). Whatever our natural deficiency is, He makes up with His Infinite Supply. "But my God shall supply all your need according to His Riches in Glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). That is the way of the Christian's life, if we pause to consider it. *God expects us to trust Him to supply for our deficiency, after He discovers to us His sufficiency*. "And He said unto me, My Grace is sufficient for thee: for My Strength is made Perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the Power of Christ may rest upon me" (2Corinthians 12:9).

The goal is not simply to comprehend that we have a necessity, but to realize that He is the Supply for our *every* need. "29 That no flesh should glory in His presence. 30 But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption: 31 that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the LORD" (1Corinthians 1:29-31). For example, after we sense that we are in a situation where we are being tempted to sin through impatience, then we need to immediately plead in faith for His patience that we may walk in patience. "In your patience possess ye your souls" (Luke 21:19). His patience can be seen in that He suffered long with the world for the benefit of the few who were rescued and preserved by His Ark. "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the Ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water" (1Peter 3:20). When we plead for that Supply of Patience, we *must* count on His Supply-- on penalty of sin, where our disbelief would call Him a liar. "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed" (James 1:6).

[Charles G. Finney](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html) (1792-1875) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html> -- referred to this process in his 19th century theological way, as Entire Sanctification, where Christ in His unique names, titles, and relations meets our every need in life. [See Finney's article at WStS, "[Relations of Christ to the Believer](#)" -- http://www.whatsaiththescripture.com/Voice/Oberlin_1845/OE1845.Relations.of.Christ.html.] "And the very God of Peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the Coming of our LORD Jesus Christ" (1Thessalonians 5:23). We must see how He is the practical answer to our everyday need of "holiness unto the LORD" (Zechariah 14:21). Our prayer for the Body of Christ in this short period before He Raptures us Home, is that He might discover to all of us how He is the Supply of our every need. "But my God shall supply all your need according to His Riches in Glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

Maranatha!

Christian, We Are In Better Hands Than We Deserve

January 15, 2001

The record is clear. "8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the Gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). This means that the God of All Grace has given amnesty to all rebels who will lay down their weapons of defiance, graciously offering what we do not deserve-- a Second Chance. The degree to which we have been impressed with the awfulness of our sins will be the extent to which we appreciate His Grace. "Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little" (Luke 7:47). Our rebellion against the Faithful Creator (1Peter 4:19) could only earn the "wages of sin [which] is death" (Romans 6:23), but the God, Who is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2Peter 3:9), has devised a vast scheme to reclaim Fallen Man, even to the extent of sacrificing His Only Begotten Son. "He that spared not His Own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32).

Christian, after we had been forgiven of our sins, and then we stumbled and fell back into them, did we not avail ourselves of His sin cleansing Promise, "If we confess our sins, He is Faithful and Just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1John 1:9)? And, was it not His Grace *again* that reached out to us *before* we turned back to Him? "Where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound" (Romans 5:20). The Free Grace of God is so necessary for our Salvation and Sanctification that the Scriptures teach us that "no man can [truly and spiritually] say that Jesus is the LORD, but by the Holy Ghost" (1Corinthians 12:3). However, this does not mean that we have received a license from God to sin, merely because He was so gracious as to forgive us our past debts. "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the Grace of our God into lasciviousness [literally, unbridled lust], and denying the only LORD God, and our LORD Jesus Christ" (Jude 4). It would be self-deception to pronounce ourselves free from the restraints of the Law of Love (Matthew 22:37-39), if we have, in fact, received the "Manifold Grace of God" (1Peter 4:10). "1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that Grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:1-2).

If we were not responsible to God to use our powers of moral choice to love Him supremely, and our neighbour as ourselves, i.e., "30 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the First Commandment. 31 And the Second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:30-31), then we could not be called into question for blaming the Almighty for our circumstances, i.e., "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat" (Genesis 3:12), or resenting our neighbour for the circumstances God allowed him, i.e., "4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: 5 but unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell... 8 And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him" (4:4-5, 8).

But, "sin is the transgression of the Law [of Love]" (1John 3:4). Whenever we complain of our circumstances, we fault the God Who orders our footsteps-- and, question His love. "My times are in Thy hand" (Psalm 31:15). For this reason, Scripture wisely advises us, "16 Rejoice evermore... 18 In every thing give thanks" (1Thessalonians 5:16, 18). The past has demonstrated man to be prone to the "lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1John 2:16); and thus, sins such as pride, envy, and jealousy are commonly committed against our neighbours. Only as we trust God's Spirit to "subdue our iniquities" (Micah 7:19) by virtue of His New Covenant Promise to give us a New Heart, do we have any hope of not repeating our sad history of breaking the Law of Love. "26 A New Heart also will I give you, and a New Spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My Statutes, and ye shall keep My Judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

Our gratitude to Christ for laying down His life for us is only compounded with His gift of the Spirit, after He ascended back to Heaven. "When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men" (Ephesians 4:8, citing Psalm 68:18). When the Church discovers Christ's Perfect Love, that flows from God, through the willing hearts of the Elect, and back to God, then debates about the possibility of living without sinning would cease. "10 For this is the Covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the LORD; I will put My Laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people: 11 and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest" (Hebrews 8:10-11, citing Jeremiah 31:33-34). Grateful hearts would only serve Christ with even greater devotion. "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our LORD Jesus Christ" (1Corinthians 15:57). The

reality of overcoming sin and sinning would no longer be reserved for Heaven only, but would find expression in the Saints' daily "faith which worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6). "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1John 5:4). No man can or will say before the Bema Seat of God that any good that they have accomplished in this world was due to any goodness in themselves, i.e., for "in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing" (Romans 7:18); but, whatever is good and praiseworthy comes from God, i.e., "every perfect gift is from Above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights" (James 1:17).

Christian, we are in Good Hands! "28 And I give unto them Eternal Life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My Hand. 29 My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's Hand" (John 10:28-29). Let us, again, gratefully offer Him ourselves. "1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:1-2). For, we know that in Heaven, we will have opportunity to cast our crowns before His Throne in worship of the Lamb for all the Good that He has accomplished before us, in us, through us, and even in spite of us. "Thou art Worthy, O LORD, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" (Revelation 4:11).

Maranatha!

If I Were God

February 18, 2001

Ever since Lucifer coveted the Almighty's Throne and "by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place" (Acts 1:25), there has been an ever increasing number of candidates for the High and Lofty One's position (Isaiah 57:15). "For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into Heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north" (14:13). Though each evil usurper has been summarily defeated, new challengers have been appearing with ever greater frequency, claiming the title of the Divine One. "Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the LORD GOD; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God" (Ezekiel 28:2). It seems especially common among earthly rulers to esteem themselves divine. "21 And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. 22 And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. 23 And immediately the angel of the LORD smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost" (Acts 12:21-23). So much has this trend of man exalting himself to be God increased, that we are near its apex where the Antichrist will exalt "himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the Temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (2Thessalonians 2:4)-- as soon as the Almighty sovereignly gives him permission. "For the Mystery of Iniquity doth already work: only He [God] Who now letteth [restrains] will let [will restrain], until He [the Holy Spirit] be taken out of the way [via the Pre-Tribulational Rapture]" (2:7). (See our article, "[Must There Be a Pre-Tribulational Rapture?](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Must.Pre.Trib.Rapture.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Must.Pre.Trib.Rapture.html> --, for a development of this thought.)

But, in retrospect, was it a good idea to create men or angels with the godlike capacity to choose between good and evil, i.e., "God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them" (Genesis 1:27)? Eternity will redound with praise that the God of Love wisely chose to give the gift of Moral Agency to man at his creation. "Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" (Revelation 4:11). The Creator's Wisdom in granting man the gift of Moral Choice is seen whenever men voluntarily commit the "keeping of their souls to Him in well doing, as unto a Faithful Creator" (1Peter 4:19). Joy is experienced in Heaven at the very moment that a single Lost Sinner repents. "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:10). Men would foolishly fashion a God who would create men without Moral Agency, but the Only Wise God our Saviour (Jude 25) has wisely set the value on the repentance of a Lost Sinner to be in excess of ninety-nine to one. "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance" (Luke 15:7).

With sin entering the picture, how could the Only Wise God (1Timothy 1:17) ever secure man from sinning, any more than a human parent could raise an obedient child? "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). Again, men would create God after their own foolish notions; but, the "foolishness of God is wiser than men" (1Corinthians 1:25). God must now reveal that part of His Eternal Plan to redeem and sanctify a people for Himself. "4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, 5 to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might

receive the Adoption of sons" (Galatians 4:4-5). What mortal could have imagined that God would have offered His Own Son to stop the flood of sin? "And without controversy great is the mystery of Godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1Timothy 3:16).

Wicked men may argue that saving a Lost Sinner is one thing, but causing him to walk in the holiness required for any man to see the LORD, is quite another, i.e., "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the LORD" (Hebrews 12:14); however, God has wisely provided a solution to secure man's holiness. In giving His Son, He provided for man's justification. "That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have Eternal Life" (John 3:15). Through the gift of the Holy Spirit, He "worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). No angel or man in designing their God would have conceived of such a bold plan to manifest God in the flesh, crucify Him, resurrect Him, then daringly inundate penitent men with the Gift of the Spirit of Christ, to teach men of Christ, which would have the effect of securing them in a holy walk. "26 But when the Comforter is come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me... 13 Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all Truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come. 14 He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you" (John 15:26; 16:13-14). What more than the manifestation of Christ to the Believer would cause him to walk in the Cycle of Loving Obedience? "He that hath My Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him" (14:21).

"O the depth of the riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His Judgments, and His Ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33).

Maranatha!

Discovering God

February 25, 2001

Since theology is the study of God, then all of humanity should be practicing theologians. "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am Meek and Lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matthew 11:29). Discovering God was the driving force behind such great men as the Apostle Paul. "That I may know Him, and the Power of His Resurrection, and the Fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His Death" (Philippians 3:10). So valuable is this Knowledge of God that "all things" must be set aside to gain this Knowledge. "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus my LORD: for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (3:8). Paul's voice would be heartily supported by the testimony of the Apostle Peter. "But grow in grace, and in the Knowledge of our LORD and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be Glory both now and for ever. Amen" (2Peter 3:18).

Every aspect of life is only a circumstance that God has providentially provided that we may learn more about Him in the School of Life. "And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children" (Isaiah 54:13). Though life is the discovery of God, He must reveal something about us to ourselves to motivate each step of our discovery of Him, e.g., the prophet Isaiah was revealed his uncleanness in the presence of the Holy God. "1 In the year that King Uzziah died I saw also the LORD sitting upon a Throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the Temple. 2 Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. 3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of Hosts: the whole Earth is full of His Glory. 4 And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of Hosts" (6:1-5).

In similar fashion, the spiritual life of every Saint began with the **Holy God** revealing to the Sinner our past disregard for His Law of Love, which said: "Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind... Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:37, 39). God used His Law to impress us that we have not obeyed It; therefore, we cannot expect to be justified by It. "10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one... 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one... 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the Glory of God" (Romans 3:10, 12, 23). Because we have all miserably failed to love God supremely, and our neighbour as ourselves, we fell under the condemnation of the Law. "For as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them" (Galatians 3:10).

Then, entered Christ, upholding His Law of Love; but, at the same time, He revealed God to us as the **God of the Second Chance**. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Romans 5:6). In effect, though the Law could not and did not save us, it was used by God to give us a sense of our sin. "For by the Law is the knowledge of sin" (3:20). Despairing of ourselves, we finally saw Jesus as our **Salvation from Sin**. "24 Wherefore the Law was our Schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a Schoolmaster" (Galatians 3:24-25). "No longer" looking to be justified by our keeping of the Law of Love, we look to **God as our Justifier** and **Jesus as our Justification**. "To declare, I say, at this time His Righteousness: that He might be Just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Romans 3:26). "24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our LORD from the dead; 25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our Justification" (4:24-25).

Though the ordinances of the Old Covenant's Ceremonial Law have been done away, the Law of Love still stands; and, we have been given the New Covenant's Gift of the Holy Spirit to cause us to walk in perfect obedience to It. "19 And I will give them one heart, and I will put a New Spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: 20 that they may walk in My Statutes, and keep Mine Ordinances, and do them: and they shall be My people, and I will be their God" (Ezekiel 11:19-20). Through His Spirit, Christ now reveals Himself to us as our **Paraklete** or **Advocate**. "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate [Greek, parakletos] with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous" (1John 2:1). What does He advocate? That "ye sin not" (2:1). Instead of attempting and failing repeatedly to obey the Law of Love, His Spirit now works in us to "will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13).

And so, throughout Eternity, we will continue to make new discoveries about our **Infinite God**. Hallelujah! "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: His going forth is prepared as the morning; and He shall Come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the Earth" (Hosea 6:3). Our short life, which is "even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (James 4:14), we must fill to its utmost with precious discoveries of the Almighty God. "For the Earth shall be filled with the Knowledge of the Glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Habakkuk 2:14).

Maranatha!

We invite you to study further on this concept of discovering God, through reading a series of lectures by Charles G. Finney, entitled:

["The Relations of Christ to the Believer"](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Relations.Christ.Believer.html)

-- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Relations.Christ.Believer.html> --

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"No one can too fully understand, or too deeply feel, the necessity of taking home the Bible with all it contains, as a message sent from Heaven to him; nor can too earnestly desire or seek the promised Spirit to teach him the true spiritual import of all its contents. He must have the Bible made a personal revelation of God to his own soul. It must become his own book. He must know Christ for himself. He must know him in his different relations. He must know him in his blessed and infinite fulness, or he cannot abide in him, and unless he abide in Christ, he can bring forth none of the fruits of holiness. 'Except a man abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered.' [John 15:6]. ['Sanctify them through Thy Truth: Thy Word is Truth' (John 17:17)]... The foregoing are some of the relations which Christ sustains to us as to our salvation. I could have enlarged greatly, as you perceive, upon each of these, and easily have swelled this part of our course of study to a large volume. I have only touched upon these sixty-one relations, as specimens of the manner in which he is presented for our acceptance in the Bible, and by the Holy Spirit. ['And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen' (John 21:25).]" -CHARLES G. FINNEY.

Help for Those Who Need Patience

March 29, 2001

The lack of patience in our dealing with our fellow man is a sign of the **failure** of our Christianity to the world and to the Saints, for we are taught to "be patient toward all men" (1Thessalonians 5:14). In truth, the sum total of True Religion is the exercise of Supreme Love toward God and an Equal Love toward our fellow man. "29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the Commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The LORD our God is one LORD: 30 and thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the First Commandment. 31 And the Second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other Commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:29-31). And, True Love is patient, or as the Apostle Paul wrote by inspiration in the Love Chapter, "charity [Greek, agape, love] SUFFERETH LONG, and IS KIND" (1Corinthians 13:4). So again, patience is not merely a Christian virtue, but it is an essential part of a True Profession of faith in the LORD Jesus Christ. "In your patience possess ye your souls" (Luke 21:19).

Help for those who need patience comes from God through Jesus Christ. "Now the God of Patience and Consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus" (Romans 15:5). What better picture of God's Longsuffering Love toward us than sending His own Son to die for us? "For God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life" (John 3:16). It would have been completely justifiable for God to have swiftly judged each of us by dropping us into the darkest Hell, when we sinned against Him, just as the Rebel Angels were cast out of Heaven, when they sinned. "4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to Hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment... 9 [Then] The LORD knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the Day of Judgment to be punished" (2Peter 2:4, 9). But, the "longsuffering of our LORD is Salvation" (3:15). If God did not exercise patience with us, He would not have sent Christ to die for us, and to grant through Christ, the blessing of the Spirit of Christ to work in us "to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). Realizing that patience is a good gift, and that "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights" (James 1:17), we must cooperate with God in perfecting patience in us. "But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1:4).

If all of True Religion was only waiting for God to do something, then we would only have to keep waiting for patience; but, God will do His part, *only* if we will do our part. "But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John 5:17). Our part-- however insignificant in comparison to His part-- is to use the totality of our being in accomplishing the goal of patience, even as God's uses the totality of His Being in working that patience in us. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). Though good intentions on our part are important, we need more than that. *We need understanding of His Word for the Holy Spirit to be able to gain the required control of our will that results in the Godly exercise of patience.* "17 That the God of our LORD Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation in the knowledge of Him: 18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the Saints" (Ephesians 1:17-18). *If we will only seek through prayer and searching of the Word, we will find the patience for which we sense our need.* "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matthew 7:7).

Patience is the willingness to wait upon the LORD. "But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Romans 8:25). And, through waiting upon the LORD, we are renewed in strength, so that we become unwearied and unfainting in accomplishing all the will of God in our lives. "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31). Patience is a continual process of trusting God. "Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience" (James 1:3). The work of patience is vital in perfecting the Body of Christ and completing the "good work" that He began in us until the "Day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6), i.e., until He Returns for us. "But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1:4). Since patience is an ongoing work in us, ours is not to complain of new trials or vicissitudes, but to "count it all joy when [we] fall into divers temptations" (1:2). Now, that is an act of faith in God, to trust Him concerning our new difficulty, that He is working patience in us so that we may be His Spotless Bride-- "without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our LORD Jesus Christ" (1Timothy 6:14).

Love is patient, i.e., "charity suffereth long, and is kind" (1Corinthians 13:4). Love, then is a motivator that the Spirit of God uses to work patience in us. "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity" (13:13). The Second Coming of the LORD Jesus is also a motivator for patience. "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the Coming of the LORD. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the Earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain" (James 5:7). Patience is eminently necessary for all those who are praying the prayer that all those pray, who are waiting for the Soon Return of the LORD Jesus Christ, i.e., "Come [quickly], LORD Jesus" (Revelation 22:20). "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the Coming of the LORD draweth nigh" (5:8). Knowing that God Himself is Patience, patient toward us, as well as the example for our patience, is a motivator for our patience. "And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and Truth" (Exodus 34:6).

Comprehending that patience must be preceded by tribulation, but that the patience that results in experience and hope, will unashamedly flower into the Love of God, that is the heart of our religion. This, too, will give the Promised Spirit of the Covenant, the nourishment to feed us to give us our longed for patience. "3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; 4 and patience, experience; and experience, hope: 5 and hope maketh not ashamed; because the Love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans 5:3-5). Christ is where our patience is stored, that is, the Father stores all the supply of patience that we need in "His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). Understanding that the Holy Spirit of Promise must continually be revealing new secrets from His Word to us about Christ to perfect patience in us, makes us patient. "But when the Comforter is come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me" (John 15:26). And, if we continue to increase in patience through our growth in grace in Christ Jesus, then we will do well. "5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; 6 and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience Godliness; 7 and to Godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. 8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the Knowledge of our LORD Jesus Christ" (2Peter 1:5-8).

Maranatha!

[All those seeking patience, please read A. T. Pierson's "[In Christ Jesus](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/In.Christ.Jesus.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/In.Christ.Jesus.html> --, to give our Ally the Holy Spirit, the opportunity to increase your understanding of Christ, and thus, make patience abound in you.]

Repentance After the Mark of the Beast?

April 16, 2001

"And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the Earth;
and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men
which had the Mark of the Beast,
and upon them which worshipped his image"

(Revelation 16:2).

The First Vial Judgment is poured out upon all worshippers of the Beast, i.e., "upon them which worshipped his image" (Revelation 16:2). A "vial" is translated from the Greek word *chiale*, which means a shallow bowl or cup, usually without a stand or foot, used to draw out of a larger goblet. The Almighty's anger with man's wickedness is that larger goblet, i.e., "God is angry with the wicked every day" (Psalm 7:11). He has wisely chosen to govern His anger by the offering of His Only Begotten Son in atonement for man's sinful rebellion; but, man's probation must eventually end, or God's Kingdom cannot ultimately stand. "And the LORD said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke Me? and how long will it be ere they believe Me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them?... How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against Me?" (Numbers 14:11, 27). If man could always count upon sinning with time left for repentance, then:

- (1) There would be no pressing need for immediate repentance; however, Jesus preached, "Repent: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17),
- (2) Hell would be entirely empty; but, Hell (Greek, *gehenna*) is not idly promised to those that do not escape it, i.e., "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of Hell?" (23:33), and
- (3) The White Throne Judgment would have no Unrighteous Sinners to punish; nevertheless, "whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the Lake of Fire" (Revelation 20:15), which is the place "where the Beast and the False Prophet are [at that time already]" (20:10).

A "noisome [Greek, *kakos*, meaning bad] and grievous [Greek, *poneros*, meaning evil] sore [Greek, *helkos*, meaning sore or ulcer]" (Revelation 16:2) is a loathsome and malignant ulcer, that will be poured out upon worshippers of the Beast. An ulcer is a lesion resulting from the gradual disintegration of tissue, which covers most of the internal and external surfaces of the body, whose main symptom is

pain. And, pain, which was originally intended to punish, i.e., "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children... cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life" (Genesis 3:16, 17), if it does not reform the recipient, will only be a prelude to their final destruction, for ulcers that are painful to touch are oftentimes a cancer. "Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness" (Hebrews 3:8).

This malignant ulcer will fall specifically upon the "men which had [Greek, *echontas*, present tense, literally, are having] the Mark of the Beast, and upon them which worshipped [Greek, *proskunountas*, present tense, literally, are worshipping] his image" (Revelation 16:2). Is it possible for one to have received the Mark of the Beast and yet not worship the Antichrist? Yes. The Beast will mark *all of humankind* as his property, i.e., acting for the Antichrist, the False Prophet "causeth **all**, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads" (13:16), which will include even those humans who are not moral agents, e.g., infants, toddlers, mentally handicapped, etc., who have no agency, and therefore cannot receive Divine Punishment. "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the Kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14). From the Antichrist's perspective, refusal to take the Mark of the Beast means starvation, i.e., "no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark" (Revelation 13:17), and refusal to worship the Beast means the penalty of death, i.e., "as many as would not worship the image of the Beast should be killed" (13:15). On the other hand, God will Eternally Punish those who are clinging to the Mark and worshipping the Beast. "If any man worship [Greek, *proskunei*, present tense, literally, is worshipping] the Beast and his image, and receive [Greek, *lambanei*, present tense, literally, is receiving] his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the Wrath of God" (14:9, 10).

Does this mean that someone who has taken the Mark and worshipped the Beast might yet be converted before it was too late? Yes, but **no one should ever take the Mark**-- *much less, take it with the mental reservation that they they will repent of it later*-- for "ye know not what shall be on the morrow" (James 4:14). However, if repentance was morally impossible for all who had taken the Mark and worshipped the Beast, then:

- (1) Why is the Everlasting Gospel preached in the Last Hour to "them that dwell on the Earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Revelation 14:6), if the offering was not sincere, or the hearers were unable to believe?
- (2) Why report that the hearers "repented not" (16:9, 11), if their repentance would not be accepted, or they were not still morally capable of repenting?, and
- (3) Who will be saved to physically enter into the Millennial Kingdom, where the "wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them" (Isaiah 11:6), as subjects of Messiah the King?

Remember that a "Great Multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues" (Revelation 7:9) of Tribulation Saints, will come "out of Great Tribulation" (7:14), *after* the Mark of the Beast has been implemented; and, undoubtedly, there will be *former* Beast Worshipers in that number. "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God" (Luke 18:27).

Maranatha!

Related Topics:

666

[The Antichrist and the False Prophet](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/The.Holy.Bible/Commentary.Revelations.13.html)

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Some have called chapter 13 one of the greatest prophetic chapters of the Bible!

from

A Commentary on the BOOK of REVELATION

Chapter 13

by Tom Stewart

"Seven successive stages of Gentile world power-- out of which the Antichrist will come-- are represented by the 'seven heads and ten horns' (13:1). The difficulty of interpretation is the honest bias of each commentator, who is impressed that he is one 'upon whom the ends of the world are come' (1Corinthians 10:11). As we approach the conclusion of the matter, the Infallible Commentator, which is the Holy Spirit, will drop the scales from our eyes to teach us the wonderful secret of His infallible interpretation... Who will this Antichrist be? Periodically, each generation has had its own Antiochus Epiphanes, Caligula, Pontifex Maximus, Hitler, or Mussolini that must be the Antichrist. But, why? The appearance of the Antichrist will precede the Second Advent of the LORD Jesus Christ for the counterfeit to properly work its deception. 'Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition' (2Thessalonians 2:3)."

also

Living By Faith

April 30, 2001

"The just shall live by faith"

(Romans 1:17).

George Mueller of Bristol is remembered for his ministry of supporting thousands of orphans without advertising his needs to man, but God only. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16). At times, lacking the very bread to place before the orphans, their needs were always met, when mealtime actually came. "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Psalm 37:25). Mueller believed in the literal necessity of praying, "Give us this day our **daily** bread" (Matthew 6:11). Because he loved his God supremely, he desired that all men, and especially the Saints, would know the faithfulness of God. "O Thou That Hearest Prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come" (Psalm 65:2). And, loving his neighbour as himself, he desired to relieve the material and spiritual needs of the homeless orphans. "Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow" (Isaiah 1:17). But, as touched as he was with the plight of the orphans, he desired more to prove that he was no different from his fellow Christians, in that, if God, the "Father of the Fatherless" (Psalm 68:5), would answer his prayers, then He would do the same for the Brethren. "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not" (James 5:17).

As exceptional a man as George Mueller was, when compared to contemporary Christianity, George Mueller only did what all True Christians must do, which is to live by faith. "The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17). Likewise, Abraham is held up to us as an example of a righteous man who was justified before God; but, Abraham merely did what all men must do. He believed God. "2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. 3 For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (4:2-3). Ordinary Christians are expected to "live by the faith of the Son of God" (Galatians 2:20), to provide for them-- body, soul, and spirit. "25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? 33 But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. 34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (6:25-34).

Briefly, what is living by faith?

- First, faith must be in God, not man. "It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man" (Psalm 118:8).
- Second, the Father has specifically appointed His Son as the object of our faith. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life" (John 3:16).
- Third, faith is the voluntary confiding in and trusting of the LORD Jesus Christ, Whose "Name is called The Word of God" (Revelation 19:13).
- Fourth, faith is a product of the Word of God and the Spirit of God, working in a willing heart. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17). "And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My Statutes, and ye shall keep My Judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:27).
- Fifth, living by faith is necessary for those who desire to please God. "But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

- Sixth, living by faith is in contrast to allowing yourself to be controlled by simply what your physical eyes see. "We walk by faith, not by sight" (2Corinthians 5:7).
- And, finally, since faith is the substantial controlling element of every aspect of the Christian life, no part of life can be divorced from its overriding influence. "1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a good report" (Hebrews 11:1-2).

Those who realize their need to live by faith must read, meditate upon, and study much the Word of God. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). It can be seen that every Saint throughout the ages has had the responsibility and privilege to trust God and live by faith. "The just shall live by his faith" (Habakkuk 2:4). Whenever we find ourselves making decisions and judgments without asking the Spirit, "What saith the Scripture?" (Romans 4:3), or consulting the Father through prayer, then we are walking like the world, and "not after Christ" (Colossians 2:8). "And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, [the Holy Spirit] saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left" (Isaiah 30:21). Recognizing that God is able to direct our thoughts, we are to consciously choose out "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8) with the understanding that this is walking by faith. This is thinking God's thoughts after Him. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John 5:17). This then is discerning the pattern of action that best corresponds to our understanding of His Word. "I being in the way, the LORD led me" (Genesis 24:27).

In addition to the supremacy of the Word of God *and* a continual attitude of praying "without ceasing" (1Thessalonians 5:17), to those who walk by faith, many other factors need to be considered:

- (1) The LORD Jesus Christ is the sum total of all-- moral, physical, material, and spiritual-- the supply of what we need to walk by faith. "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). [Read "[In Christ Jesus](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/In.Christ.Jesus.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/In.Christ.Jesus.html> -- by A. T. Pierson to explore this idea. Also, Charles G. Finney's "[The Relations of Christ to the Believer](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Relations.Christ.Believer.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Relations.Christ.Believer.html> -- elevates the centrality of Christ for the life of faith.]
- (2) Our moral agency should work in concert with God's sovereignty and not get in the way, **if** we seek Him first. "But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33).
- (3) A quick confession and hatred of personal sin, so that we walk in no known sin, must be the rule of those who must walk by faith. "23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: 24 and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way Everlasting" (Psalm 139:23-24).
- (4) God's Providence in our circumstances and in current events must and will guide us, if we are looking for His guidance of our walk of faith. "Seek, and ye shall find" (Matthew 7:7).
- (5) Patience will be necessary in our walk of faith, i.e., the "trying of your faith worketh patience" (James 1:3), because we are not aware of all the factors that God must manage in the performance of His promises. "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD" (Exodus 14:13).
- (6) Communion with God, where we continually converse with the High and Lofty One That Inhabiteth Eternity in the consciousness of our mind, keeps our purpose fixed to live by faith. "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him... for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God" (Genesis 5:24; Hebrews 11:5).
- (7) A non-Pharisaical separation from the world-- "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the LORD, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2Corinthians 6:17)-- and from sinning Professed Brethren-- "19 Brethren, if any of you do err from the Truth, and one convert him; 20 let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from Death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (James 5:19-20), and "if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed" (2Thessalonians 3:14)-- is necessary, if we are to live by faith.

- (8) Ensuring that we allow our physical bodies to do no more than make suggestions to us of our physical needs, e.g., pain, hunger, thirst, and pleasure, we must not allow ourselves, as the world is, to be dominated by them, i.e., "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1John 2:16), if we would live by faith. "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1Corinthians 9:27).
- (9) We must ask for and desire earnestly the protection under the shadow of the Wings of the Almighty against the temptations and assaults of the Devil, if we expect to live by faith. "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you... Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your Brethren" (James 4:7; 1Peter 5:9). And,
- (10) n expectancy of the imminent return of the LORD Jesus Christ, i.e., "and the LORD, Whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His Temple" (Malachi 3:1), to Rapture and Resurrect His Saints, and to judge the world for its impenitent sins, will be our hope and encouragement for sanctified living and service, in our present distress, because we are living by faith. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our LORD Jesus Christ" (1Thessalonians 5:23).

Amen, and Amen.

Maranatha!

Why Study Prophecy?

May 18, 2001

Blessing and happiness is promised to those who read, hear, and keep the words of Scriptural prophecy. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this Prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand" (Revelation 1:3). [See our "[Commentary on the Book of Revelation](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/The.Holy.Bible/Commentary.Revelations.1.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/The.Holy.Bible/Commentary.Revelations.1.html> -- for more about prophecy.] Study of prophecy is crucial because the "time is at hand" (1:3), implying that future events will be effected by our present actions. Study goes beyond even the blessedness of simply reading and hearing the prophecies. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth" (2Timothy 2:15). Study, in this instance, comes from the Greek word *spoudazo*, which means to exert one's self, endeavour, or give diligence. "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence [Greek, *spoudazo*] to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall" (2Peter 1:10). But, keeping "those things which are written therein" (Revelation 1:3) means that we must allow our present actions, e.g., obedience, to be continually guided by our understanding of the Spirit's enlightenment of what "must shortly come to pass" (1:1).

What value is there in understanding in advance the wretched condition to which our Earth and our neighbours will come? Some would even say that to admit or profess that such things will occur, is to invite them and to give up on the spread of the Gospel, but "what saith the Scripture?" (Romans 4:3). The Apostle Paul instructed Timothy that his understanding of the prophecies, i.e., "things to come" (John 16:13), would strengthen him in the fight of faith., i.e., "according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare" (1Timothy 1:18). After all, to know today what will happen tomorrow should give the Saints a staggering advantage over the Enemy in strategically and tactically planning the advance of the Gospel. "And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14). Stop and consider. Not until the Gospel is "preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations" (24:14), will the End come. If the Saints are truly led of the same Spirit that converts the Lost, then we will know when the Father has planned our departure. "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your Redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28). [Read A. J. Gordon's poem, "[The King Draws Near](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Poetry/The.King.Draws.Near.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Poetry/The.King.Draws.Near.html> --, to appreciate the relationship of the Second Coming of Christ to Christian service.]

But, as important as our concern for the Lost, we need to recognize that the Spirit of God must complete the Work of Grace in us that He began at our conversion. "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6). This means that our sanctification must not be taken for granted, and that we must be actively trusting God for its fulfillment as we trusted Him for our salvation. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the LORD" (Hebrews 12:14). Those who take for granted their security in Christ would be most susceptible in deceiving themselves that they possess salvation. "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His Commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him" (1John 2:4). Therefore, our cooperation in completing the process of our sanctification is essential in promoting the return of the LORD Jesus Christ for us. "And the very God of Peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our LORD Jesus Christ" (1Thessalonians 5:23). [Our article, "[He Will Subdue Our Iniquities](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/He.Will.Subdue.Our.Iniquities)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/He.Will.Subdue.Our.Iniquity.html> --, teaches us how God makes normal Christians to walk without sinning.]

Prophecy assures us that the calamitous events of the Book of Revelation will most certainly occur; and for that reason, our efforts to actively oppose wickedness and promote the Gospel of the Grace of God must recognize that we will not usher in the Millennium without the intervening Apocalyptic Tribulation. "1 Come, and let us [Wayward Israel] return unto the LORD: for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up. 2 After two days [2,000 years of the Church Age] will He revive us: in the third day [the Millennium] He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight" (Hosea 6:1-2). Man's pattern has been a precipitous plunge from the first sin in the Garden of Eden toward the ultimate worship of the Antichrist in the place of Jesus Christ, "Who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen" (Romans 9:5). Only with the season of suffering and glory during the Smyrna Church Age and the small missionary expansion of the Philadelphian Church Age, has the True Church seen enough respite to turn the tide in favor of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. "I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an Open Door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My Word, and hast not denied My Name" (Revelation 3:8). Otherwise, we have seen wickedness in the world only wax worse. "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2Timothy 3:13). The present Laodicean Church Age is the predicted result, where True Godliness is all but unknown, and a false standard of holiness is generally received. "16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth. 17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (3:16-17).

Be warned, however, that the study of prophecy, is a study of eschatology, which means the study of last things. This presumes an understanding of the first things, i.e., the fundamental doctrines of the Scriptures. "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God" (Hebrews 6:1). Just as a stone mason understands the need of a well and truly laid cornerstone, the study of prophecy demands a pivotal understanding of the LORD Jesus Christ-- defining all of prophecy in terms of our understanding of Jesus Christ. "Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a Chief Corner Stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded" (1Peter 2:6). We are taught that the LORD Jesus is "made unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption" (1Corinthians 1:30). If we deviate from a good understanding of the "first principles of the Oracles of God" (Hebrews 5:12), then the building of our understanding of prophecy will become increasingly unstable as we construct. "And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it" (Matthew 7:27). Often, we can observe what error in comprehension of the first truths that Laodicea has received, and avoid their mistakes of misunderstanding Bible Prophecy. "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished" (Proverbs 22:3; 27:12). [Charles G. Finney's "[The Relations of Christ to the Believer](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Relations.Christ.Believer.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Relations.Christ.Believer.html> -- makes plain our continued need of sanctification through faith in Christ.]

Through the study of prophecy, we will derive encouragement that our King is coming, not simply to judge the world for its wickedness, but to deliver us, who are "strangers and pilgrims on the Earth" (Hebrews 11:13). "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass [via a Pre-Tribulational Rapture], and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36). Our hands will not grow weak as we continue to plow the ground for the seed of the Gospel. "And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God" (9:62). Hope will be renewed in our hearts that we are not plowing in vain. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing Precious Seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Psalm 126:6). We seek not just the salvation of our neighbours, but the reclamation of the Backslidden. "To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the LORD Jesus" (1Corinthians 5:5). Close to the heart of Jehovah, will be the Spiritual Re-Birth of the Nation of Israel at His Second Coming. "Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the Earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children" (Isaiah 66:8). But, of course, "every transgression and disobedience [will receive] a just recompense of reward" (Hebrews 2:2), when the LORD Jesus Christ returns to judge the world. "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the Earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen" (Revelation 1:7).

May the LORD bless your study of Bible prophecy!

Maranatha!

The Manner of the Second Coming of the LORD Jesus Christ

June 5, 2001

Excerpted from our "[Commentary on the Book of Revelation](#)",
commenting on [Chapter 14](#), verse 20.

"And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs"

(Revelation 14:20).

The "city" (14:20) undoubtedly refers to Jerusalem, for it and its Godly inhabitants will again make it the "apple of [Jehovah's] eye" (Lamentations 2:18). "And give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the Earth" (Isaiah 62:7). The "blood of the grapes" (Genesis 49:11) has figuratively described the pressed juice of the grapes, but here it actually describes the blood of formerly living human beings, who have been slain in the judgments surrounding the Second Coming of the LORD Jesus Christ. "I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with Me: for I will tread them in Mine anger, and trample them in My fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all My raiment" (Isaiah 63:3). The LORD God has never taken pleasure in the death of the wicked. "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezekiel 33:11).

However, at this time (14:20), the death of the wicked will purge humanity of sin; and, the Almighty will defend the purity and integrity of the City or the Great House that He has invited all men to dwell in-- which invitation, only His children have accepted. "24 Therefore whosoever heareth these Sayings of Mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: 25 and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. 26 And every one that heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: 27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it" (Matthew 7:24-27). Blood will come out of the winepress "even unto the horse bridles" (14:20). Some speculate that the blood of slain men at Armageddon will yield a flow of blood deep enough to come up to the bridle of a horse, while others conjecture that it represents only a liberal splattering of blood. However the LORD brings His Word to pass, we are assured that the life of humanity will be liberally dissipated in this Judgment, for the "life of the flesh is in the blood" (Leviticus 17:11).

A "thousand and six hundred furlongs" (14:20) is the distance in which the blood will flow "unto the horse bridles" (14:20). A furlong, according to "Easton's Bible Dictionary" (1897), is "a stadium, a Greek measure of distance equal to 606 feet and 9 inches [or, 606.75 feet]". 1,600 furlongs would then be the equivalent of 183.86 miles. What do we believe to be the manner of the LORD Jesus Christ's Second Coming?

(1) Christ will descend to the Mount of Olives, just as He previously ascended from it. "11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into Heaven. 12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a Sabbath day's journey [i.e., approximately 2,250 feet, or less than half a mile]" (Acts 1:11-12). "3 Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. 4 And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south" (Zechariah 14:3-4).

(2) Christ will then pursue His enemies, slaying them, down to Bozrah. Bozrah lies approximately 18 miles southeast of the Dead Sea in the mountain district of Petra, according to the "Davis Dictionary of the Bible", and it is approximately 58 miles southeast of the Mount of Olives. "6 The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea. 7 And the unicorns shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls; and their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness" (Isaiah 34:6-7). And,

(3) Christ will then continue His pursuit and slaying of His enemies from Bozrah to Megiddo-- Megiddo being the ancient city close by the final conflict at Armageddon-- traveling approximately another 128 miles. "1 Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. 2 Wherefore art Thou red in Thine apparel, and Thy garments like Him that treadeth in the winefat? 3 I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with Me: for I will tread them in Mine anger, and trample them in My fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all My raiment. 4 For the day of vengeance is in Mine heart, and the year of My redeemed is come. 5 And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore Mine own arm brought Salvation unto Me; and My fury, it upheld Me. 6 And I will tread down the people in Mine anger, and make them drunk in My fury, and I will bring down their strength to the Earth" (Isaiah 63:1-6). Combining the distances from the Mount of Olives to Bozrah of 58 miles with the distance from Bozrah to Megiddo of 128 miles, is a distance of 186 miles, which is approximately the same as 1,600 furlongs (14:20).

Maranatha!

Armageddon and the Great Crack in the Earth

June 10, 2001

Armageddon represents the final showdown between Good and Evil, between the LORD Jesus Christ and the Antichrist. "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is LORD of Lords, and KING of Kings: and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful" (Revelation 17:14). [See our article, "[The Conflicts of Armageddon](#)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/Conflicts.of.Armageddon.html> --, for a discussion of past battles, as well as the upcoming Apocalyptic Battle of Armageddon.] As a battle that is yet to be fought, the archaeologists who make the excavation of Megiddo their livelihood, do not necessarily believe that Armageddon as depicted in the New Testament Book of Revelation, will happen. But, "what saith the Scripture?" (Romans 4:3). "12 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the Kings of the East might be prepared. 13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the Dragon [Satan], and out of the mouth of the Beast [the Antichrist], and out of the mouth of the False Prophet. 14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the Kings of the Earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. 15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. 16 And He gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon" (Revelation 16:12-16).

Because Biblical Prophecy has the aura of wives tales or fables to many, the impact of the message to turn from selfishness to faith in the LORD Jesus Christ before it is too late, to them, is laughable. "3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the Last Days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 4 and saying, Where is the Promise of His Coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. 5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the Word of God the heavens were of old, and the Earth standing out of the water and in the water: 6 whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: 7 but the heavens and the Earth, which are now, by the same Word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the Day of Judgment and perdition of ungodly men. 8 But, Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the LORD as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The LORD is not slack concerning His Promise, as some men count slackness; but is Longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 10 But the Day of the LORD will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the Earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. 11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and Godliness" (2Peter 3:3-11).

Another of our editorials, "[The Manner of the Second Coming of the LORD Jesus Christ](#)", makes reference to Zechariah's prophecy, describing the LORD's descent to the Earth, specifically to the Mount of Olives, before He proceeds to Armageddon. "3 Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. 4 And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south" (Zechariah 14:3-4). In support of the authenticity of the Scriptural account of the upcoming Battle of Armageddon, it should be noted that the Jordan River Valley is at the head of a great crack or series of cracks in the Earth, known as the East African Rift System. Of course, these cracks in the Earth are known as seismic faults; and, along its length are earthquakes and volcanoes. This particular series of cracks is one of the most extensive rifts on the Earth's surface, extending from Jordan for 4,000 miles (6,400

kilometers) down the Jordan River to the Dead Sea extending to the Gulf of Aqaba along the Red Sea through Ethiopia past the equatorial region of snowcapped Mount Kilimanjaro's 19,340 feet (5,895 meters) and down to Mozambique. In Africa, it is known as the Great Rift Valley, averaging 30-40 miles (48-64 kilometers) wide. "And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the Earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the Earth" (Isaiah 2:19).

At the close of the Tribulation Week, the Almighty will pour out the final Seven Vial Judgments. The Seventh Vial Judgment will conclude with the Greatest Earthquake in the History of the World, causing Jerusalem to be fragmented into three parts. The Mount of Olives, to which the LORD Jesus Christ will descend at His Second Coming during the Campaign of Armageddon, is on the east side of Jerusalem, separated only by the Kidron Valley. "17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a Great Voice out of the Temple of Heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. 18 And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the Earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. 19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His Wrath" (Revelation 16:17-19). The Second Coming of the LORD Jesus Christ will include the greatest earthquake experienced by man along the most extensive rift on the surface of the Earth-- all of this as the LORD continues northward towards Armageddon. **Repentance, faith, and holiness should be the effect of such news as Armageddon and the Great Crack in the Earth.** "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance" (Matthew 3:8). "14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the Way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets: 15 and have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a Resurrection of the dead, both of the Just and Unjust. 16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men" (Acts 24:14-16). "But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation" (1Peter 1:15).

Maranatha!

What's Wrong With the Golden Rule?

June 17, 2001

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the Law and the prophets"
(Matthew 7:12).

What's wrong with the Golden Rule? Absolutely nothing! This principle of reciprocity is so well understood by mankind, that literally every major religion of the world acknowledges it in their sacred writings. "14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the Law, do by nature the things contained in the Law, these, having not the Law, are a law unto themselves: 15 which shew the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another" (Romans 2:14-15). However, the Golden Rule, when divorced from the rest of the Scriptural concept of the Moral Law, becomes merely an untenable ethical position employed by philosophers or pragmatists. But, "Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). For example, if I (hypothetically) as a police officer would not desire to be shot or killed, then how could I rationalize the use of deadly force upon a shooter, fleeing from my presence after shooting at me and killing my partner? Wouldn't a strict interpretation of the Golden Rule force me to stand in the shoes of the fleeing shooter and also desire not to be shot or killed? "Nonsense!" you may react; but-- how does the Scripture reconcile the use of deadly force with the Golden Rule? "What saith the Scripture?" (Romans 4:3).

Deadly force is justified by Scripture. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man" (Genesis 9:6). Specifically, Human Government's use of deadly force is recognized and sanctioned by Scripture. "3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: 4 for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil" (Romans 13:3-4). But, the Golden Rule addresses only the second half of the Ten Commandments or Decalogue, which epitomizes the Moral Law. "36 Master, which is the great Commandment in the Law? 37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with ALL thy heart, and with ALL thy soul, and with ALL thy mind. 38 This is the First and Great Commandment. 39 And the Second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:36-40). The LORD Jesus Christ summarized *the whole* of the Moral Law keying on the word *love*, with the Golden Rule being identified with only the Second, i.e., "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (36:39).

A Scriptural statement of the Golden Rule was given by the LORD Jesus Christ in His Sermon on the Mount.

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you,
do ye even so to them:
for this is the Law and the prophets"
(Matthew 7:12).

The Gospel According to Luke also records Christ's statement of the Golden Rule. "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise" (Luke 6:31). Anticipating the moralists' emphasis upon the Golden Rule, Christ added this perspective that reciprocity alone is not the key to human conduct, but love is. "43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. 44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; 45 that ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? 47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? 48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is Perfect" (Matthew 5:43-48).

Humanistic philosophy and morality *may* gladly embrace the Golden Rule because it reciprocates conduct on a purely human to human level; but, that which separated Ancient Judaism and separates True Christianity from the other major religions of the world, is the emphasis upon Love and obedience to the Almighty, which is the rest of the Moral Law, in addition to the Golden Rule. "37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with ALL thy heart, and with ALL thy soul, and with ALL thy mind. 38 This is the First and Great Commandment" (Matthew 22:37-38). Only as we begin to comprehend that True Love is obedience to the LORD Jesus Christ, can we begin to develop a properly balanced life, which also pays appropriate homage to the Golden Rule. "1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth Him [the Father] that begat loveth Him [the Son] also that is begotten of Him [the Father]. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His Commandments. 3 For this is the Love of God, that we keep His Commandments: and His Commandments are NOT grievous [literally, burdensome]" (1John 5:1-3).

Human ethics do not necessarily see a need for asking God forgiveness for breaking the Golden Rule, which is also called the Royal Law in New Testament Scripture. "If ye fulfil the Royal Law according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well" (James 2:8). God is the Moral Governor of the Universe that enforces compliance to the Golden Rule, judging it sin when the Golden Rule is transgressed, and punishing those who break it. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7). Mercy, then, is a necessity to all those who have broken God's Golden Rule, for "all have sinned, and come short of the Glory of God" (Romans 3:23) and the "wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). However, Christianity preaches the "Gospel of the Grace of God" (Acts 20:24), where mercy has been demonstrated to mankind by the Father offering His Son in our place in atonement for our sins, i.e., "For God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life" (John 3:16). "9 But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the Law as transgressors. 10 For whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. 11 For He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the Law. 12 So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the Law of Liberty. 13 For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment" (James 2:9-13).

Even Professing Christians, who are persuaded of the rightness of Scripture's Golden Rule, must also understand the need of the Holy Spirit working in man "to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). The best of intentions in Professing Christians may still result in miserable failure in keeping the Golden Rule, unless we purposefully come in faith to the Almighty for the fulfilling of His New Covenant with us. "But this shall be the Covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put My Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Jeremiah 31:33). That Covenant is now called the New Testament, whose chief feature is the indwelling Spirit of God in the Saints to renew them and cause them to walk in obedience. "26 A New Heart also will I give you, and a New Spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My Statutes, and ye shall keep My Judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

This is the reason that the LORD looks upon disobedience in Professed Christians with such disdain. "Why call ye Me, LORD, LORD, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). And further, calls such conduct a Lying Profession. "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His Commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him" (1John 2:4). In sum, this is the answer to the question that has plagued mankind as to *why people do not do what they know they ought to do-- all of mankind needs the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit*, which is given to those who are willing to obey Him. "And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, Whom God hath given to them that obey Him" (Acts 5:32). Willingness on our part indicates that God is already working in us. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy Power" (Psalm 110:3). And, if He has chosen to work in us, then He will continue to perform that Perfect Work until He comes for us. "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6). Keeping the Golden Rule does not save us, but how can we claim to be saved, if we do not keep it? "3 And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His Commandments. 4 He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His Commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him" (1John 2:3-4).

May God give us the Grace to keep His Golden Rule.

Maranatha!

Lead Us Not Into Temptation

June 29, 2001

"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Matthew 6:13) means, Help us not to sin, i.e., *not* to succumb to temptation, and thereby sin. Jesus implied that everyone, including His Human Self, has tendencies of habit, circumstances of the flesh, and predispositions of circumstances in the world, that will inevitably cause us to sin *unless* identified and **countered by a strength of God's character, that can be claimed in faith as a Promise**. "For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour [literally, help] them that are tempted" (Hebrews 2:18). For instance, if I understand that I have a tendency to lose my patience with a certain person in a familiar circumstance, i.e., the "sin which doth so easily beset us" (12:1), then it behooves me to seek by prayerful searching of the Word for a revelation of the LORD's strength of patience, that the Holy Spirit may apply to me, should the circumstance arise yet again. "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished" (Proverbs 22:3). Further, Christ Jesus "pleased not Himself" (Romans 15:3), leaving me the example of patience "for our learning" (15:4); thereby, holding forth the opportunity that the "God of patience and consolation [would] grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus" (15:5). This is the anatomy of praying not to be led INTO temptation. "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an Example, that ye should follow His steps" (1Peter 2:21). [See our article, "[What the Bible Says About Temptation](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/What.Bible.Says.Temptation.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/What.Bible.Says.Temptation.html> --, for an amplification of this subject.]

If we are to be holy, we must not be continually falling prey to sin. "Follow peace with all men, and Holiness, without which no man shall see the LORD" (Hebrews 12:14). And, if we seek not to be caught perpetually in the teeth of sin, we need to be continually claiming Promises in prayer not to succumb to temptation. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is Faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1Corinthians 10:13). Christians underestimate the necessity of prayer in overcoming temptation, perhaps because they incorrectly assume that God's unwillingness that we commit any kind of sin, prevents Him from allowing the world, the flesh, or the Devil to tempt us. Remember, Christ "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). The purpose of God allowing temptation is to get us to turn to Him for help. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find Grace to help in time of need" (4:16). [R. A. Torrey's "[How to Pray](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/How.to.Pray.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/How.to.Pray.html> - gives insight into the basics of prayer.]

Our LORD Jesus Christ was allowed by the Father to be tempted in the wilderness by the *flesh* (i.e., "2 And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterward an hungred. 3 And when the Tempter came to Him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread" [Matthew 4:2-3]), and to be tempted by the *world* (i.e., "8 Again, the Devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; 9 and saith unto Him, All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me" [4:8-9]). The LORD Jesus countered and overcame the temptation by resorting to the help of the Word of God each time, i.e., "It is written" (4:4, 7, 10). Our victory over temptation is no different. You must also "resist stedfast in the faith" (1Peter 5:9) before Satan "will flee from you" (James 4:7). If the Father saw fit to *allow* His Only Begotten Son to be tempted, to benefit us by the example of Jesus overcoming by actively and purposely depending on the Word of God, then the Father *will also allow* us to be tempted to glorify Himself by our overcoming temptation. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man" (James 1:13). Also, remember that the Apostle Peter denied the LORD Jesus after he failed to avail himself of the opportunity to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane, because he was tired and did not see the need. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not INTO temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41). [Read our next editorial, "[What Happened in Gethsemane?](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/What.Happened.in.Gethsemane.html)" for more concerning this.]

Maranatha!

Related Topics:

[Victory Over Temptation](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Victory.Over.Temptation.html)

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[He Will Subdue Our Iniquities](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/He.Will.Subdue.Our.Iniquit.html)

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[Exceeding Great and Precious Promises](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Promises/Exceeding.Promises.html)

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[The Relations of Christ to the Believer](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Relations.Christ.Believer.html) by C. G. Finney

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What Happened in Gethsemane?

July 2, 2001

To the east of Jerusalem, "over the brook Cedron" (John 18:1), probably at the foot of the Mount of Olives, there "was a garden" (18:1) "called Gethsemane" (Matthew 26:36). In the Greek, Gethsemane means *an oil orchard*. Attached to the garden was an orchard of olive, fig, and pomegranate trees to which "Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with His disciples" (John 18:2) to retreat from the crowds for rest, comfort, and prayer. The Garden of Gethsemane is best known to us for the scene of the betrayal of the LORD into the hands of the "chief priests and elders of the people" (Matthew 26:47). Of the events prior to His betrayal that night in Gethsemane, we are called upon to consider the nature of Jesus' agony when He prayed, "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). Scripture records that immediately "there appeared an angel unto Him from Heaven, strengthening Him" (22:43), in response to His petition.

Shortly before Christ's prayer in Gethsemane, He and His disciples had just observed the Passover Supper, that we now commemorate as the "Lord's Supper" (1Corinthians 11:20). They came to Gethsemane, where the LORD told the eleven, "Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder" (Matthew 26:36). Taking with Him Peter, James, and John about "a stone's cast" (Luke 22:41) from the remaining disciples, Jesus instructed them, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with Me" (Matthew 26:38). These were the LORD's closest earthly friends of which He asked their support in preparation for His death on the Cross. "And He said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee; take away this cup from Me: nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt" (Mark 14:36). It was not that His will did not match the Father's will, because the LORD Jesus certainly was one with the Father. "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee" (John 17:21). Jesus just wanted to emphasize that it was the Father's will that mattered, not His own. What was the LORD Jesus doing at this pregnant moment before He knew He would be delivered into the enemies' hands for suffering and death? Was He praying that Satan would not be allowed to destroy Him in the Garden of Gethsemane before He had the opportunity to atone for the sins of mankind upon the Cross? Yes, most certainly. "And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:44).

The body of the LORD Jesus was reported by "Luke, the beloved physician" (Colossians 4:14) to have "sweat... great drops of blood" (Luke 22:44). This was undoubtedly due to the great "agony" (22:44) He was enduring at that very moment in Gethsemane. "Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared" (Hebrews 5:7). The agony of Christ in Gethsemane was necessary-- as the Son of God, Who "stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51)-- for the voluntary sacrifice of His life on the Cross. This He knew would satisfy the Public Justice of God's Holy Law of Love, making it appropriate for the Father to forgive those who would repent and believe, while upholding the sanctity of the Moral Law. "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matthew 5:17). "For all the Law is fulfilled in one Word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Galatians 5:14). [See the instructive comments on the nature of Public Justice by [Charles G. Finney](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Systematic.Theology.html> -- in his "[Systematic Theology](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Systematic.Theology.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Systematic.Theology.html> -- (1851), [Lecture 34 on the "Atonement"](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Systematic.Theology.html) -- [http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Systematic.Theology.4.html#LECTURE 34](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Systematic.Theology.4.html#LECTURE%2034) --.]

But, the humanity of the LORD Jesus knew full well that He was about to endure unimaginable suffering, even for the noble cause of redeeming mankind. "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the LORD the Church" (Ephesians 5:29). Which of us would not appreciate Divine Grace to assist us to willingly lay down our lives, if so required? "2 Looking

unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of Our Faith; Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God. ³ For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds" (Hebrews 12:2-3). Jesus "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (4:15). Humanly speaking, this meant that He could be tempted in the flesh to *not* want to be scourged and crucified, i.e., "Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death" (Hebrews 5:7). Since the Atonement of the LORD Jesus Christ was the substitution or exchange of His sufferings on the Cross for the punishment of Sinners, Christ needed to be strengthened by the angels to overcome the temptation *not* to go to the sufferings and death of the Cross. For if He had not gone, He would not have become a "Ransom for all" (1Timothy 2:6).

Thank you, LORD Jesus, for willingly enduring the "contradiction of sinners" against Yourself, and "despising the shame" of the Cross to purchase our Redemption. Thank you for overcoming the temptation to *not* go to the suffering and death of the Cross. And, thank you, Father, for loving us so much that You gave us your Only Begotten Son and strengthening Him in Gethsemane and on the Cross to endure the suffering to purchase our Forgiveness.

Amen, and Amen.

Related Topics:

[The Majesty of the Atonement of Jesus Christ](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Majesty.of.the.Atonement.html)

Or, Christ's Humanity Provided an Atoning Sacrifice for the Sins of Mankind
-- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Majesty.of.the.Atonement.html> --

[The Amazing Humanity of Jesus Christ](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Jehovah/Amazing.Humanity.of.Jesus.html)

Or, The Benefit of Christ's Birth
-- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Jehovah/Amazing.Humanity.of.Jesus.html> --

[What the Bible Says About Temptation](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/What.Bible.Says.Temptation.html)

-- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/What.Bible.Says.Temptation.html> --

St. Patrick: The Trinity and the Shamrock

July 22, 2001

St. Patrick (373-465 AD) is the patron saint of Ireland, and long before man gave him the title of St., God had already made him one. "Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be Saints" (1Corinthians 1:2). Though the Church of Rome claims St. Patrick as its own, he is more appropriately owned by the "General Assembly and Church of the Firstborn, which are written in Heaven" (Hebrews 12:23), where "Christ is the Head of the Church: and He is the Saviour of the Body" (Ephesians 5:23). Historians believe that St. Patrick's missionary career in Ireland took place in the 5th Century, though they are uncertain of the date of his birth. "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered [by God]" (Matthew 10:30). Born in Britain (373 AD), Patrick was kidnapped into slavery at the age of sixteen to serve as a herdsman in Ireland for six years, where he turned in faith to the LORD Jesus Christ. "When He [God] slew them, then they sought Him: and they returned and enquired early after God" (Psalm 78:34). During the second half of the 4th Century, when Roman power was in decline in Italy and Britain, Irish raiding expeditions were common along the west coast of Britain, and unconverted Patrick was seized by such raiders. "I will go and return to My place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek My face: in their affliction they will seek Me early" (Hosea 5:15). In a dream, he heard that the ship in which he was to make his escape was ready, so he fled his master and found his way back to Britain. "I being in the way, the LORD led me" (Genesis 24:27).

A passage from Patrick's spiritual biography, "Confessio" [Latin, Confession], tells of a dream that came to Patrick after he had escaped from Ireland and returned to Britain. One Victorinus appeared to Patrick, delivering him a letter entitled, "The Voice of the Hibernians". Hibernia is the Latin name for the island of Ireland. As Patrick read the letter, he seemed to hear a company of Irish beseeching him to return to Ireland. "9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. 10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the LORD had called us for to preach the Gospel unto them" (Acts 16:9-10). Though Patrick doubted his fitness and educational preparation for such a task, he entered his missionary task to the Irish people (405 AD) with the zeal of an Apostle Paul. "19 For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more... 22 To

the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1Corinthians 9:19, 22). He met with great success in Ulster and Tara, though he faced the continual threat of martyrdom. Remember, he preached the Gospel where pagan idols were worshipped and Druid human sacrifice was still practiced. "For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the Living and True God" (1Thessalonians 1:9). His success with the Irish was matched by his trouble with his ecclesiastical superiors in Britain; but through it all, he humbly promoted the "Gospel of the Grace of God" (Acts 20:24).

Excerpt from "Patrick's Confession"

"I, Patrick, a sinner, a most simple countryman, the least of all the faithful and most contemptible to many, had for father the deacon Calpurnius, son of the late Potitus, a presbyter, of the settlement of Bannaven Taburniae; he had a small villa nearby where I was taken captive. I was at that time about sixteen years of age. I did not, indeed, know the true God; and I was taken into captivity in Ireland with many thousands of people, according to our deserts, for quite drawn away from God, we did not keep his precepts, nor were we obedient to our presbyters who used to remind us of our salvation. And the Lord brought down on us the fury of his being and scattered us among many nations, even to the ends of the earth, where I, in my smallness, am now to be found among foreigners.

"And there the Lord opened my mind to an awareness of my unbelief, in order that, even so late, I might remember my transgressions and turn with all my heart to the Lord my God, who had regard for my insignificance and pitied my youth and ignorance. And he watched over me before I knew him, and before I learned sense or even distinguished between good and evil, and he protected me, and consoled me as a father would his son.

"Therefore, indeed, I cannot keep silent, nor would it be proper, so many favours and graces has the Lord deigned to bestow on me in the land of my captivity. For after chastisement from God, and recognizing him, our way to repay him is to exalt him and confess his wonders before every nation under heaven.

"For there is no other God, nor ever was before, nor shall be hereafter, but God the Father, unbegotten and without beginning, in whom all things began, whose are all things, as we have been taught; and his son Jesus Christ, who manifestly always existed with the Father, before the beginning of time in the spirit with the Father, indescribably begotten before all things, and all things visible and invisible were made by him. He was made man, conquered death and was received into Heaven, to the Father who gave him all power over every name in Heaven and on Earth and in Hell, so that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and God, in whom we believe. And we look to his imminent coming again, the judge of the living and the dead, who will render to each according to his deeds. And he poured out his Holy Spirit on us in abundance, the gift and pledge of immortality, which makes the believers and the obedient into sons of God and co-heirs of Christ who is revealed, and we worship one God in the Trinity of holy name."

The Trinity and the Shamrock

Legend has it that St. Patrick was responsible for ridding the Emerald Isle of snakes; but more importantly, it is said that Patrick used the shamrock as a symbol to explain the Trinity to Unbelievers, i.e., how God is One God in Three Persons. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19). Patrick would hold up a shamrock and challenge his hearers, "Is it one leaf or three?" "It is both one leaf and three," was their reply. "And so it is with God," he would conclude. "19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of Him from The Creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His Eternal Power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:19-20). Of course, doctrines such as the Trinity or the Divinity of Jesus Christ can only be received by willing hearts, who have committed themselves to obey whatever the Spirit reveals from the Scriptures. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine" (John 7:17). St. Patrick, no doubt, was careful not to confuse pagan idolaters with the idea of Polytheism, i.e., the false notion that there are many separate gods; but, his dependence upon the Holy Spirit to give him the illustration of the shamrock to illustrate the Trinity, gave him success in preaching the Gospel. "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the Power of God unto Salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16). [See our article, "[Who Then Can Be Saved?: Or, The Simplicity of Gospel Salvation](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Jehovah/Who.Then.Can.Be.Saved.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Jehovah/Who.Then.Can.Be.Saved.html> --, for a brief discussion of what must we do to be saved.] Thank God for the testimony of Patrick of Ireland!

A Brief Outline of Scripture Concerning the Doctrine of the Trinity

1. The Old Testament Scriptures speak of God as More Than One. "And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the Earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the Earth" (Genesis 1:26). "And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of Us, to know good and evil" (3:22).

2. God is spoken of as Three in Scripture. "Come ye near unto Me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from The Beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the LORD GOD, and His Spirit, hath sent Me" (Isaiah 48:16).

3. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are **equally** referred to as God.

FATHER:

- "Doubtless Thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: Thou, O LORD, art our Father, our Redeemer; Thy Name is from Everlasting" (Isaiah 63:16).
- "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto Everlasting Life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you: for Him hath God the Father sealed" (John 6:27).

SON:

- "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).
- "27 My sheep hear My Voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: 28 and I give unto them Eternal Life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. 29 My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. 30 I and My Father are One. 31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. 32 Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from My Father; for which of those works do ye stone Me? 33 The Jews answered Him, saying, For a good work we stone Thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God. 34 Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your Law, I said, Ye are gods? 35 If He called them gods, unto whom the Word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken; 36 say ye of Him, Whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" (John 10:27-36). [See our editorial, "[John F. Kennedy, Jr.: America's Departed Prince](#)", for an exposition of the 82nd Psalm, from which Jesus cited, "Ye are gods".]

SPIRIT:

- "And the Earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:2).
- "7 Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? 8 If I ascend up into Heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in Hell, behold, Thou art there. 9 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; 10 even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me" (Psalm 139:7-10).
- "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost... thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God" (Acts 5:3,4).

4. The Father sends the Son, Who sends the Spirit.

FATHER SENDS THE SON:

- "For God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life" (John 3:16).
- "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you"

SON SENDS THE SPIRIT:

- "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, Whom the Father will send in My Name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (14:26).
- "But when the Comforter is come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me" (15:26).
- "Nevertheless I tell you the Truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you" (16:7).

Excerpt on the Trinity from "[Sermons on Gospel Themes](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Sermons.on.Gospel.Themes.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Sermons.on.Gospel.Themes.html> --, by [C. G. Finney](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html> --:

"Let me say again: the manner in which the Bible reveals God is also a great stumbling-block to many; the doctrine of the Trinity, for example, there are a great many that stumble at it because they cannot understand it, any better than they can understand a great many other things; because they cannot understand it they reject it, and say that it cannot be, and so they will not receive it simply because they cannot explain it. Just so with respect to the incarnation of the Son of God; many men because they cannot understand how humanity and Deity could be united, reject the doctrine, and will not believe it. Now it is admitted at once, there is no occasion for denying it, and to do so would be as absurd as it is unnecessary, that these doctrines are very mysterious; but they are announced as facts, that God was in Christ, that Christ was both God and man; of course it is readily admitted that this declaration is a great trial to the faith of finite creatures; but then the announcement is made by God himself and ought to be believed. The doctrine of the atonement is another stumbling-block to men; that God should give his own Son to die for the sins of mankind, and that he should actually suffer, is a difficulty that can only be overcome by faith -- unbelief will suggest a multitude of difficulties and reject it... If God's attributes are what he declares them to be, there are things that cannot be explained to finite beings. Now for example; take the doctrine of the Trinity. To be sure human reason cannot explain that, nor is any explanation called for; God simply announces the fact in the bible, that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are God. Now that God should manifest himself in ten hundred thousand beings at one and the same time is not contrary to reason. For example, we find that at one time, before the destruction of Sodom, three individuals appeared to Abraham, and one of them who is called Jehovah, informed Abraham what they were going to do, and Abraham put up a prayer to have Sodom saved -- you recollect the afflicting circumstance. We learn that there were three men, or apparently so; two of them probably were angels in human form, and the other was no less a being than Jehovah himself. Now mark! Who can doubt but that God could have assumed the same form in millions of cases at the same time in different parts of the world, for there would be nothing contrary to reason in that. There is nothing then unreasonable in the supposition that God should exist in three persons or three hundred thousand million persons! We say there is nothing unreasonable in it. Who does not know that there is not? What then do men mean when they say that they cannot believe in the Trinity? Why not believe? What do such men suppose they know about infinity? Can they affirm of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost that these three cannot exercise and manifest the attributes of God? But as the fact is announced, there need be no evidence of it to the man who has faith. Faith makes no effort to understand it. If you object to this, let me ask, how do you know that you exist yourselves? O yes, you say, we know that we exist; we believe it. What makes you believe it? Can you explain it? Did you choose your body? Can you tell the connection between matter and spirit? How can you prove what yourselves are?"

All worship, praise, and glory to the Thrice Holy God, to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit! "Holy, Holy, Holy, LORD God Almighty, which Was, and Is, and Is To Come" (Revelation 4:8).

Maranatha!

Related Topics:

[St. Patrick's Confession](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Stories/St.Patrick.Confession.html)

-- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Stories/St.Patrick.Confession.html> --

by Patrick (373-465 AD)

"I, Patrick, a sinner, a most simple countryman, the least of all the faithful and most contemptible to many, had for father the deacon Calpurnius, son of the late Potitus, a presbyter, of the settlement of Bannaven Taburniae; he had a small villa nearby where I was taken captive. I was at that time about sixteen years of age. I did not, indeed, know the true God; and I was taken into captivity in

Ireland with many thousands of people, according to our deserts, for quite drawn away from God, we did not keep his precepts, nor were we obedient to our presbyters who used to remind us of our salvation. And the Lord brought down on us the fury of his being and scattered us among many nations, even to the ends of the earth, where I, in my smallness, am now to be found among foreigners."

--Patrick

and

[St. Patrick: Apostle of Ireland](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/St.Patrick.of.Ireland/St.Patrick.of.Ireland.1.html)

-- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/St.Patrick.of.Ireland/St.Patrick.of.Ireland.1.html> --

A Ten Chapter Excerpt (Chapters 9-18) from "History of the Scottish Nation"

by J. A. Wylie

"In entering on the story of Succat, whom our readers will more familiarly recognise under his later and better known appellation of St. Patrick, we feel that we tread on ground more stable and reliable than that which we had to traverse when relating the earlier evangelization of Whithorn. St. Patrick, it is true, has not wholly escaped the fate which has usually befallen early and distinguished missionaries at the hands of their monkish chroniclers. Unable to perceive or to appreciate his true grandeur as a humble preacher of the Gospel, some of his biographers have striven to invest him with the fictitious glory of a miracle-worker.

No monk of the Middle Ages could have imagined such a life as Patrick's. These scribes deemed it beneath their heroes to perform, or their pens to record, whatever did not rise to the rank of prodigy. Humility, self-denial, deeds of unaffected piety and benevolence, discredited rather than authenticated one's claim to saintship. Boastful professions and acts of fantastic and sanctimonious virtue were readier passports to monkish renown than lives which had no glory save that of sterling and unostentatious goodness.

We can trace the gradual gathering of the miraculous halo around Patrick on the pages of his successive chroniclers. His miracles are made to begin before he himself had seen the light. His story grows in marvel and prodigy as it proceeds. Each successive narrator must needs bring a fresh miracle to exalt the greatness of his hero and the wonder of his readers. Probus in the tenth century outdoes in this respect all who had gone before him, and Jocelin, in the twelfth, outruns Probus as far as Probus had outrun his predecessors.

Last of all comes O'Sullivan in the seventeenth century, and he carries off the palm from every previous writer of the "Life of St. Patrick." The man who comes after O'Sullivan may well despair, for surely nothing more foolish or more monstrous was ever imagined by monk than what this writer has related of Patrick.

So rises this stupendous structure which lacks but one thing-- a foundation. But happily it is easier in the present instance than in most cases of a similar kind, to separate what is false, and to be put aside, from what is true, and, therefore, to be retained. Before the monks had any opportunity of disfiguring the great evangelist by encircling him with a cloud of legends, Patrick himself had told the story of his life, and with such marked individuality, with such truth to Christian experience, and with such perfect accordance to the age and the circumstances, that we are irresistibly led to the conclusion that the life before us is a real life, and must have been lived, it could not have been invented. The confessions here poured forth could come from no heart but a heart burdened with a sense of guilt; and the sorrows here disclosed with so simple yet so touching a pathos, authenticate themselves as real not ideal. They are the experiences of the soul, not the creations of the imagination. Succat the first name of the man who has taken his permanent place in history as Patrick or St. Patrick was born on the banks of the Clyde..." --J. A. Wylie

and

[An Earnest Appeal to Roman Catholics](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/An.Earnest.Appeal.html)

-- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/An.Earnest.Appeal.html> --

Or, Roman Catholicism Examined in Light of the Scriptures

by Tom Stewart

"We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed: forsake her" (Jeremiah 51:9).

If all would agree that Salvation comes **only by the grace of God through faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ upon the cross of Calvary**-- "8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9)-- then adherence to or rejection of the Church of Rome would simply be a test of Christian nobility, i.e., searching the Scriptures for proof to go out or stay in. "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11).

Further, if anyone resorts to the investigation of Scripture, then a cardinal rule must be observed. **You must be willing to obey the Scriptures.** Jesus said, "If any man will do His [the Father's] will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself" (John 7:17). This cannot be an unreasonable rule, for Jesus Christ identifies Himself as the very Word that "was made flesh" (John 1:14), that we must obey. "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in Truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (1Thessalonians 2:13).

I propose to demonstrate from Scripture that Roman Catholicism is **not** a Christian religion, and that the Church of Rome is **not** a

Christian Church. And, if so, then it would only be reasonable for all those who truly name the "Name of Christ" (2Timothy 2:19) to separate themselves from this "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Revelation 17:5). Thus, the warning of the Revelation would fall upon your ears to come out of Babylon the Great. "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (18:4).

The Danger of Modern Prophets

July 24, 2001

What is a Modern Prophet? According to the Apostle Peter's Pentecostal citation of Joel 2:28-32-- "16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; 17 and it shall come to pass in the Last Days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: 18 and on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy: 19 and I will shew wonders in Heaven above, and signs in the Earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: 20 the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable Day of the LORD come: 21 and it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the Name of the LORD shall be saved" (Acts 2:16-21)-- the events surrounding the giving of the Holy Spirit to the Early Church, certainly qualified them to be Modern Prophets. However, it should be noted that both Joel and Peter were inspired to describe the time that God's "servants" and "handmaidens" would "prophesy" and "dream dreams" would not only include the "Last Days" of Peter's Pentecostal sermon, but continue to the future events of the "Day of the LORD", thus completing the Tribulation Week, *and leaving the Scriptural door open for still more contemporary Modern Prophets*. "And the Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35).

Traditional Biblicists correctly understand that the Canon of Scripture has long since been completed, and that the security of the Canon of thirty-nine Old Testament books and twenty-seven New Testament books is protected by the Anathema of the Almighty Himself. "18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the Words of the prophecy of this Book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this Book: 19 and if any man shall take away from the Words of the Book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life, and out of the Holy City, and from the things which are written in this Book" (Revelation 22:18-19). Though God's Omnipotence defends the Canon of Scripture, modern false prophets will be known by their false teachings, especially attempting to add to or take away from the Word of God. "To the Law and to the Testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them" (Isaiah 8:20).

For example, the Mormons' Joseph Smith (1805-1844) denied the Trinity when he said, "I have always declared God to be a distinct personage, Jesus Christ a separate and distinct personage from God the Father, and the Holy Ghost was a distinct personage and a Spirit: and these three constitute three distinct personages and **three Gods** [WStS emphasis]" ("Teachings of Prophet Joseph Smith" p. 370); but, the Scriptures definitely assert the Trinity, i.e., "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19). Christian Science's Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910) attacked both the Trinity and the Divinity of Jesus Christ: "Jesus Christ is not God, as Jesus himself declared, but is the Son of God ... Life, truth, and love constitute the triune Person called God... [an impersonal] Divine Principle [i.e., a conception of one's mind]" (Science and Health, pp. 331, 361, 469), while Jesus proclaimed His Divinity when He asserted, "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58). [For more background on the Trinity, please read our editorial, "[St. Patrick: The Trinity and the Shamrock](#)" [just above this editorial]] Even more recently, the Jehovah's Witnesses' Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916) calculated that the "invisible return" of Christ was to have taken place in 1874, and the Second Coming of Christ in 1914; but, the ill-repute and failure of his predictions, more importantly, must be assessed in light of his organization's ill-treatment and abuse of "Jesus Christ, whom we [the official Jehovah's Witnesses' publication] understand from the Scriptures to be Michael the archangel" ("The Watchtower", February 15, 1979, p. 31). These are crucial errors made by false prophets concerning the person of the "LORD Jesus Christ, the LORD of Glory" (James 2:1); and, who should trust them to make any other predictions about future dates? "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1John 4:1).

Why are Modern Prophets so potentially dangerous? Again, the very concept of Modern Prophets *is* Scriptural (cp. Acts 2:16-21 above), but Contemporary Prophets cannot add to or take away from the completed Canon of Scripture (cp. Revelation 22:18-19 above), *nor* do they have the luxury of contradicting the Canon of Scripture. "[God] cannot deny Himself" (2Timothy 2:13), in particular, by speaking one thing from the Canon of Scripture, while absurdly contradicting Himself through a Professed Modern Prophet. "Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but My Words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35). *Modern Prophets are so potentially dangerous because modern Professed Christians are so often unable to handle the Word of God to discern the false from the true prophet*. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). What this proves is that either

the Professed Saint is honestly inexperienced and simply immature or that he is *not* a True Christian. "2 But He that entereth in by the door is the Shepherd of the Sheep. 3 To Him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear His Voice: and He calleth His Own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. 4 And when He putteth forth His Own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him: for they know His Voice. 5 And **a stranger will they not follow**, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers" (John 10:2-5). [See our article, "[How to Identify a False Prophet](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophets/How.To.ID.False.Prophet.html)" -- http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophets/How.To.ID.False.Prophet.html --, for a Scriptural discussion of the concept.]

May God give His people discernment to receive the Godly true prophets and the ability to reject the false prophets, thus preserving His Saints from the Antichrist!

Maranatha!

Communing With God

August 13, 2001

When we think about our communion with God, we may perhaps consider one of the early Saints. "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him" (Genesis 5:24). Enoch's rapture was premised on the foundation that he pleased God. "5 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. 6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:5-6). The concept of communing is represented in the New Testament Greek with the word *koinonia*, and is translated in the Authorized King James Version as:

- (1) communion, i.e., "The grace of the LORD Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen" (2Corinthians 13:14),
- (2) fellowship, i.e., "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1John 1:3),
- (3) communication, i.e., "That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus" (Philemon 6),
- (4) distribution, i.e., "Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the Gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men" (2 Corinthians 9:13),
- (5) contribution, i.e., "For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor Saints which are at Jerusalem" (Romans 15:26), and
- (6) to communicate, i.e., "But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Hebrews 13:16).

Communing with God embraces the idea of sharing, as we would with man; but more importantly, it must involve God's willingness to condescend to us. "I am the Living Bread which came down from Heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall Live for ever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the Life of the world" (John 6:51). True, everyone has the opportunity of calling upon God, but only those who have actually repented of their selfishness will be heard by God. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the LORD will not hear me" (Psalm 66:18). Because the world system into which we are born complicates and confuses the *selfishness, which is sin*, that the human heart readily falls into, the communion with God that is natural to a very young child-- "for of such is the Kingdom of God" (Luke 18:16)-- becomes impossible unless God divinely intervenes to remove the obstacle. "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). For a limited time, we have been given the opportunity of repenting and believing the Good News that "whosoever believeth in Him [Jesus]

shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43). Thus, God has mercifully and graciously done more than His part to ensure that we may freely commune with Him, even as the LORD Jesus Christ was able to commune with the Father in the Garden of Gethsemane. "And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are One" (John 17:22).

Prayer is the natural vehicle for communing with God, because prayer is merely knowingly or consciously directing our thoughts to God in worship, praise, or supplication, for who but the Omnipresent and Omniscient God is capable of such intercourse? "O Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come" (Psalm 65:2). Even when we are not sure of what or how to pray, the Holy Spirit quickly intervenes to place the right thoughts so readily into our minds that we would take credit for it ourselves, if we did not know better. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26). Depending upon the circumstances, it is most appropriate to begin our prayer with worship, where we acknowledge who He is and the relation He sustains to us, e.g., "9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name... 11 Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:9, 11). And, we need not make apology for troubling the Father for "our daily bread", because He intends us to ask for all our needs "according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). However, as deep as our needs go, He is able to satisfy them so sufficiently, that we begin to praise Him-- "In every thing give thanks: for this is the Will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1Thessalonians 5:18)-- and to intercede for others, e.g., "5 And He [Jesus] said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend [the Father], and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; 6 for a friend of mine [the person for whom we intercede] in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? 7 And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. 8 I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity [persistence] he will rise and give him as many as he needeth" (Luke 11:5-8). [For a basic manual on prayer, read R. A. Torrey's "[How to Pray](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/How.to.Pray.html)" - <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/How.to.Pray.html> - . And [E. M. Bounds](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/E.M.Bounds.html) - <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/E.M.Bounds.html> - has much encouragement on prayer in his books.]

It is strange that those who believe it possible for man to communicate to God in prayer, and that God has communicated to man through His Son, Who is the "Word" (John 1:1), i.e., "1 God, Who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 hath in these Last Days spoken unto us by His Son" (Hebrews 1:1-2), would have such trouble with the idea that God communicates with us through:

- (1) providential circumstances, i.e., "I being in the way, the LORD led me" (Genesis 24:27),
- (2) His Spirit, i.e., "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14), or even by
- (3) modern prophets, i.e., "17 And it shall come to pass in the Last Days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: 18 and on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy" (Acts 2:17-18).

But, of course, we can always be sure that any communing from God that has come through Providence, the Spirit, or a modern prophet must be consistent with the Canon of Scripture, for the "Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). "To the Law and to the Testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them" (Isaiah 8:20). [See our editorial, "[The Danger of Modern Prophets](#)", for a brief treatment of the concept of modern prophets.]

Communing with God was always meant to be normal and natural for man, as can be seen that Adam and Eve originally "heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day" (Genesis 3:8). Likewise, any strained attempt to commune with God without recognizing His immediate presence, misses the point. "Am I a God at hand, saith the LORD, and not a God afar off?" (Jeremiah 23:23). If we seek utmost to please God, i.e., "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33), then communing with God is as straightforward as a little child looking into the face of a Loving Parent. "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15). Our lives will testify if we truly commune with God, because it will be known by God and understood by ourselves that our confidence in Him pleases Him. "11 According to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our LORD: 12 in Whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him" (Ephesians 3:11-12). We can only maintain communion with God, if we are trusting His Spirit to continually transform us into His likeness by His Promises. "Whereby are given unto us Exceeding Great and Precious Promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2Peter 1:4). [See the "[Promises](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/WStS.Promises.html)" - <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/WStS.Promises.html> - section of our website for many Precious Promises.] And, if by His grace, the LORD's tarrying finds us among those who "walk worthy of the LORD unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Colossians 1:10), then He shall soon Rapture us Home, as Enoch. "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36).

What is God Teaching You?

August 17, 2001

In this New Testament Age, it is the exalted purpose of the Blessed Holy Spirit to teach His Saints to walk in His Commandments. "He through the Holy Ghost had given Commandments unto the apostles" (Acts 1:2). "And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My Statutes, and ye shall keep My Judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:27). "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, Whom the Father will send in My Name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26). Each of us has a different physical circumstance in which we are taught, but all of us have been blessed with the Divine Paraclete as our Master, Teacher, and Mentor. "But the Anointing [Greek, *chrisma*, meaning the Holy Spirit] which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same Anointing teacheth you of all things, and is Truth, and is no lie, and even as It hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him" (1John 2:27). Unlike many earthly teachers, the Spirit of God is satisfied with His pupils appreciating and understanding His teaching and empowering function, but magnifying particularly the Person and Work of the LORD Jesus Christ as His teaching goal. "13 Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all Truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come. 14 He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you. 15 All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall shew it unto you" (John 16:13-15).

Why does the Spirit emphasize the LORD Jesus Christ as His teaching goal? The Holy Spirit knows better than any that *Christ is the answer to all the needs of man*. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (John 14:6). All aspects of the life of the Saint are comprehended in a proper understanding of the many relationships of Christ to the Believer. "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption" (1Corinthians 1:30). Though we may wrongly perceive that simply a better understanding of how to master our physical circumstances, e.g., how to maintain our health, how to promote our livelihood, etc., is our true necessity, the Spirit of Christ would quickly remind us that only as we seek the most important things of God, can we master the less important circumstances of our physical environment. "31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. 33 But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His Righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:31-33). If we can mentally and spiritually comprehend this precept of the primacy and superiority of God's things to even our everyday physical necessities, then we are prepared to continue our course of instruction with the Holy Spirit. "Therefore leaving the [first] principles of the Doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God" (Hebrews 6:1).

Further, our learning experience is attached to our following of the LORD Jesus Christ. "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps" (1Peter 2:21). *We are, therefore, providentially in just the circumstance that is best suited for our tailor-made schooling in the things of God*. "Thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this" (Esther 4:14). Instead of making the struggle to transform our physical circumstances our main priority, we ought to be seeking to learn as much as we can about the LORD and His Promises that will better enable us to deal with those circumstances. "Through Wisdom is an house builded; and by Understanding it is established" (Proverbs 24:3). In other words, we need to be sure that we are putting first things first, while we balance our God-given necessity to control our environment. "God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the Earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the Earth" (Genesis 1:28). It is unnecessary to cast about for a mysterious sense of the Will of God for our lives, because the "Word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the Word of faith, which we preach" (Romans 10:8). As we seek to advance the Kingdom of God, it is clear that the Spirit of God places the right desires into our hearts to desire and choose those things that He intends to fulfill for us. "The desire of the righteous is only good" (Proverbs 11:23). "The desire of the righteous shall be granted" (10:24). Ours, then, is to flee from evil and cleave to the LORD, petitioning Him for the mercy to only perform the "good, and acceptable, and perfect, Will of God" (Romans 12:2).

The Providence of God in placing you into existence at this point in time, is entirely adapted by the Omniscience of God to Sovereignly place you in the position to learn what others may not yet know, but you have been divinely allowed to benefit by the understanding and teaching of those Saints who preceded you. "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1Corinthians 11:1). For this reason, we may *with caution* open ourselves to the instruction of teachers. "11 And He gave some, apostles; and some,

prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-12). Though you read this from the hand of a contemporary teacher, it is your responsibility and necessity to "prove all things; [and] hold fast that which is good" (1Thessalonians 5:21), because you will stand alone before God at His Judgment Seat to answer for all that you have "done, whether it be good or bad" (2Corinthians 5:10). It is admittedly easier to find the testimony of Christian teachers who have already departed this life and who have already given a clear picture of the direction and purpose of their ministry, to listen to their illumination and exposition of the Word of God, as we have provided in the "[Voice of Philadelphia](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/W.S.t.S.Voice.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/W.S.t.S.Voice.html> -- section of our website; but still, you must consult the Infallible Director, Who is the Holy Spirit dwelling in you, to determine what to believe and what to reject. "To the Law and to the Testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them" (Isaiah 8:20).

You have been Divinely gifted with the Holy Spirit as your Teacher and His Word as your Text, in which you may find the very Words of our LORD Jesus Christ, Precepts from New Testament epistles, examples of Old Testament patriarchs and early New Testament Saints, Psalms of the heart swells of sweet singers, warnings of the prophets concerning things to come, prophecies from the Old and New Testaments, Proverbs to address every circumstance of life, and most of all, "Exceeding Great and Precious Promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2Peter 1:4). *This kind of careful study can only be attained when we give ourselves to seeking the understanding that we must have, come what may.* "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me" (Genesis 32:26). Holy diligence of this kind is smiled upon by the Almighty, Who is as He was to Abram, i.e., "I am thy Shield, and thy Exceeding Great Reward" (Genesis 15:1). "9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the Judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. 10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. 11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is Great Reward" (Psalm 19:9-11).

You cannot stand still in your learning about God. You will either be falling away from what you have been taught, or you will be going "on unto perfection" (Hebrews 6:1). Whether or not you will ever have the privilege or opportunity to communicate what you have learned to another human being, God has elevated your understanding to a higher level that you may now understand somewhat more of what He understands. Blessed meeting of the minds! Blessed communion! "13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. 15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you" (Philippians 3:13-15).

Maranatha!

When You Are Ready to Panic

August 28, 2001

A true humanist leaves God out of the equation. "God is not in all his thoughts" (Psalm 10:4). Humanistic advice for those who are ready to panic (to suddenly become overpowered with terror) is *to simply not do it*. "Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD" (Jeremiah 17:5). On the other hand, infinitely better advice is found in the Scriptures. "What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee" (Psalm 56:3). You will notice that the Psalmist understands that finite man is easily overpowered with circumstances that are fearful indeed, but the solution for keeping from descent into the Abyss of Panic is to trust God. "I sought the LORD, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears" (34:4). Faith in God is the secret to keep you from falling into the Slough of Panic. "And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God" (Mark 11:22). This is simple advice for all those who have already trusted in Jesus to reconcile themselves to God, and it is *not* overly simplistic. A "faith which worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6) is still the goal of our Christianity.

When we actually fall into panic and entertain it like a guest, then we are sinning against God. "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). We already know that we should not panic, because God alone is to be feared. "Sanctify the LORD of Hosts Himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread" (Isaiah 8:13). We are *not* to be blamed for the sense of fear and panic that rises up to meet all of humanity; but, *with the help of God's grace*, we are *not* to give in to panic. That is what David meant in the 56th Psalm. "2 Mine enemies would daily swallow me up: for they be many that fight against me, O Thou Most High. 3 What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee. 4 In God I will praise His Word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me" (Psalm 56:2-4). We do not sin against God, when we experience the inevitable, finite, human condition of the Waves of Panic that come crashing upon us. "Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward" (Job 5:7). That is only the

temptation to sin. But, sin is the actual volition of choosing not to trust God, in response to the temptation to panic. "Ye have this day rejected your God, Who Himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations" (1Samuel 10:19).

The reason we most often fall into the sin of panic is because we do not understand or forget that God allows us to be accosted by this sense of panic to drive us to Himself. "28 Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matthew 11:28-29). It is God's Divine Pattern that we must grow in our understanding of Him, i.e., "grow in grace, and in the Knowledge of our LORD and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2Peter 3:18), and consequently be transformed in the process to be more like the LORD Jesus Christ. "Whereby are given unto us Exceeding Great and Precious Promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (1:4). Humanly speaking, we do not desire to subject ourselves to the pain that the process of sanctification promises; but, we know that our Loving Heavenly Father is more than willing to exercise us by all the wisest means-- including the Scourge of Panic-- to fashion us "to the image of His Son" (Romans 8:29). Only as we sympathize with the Father's necessity to use even this sense of panic, to cause us to seek to be sanctified "spirit and soul and body" (1Thessalonians 5:23), do we experience the peaceful calm of His wings. "He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust: His Truth shall be thy Shield and Buckler" (Psalm 91:4).

How Not to Surrender to Panic.

- First, cry out immediately for help. "32 And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, Surely it is the king of Israel. And they turned aside to fight against him: and Jehoshaphat cried out. 33 And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him" (1Kings 22:32-33).
- Second, make your petition to the Throne of Grace. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).
- Third, expect God to reveal Himself to you, i.e., His character, His names, His relations, etc., for that is our sanctification. "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole Earth, to shew Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him" (2Chronicles 16:9).
- And finally, depend upon God to perfect you in the process-- as much as a mere man can be perfected. "And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on My Name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is My people: and they shall say, The LORD is My God" (Zechariah 13:9).

May God grant to us His "way to escape, that [we] may be able to bear" (1Corinthians 10:13) that sense of panic, and "grow thereby" (1Peter 2:2).

Maranatha!

If Jesus Never Came

September 7, 2001

Humanity has been the beneficiary of a continuing revelation of God Himself to man. "1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... 14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His Glory, the Glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father,) full of Grace and Truth" (John 1:1,14). It is far too easy to take for granted knowledge inherited without the toil that ingrains appreciation upon every remembrance of the possession. "5 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: 6 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? 7 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" (Joshua 4:5-7).

Broadly speaking, what has God taught humanity about Himself since the Creation?

- First, He is the God that is-- the Self-Existent, Everlasting God. "13 And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is His name? what shall I say unto them? 14 And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. 15 And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is My Name for ever, and this is My memorial unto all generations" (Exodus 3:13-15).
- Second, He is our Creator. "So God created man in His Own Image, in the Image of God created He him; male and female created He them" (Genesis 1:27). "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the Will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well doing, as unto a Faithful Creator" (1Peter 4:19).
- Third, He is our King, Law Giver, and the Ruler of the Universe. "For God is the King of all the Earth: sing ye praises with understanding" (Psalm 47:7). "And He declared unto you His Covenant, which He commanded you to perform, even Ten Commandments; and He wrote them upon two tables of stone" (Deuteronomy 4:13). "Wherefore the Law was our Schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Galatians 3:24).
- Fourth, He is our Chastener, i.e., corrects, punishes, or reproveth us when we stray from His Law. "6 For whom the LORD loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" (Hebrews 12:6-7).
- Fifth, He is the Saviour of mankind, but of course, only to those who repent and "believe on the LORD Jesus Christ" (Acts 16:31). "And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1John 4:14).
- Sixth, He is the Blessed Assurance of our Perfect Obedience to His Law of Love. "8 For finding fault with them, He saith, Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, when I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: 9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in My covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the LORD. 10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the LORD; I will put My Laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: 11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest" (Hebrews 8:8-11).
- Finally, He is the Security that His people will continue in the Joy of Perfect Obedience throughout all Eternity. "3 And I heard a great voice out of Heaven saying, Behold, the Tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. 4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. 5 And He that sat upon the Throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these Words are True and Faithful. 6 And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give unto him that is athirst of the Fountain of the Water of Life freely. 7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son" (Revelation 21:3-7).

At this stage of God's manifestation of Himself to mankind, *we should be learning* the Blessed Assurance of our Perfect Obedience to His Law of Love, for we have been the recipient's of the Blessed Holy Spirit's influence since the time of the Pentecost of the Book of Acts. "1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from Heaven as of a rushing Mighty Wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven Tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1-4). Though the Spirit's presence may be attended with great emotion or miraculous manifestations, *the giving of the Spirit was always and preeminently intended by the Almighty to secure His people in Loving Obedience to His commandments*. "26 A New Heart also will I give you, and a New Spirit will I put within you: and I will

take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And **I will** put My Spirit within you, and **cause you** to walk in My Statutes, and ye shall keep My Judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:26-27). Instead of solely focusing upon the removal of the pain, difficulty, or obstacles in the path of our obedience to God, we ought to petition the Father for the mercy that will cause us first of all to be sanctified into Loving Obedience, as His Dear Son was sanctified. "8 Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; 9 and being made perfect, He became the Author of Eternal Salvation unto all them that obey Him" (Hebrews 5:8-9).

Salvation has always been by faith, trust, and confidence in God. "4 Our fathers trusted in Thee: they trusted, and Thou didst deliver them... 21 Save me from the lion's mouth: for Thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns... 24 For He hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath He hid His face from him; but when he cried unto Him, He heard" (Psalm 22:4, 21, 24). "Believe on the LORD Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:31). Obedience has always been by the effectual working of God's Spirit in a willing heart causing us to obey. "Teach me to do Thy Will; for Thou art my God: Thy Spirit is Good; lead me into the land of uprightness" (Psalm 143:10). "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). What then is the significance of a New Covenant ushered in with the Holy Spirit in these New Testament times, if the Saints could have already obeyed prior to the New Covenant? The New Covenant is "Grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16). Plainly, a covenant or contract authored by God is a Promise that our faith may rely on to secure for us and assure to us what is not available otherwise. "I have sworn by Myself, the Word is gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear" (Isaiah 45:23). Though obedience was manifestly possible prior to the New Covenant, *the New Covenant assures the **certainty** of obedience to God's commandments*, but *only* to those who understand and accept the terms of faith of the New Covenant-- namely, to simply understand and believe that God will secure our obedience through His Spirit. "Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established" (2Chronicles 20:20). "As for Me, this is My covenant with them, saith the LORD; My Spirit that is upon thee, and My Words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever" (Isaiah 59:21). "And I will give them one heart, and I will put a New Spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 11:19). "38 He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of Living Water. 39 (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified)" (John 7:38-39).

If Jesus never came, the Spirit would never have been given. "Nevertheless I tell you the Truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you" (John 16:7). And, without our **absolute sense of dependence** upon the assistance and Promise of the Holy Spirit for our obedience, we would be like Old Testament Israel-- perpetually backsliding. "For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer" (Hosea 4:16). But, thanks be to God, Jesus did come, and His Spirit has been given! "4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the Promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of Me. 5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts 1:4-5). However often we may have ever disgraced God with our sinful disobedience-- "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:24)-- we still have the hope that we may be delivered from ourselves, if we would but repent and stand fast in the liberty of the Promise of the Spirit of the New Covenant. "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the Promise of the Spirit through faith" (Galatians 3:14). The secret of joyful, loving, perfect obedience is to learn to intimately walk with our All-Loving, Omnipotent, and Omniscient Comforter, Ally, Advisor, and Friend-- the "Spirit of Christ" (1Peter 1:11).

"1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His Own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4 that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is Death; but to be spiritually minded is Life and Peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. 10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is Life because of Righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you. 12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. 13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:1-14).

May God give us the mercy, grace, wisdom, and strength to stand in faith until He comes! "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy Power" (Psalm 110:3).

Maranatha!

Significance of the Attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon

September 16, 2001

Only a few days after the infamous kamikaze assault upon the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., the language describing the Pearl Harbor event has escalated from "senseless" to an act of "war". "O LORD, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against Thee" (Daniel 9:8). President George W. Bush has vowed that no distinction will be made between the terrorists and those who harbor the terrorists. "He that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2John 11). As the days have gone by, disbelief and fear have turned into increasing national rage against the perpetrators of this terrorist act; and, virtually the whole world community has quickly aligned itself with the United States in acting against the terrorists, e.g., NATO has pledged that an attack upon one member is an attack upon all. "A sound of battle is in the land, and of great destruction" (Jeremiah 50:22). As the carnage is gradually assessed in the media, and hope to find survivors fades, the sense that President Bush must act with the military might of the United States against the terrorists increases; and accordingly, Islamic terrorist Osama bin Laden, has further sequestered himself into the mountains of Afghanistan, bracing himself against retaliation for the diabolical attacks. "Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing [lies]: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man" (Psalm 5:6).

But, what is the true significance of the September 11th 2001 attack? More than the early bewilderment and disbelief that seized upon the escaped occupants of the World Trade Center; more than the fear and anguish that has consumed the families of the missing victims; more than the weariness and fatigue of the rescuers, who want desperately to do more than clean up; and greater still than the understood vulnerability and anxiety of the ordinary American-- *that God would take away the restraint and allow such a monumental breach of day-to-day life, is the true significance of this trumpet blast, that the Professed Church would awaken out of its slumber of sin.* "For the time is come that Judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God?" (1Peter 4:17). It is far too easy to self-righteously lay the blame merely upon the bloody terrorists. They are to be blamed, and they will be judged. "Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the LORD" (Romans 12:19). To beat our chests and assert that God has allowed this catastrophe merely because the unconverted of America have tolerated abortion and homosexuality, also misses the point. Of course, God will certainly judge the murder that abortion is-- "in the secret places doth [the wicked] murder the innocent" (Psalm 10:8)-- and, He will deal with the perversion of homosexuality-- "men with men working that which is unseemly" (Romans 1:27)-- but, multitudes of Professed Christians defend these sins and perversions of the world, because they *believe and practice* it themselves! "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the LORD, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2Corinthians 6:17).

Even further, we may applaud our unwillingness to tolerate perversion in the Church, but do we allow the Holy Spirit to fulfill His function in us to make us walk "holy and without blame before Him in love" (Ephesians 1:4)? After all, is it not the whole point of the New Testament-- which is the New Covenant-- that the Almighty would place His Spirit within His people to make us "to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13)? "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah" (Jeremiah 31:31). "26 A New Heart also will I give you, and a New Spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My Statutes, and ye shall keep My Judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:26-27). Jesus came the First Time because His Atoning Blood was necessary to make it appropriate for God to forgive men that would repent and to make possible this New Economy of Perfect Loving Obedience in His Saints. "Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in My Blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:20). "Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His Own blood, suffered without the gate" (Hebrews 13:12).

If we do not daily and continuously overcome the "sin which doth so easily beset us" (Hebrews 12:1), then we will crucify the "Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame" (6:6)-- which is an atrocity much worse than that committed by the terrorists in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania. "Of how much **sorer** punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the Blood of the Covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of Grace?" (10:29). Remember, if we do victoriously live our profession of Christ, it is only because of the Spirit of Grace working in us. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help in time of need" (4:16). Professed Christian, if we ever do realize the lateness of the hour and the significance of the recent acts of terror, then let us awaken out of the slumber of sin, lay hold of the "Promise of the Spirit through faith" (Galatians 3:14), and arise that we may "be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). Only then will we fulfill our purpose of walking in joyful, loving, faithful, holy, and perfect obedience to the God that created us and purchased us "with His Own Blood" (Acts 20:28).

Let us heed the Spirit's warning given to us by the Apostle Paul. "1 But of the times and the seasons, Brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. 2 For yourselves know perfectly that the Day of the LORD so cometh as a thief in the night. 3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. 4 But ye, Brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. 5 Ye are all the Children of Light, and the Children of the Day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. 7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. 8 But let us, who are of the Day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of FAITH and LOVE; and for an helmet, the HOPE OF SALVATION. 9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain Salvation by our LORD Jesus Christ" (1Thessalonians 5:1-9).

Remember, the "LORD knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (2Peter 2:9). And, there is still the hope of the Pre-Tribulational Rapture for those who are ready. "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36).

Maranatha!

Is It Possible to Guarantee Our Obedience?

October 10, 2001

"And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My Statutes, and ye shall keep My Judgments, and DO them" (Ezekiel 36:27).

If you believe that man has a sinful nature that renders his best attempts at obedience sinful, then it is doubtful that you would say that anyone could guarantee our obedience this side of Heaven. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" (Job 14:4). But, if you believe, as I do, that our parents only pass down to us a run-down physical body that *may* be used to encourage us to sin, i.e., physical depravity, while the *ability*, i.e., moral agency, *to make a right moral choice*, i.e., holiness, *or wrong moral choice*, i.e., moral depravity, *remains intact, then the possibility is left open for you to claim the promise*, i.e., "And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My Statutes, and ye shall keep My Judgments, and DO them" (Ezekiel 36:27), *that the covenanted Holy Spirit of this New Testament Age has been offered to us on the condition of faith to cause us to walk in joyful, loving, holy obedience, this side of Heaven!* "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the Promise of the Spirit through faith" (Galatians 3:14). [See our article, "[Must We Then Sin?](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Must.We.Then.Sin.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Must.We.Then.Sin.html> --, for a Scriptural answer to that question.]

Instead of vaguely assuming that the Holy Spirit simply dwells in Professed Christians, the Scripture teaches us that the Spirit is given **only** to those that obey Him. "And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, Whom God hath given **to them that obey Him**" (Acts 5:32). But, if the Spirit is only given to those that "obey Him" (5:32), then *obedience to the Gospel*, i.e., "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30), *must be possible*. However, it is dangerous, to assume that the Sovereign God has no agency in bringing us to repentance, for we have been assured that God most absolutely is working in us, while we are repenting. "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth" (2Timothy 2:25). We must cooperate in our Salvation, but it could not be Salvation unless **HE** saved us. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His Mercy He saved us, by the washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5).

Consider again the wonderful Promise of our text, "I will put My Spirit within you" (36:27). This is most certainly the promised giving of the Spirit in this New Testament Age. "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Romans 8:9). Look at what God has promised us that He will accomplish in us. "And I will put My Spirit within you, and **cause** you to walk in My Statutes, and ye shall keep My Judgments, and DO them" (Ezekiel 36:27). He says that He will "cause" us to obey Him, but does that mean that He must set aside our moral agency to force or necessitate our obedience like a machine? Nonsense! "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). If God wanted robots, He would have created robots; but instead, "God created man in His Own Image" (Genesis 1:27). God is able to cause us to walk in obedience, so that our obedience is a "sweet savour of Christ" (2Corinthians 2:15), that He, and not we, may be glorified. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be Glorified through Jesus Christ, to Whom be Praise and Dominion for ever and ever.

Amen" (1Peter 4:11).

God's Promised Spirit dwells within those who abide in Him through their "faith which worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6). "If ye keep My Commandments, ye shall abide in My Love; even as I have kept My Father's Commandments, and abide in His Love" (John 15:10). Though it is unnecessary to request the Holy Spirit to indwell us, since He immediately takes up residence in all those who repent, i.e., "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38); still, we are continually exhorted to be filled with His Spirit. "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" (Luke 11:13). The influence of the Holy Spirit will not only **cause** us to walk holy, but would yield the fruit of the Spirit. "22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22-25). As you can see, the presence of the Spirit, not only is based upon obedience, but yields obedience. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the LORD of Hosts" (Zechariah 4:6).

Since we have been given this Exceeding Great and Precious Promise to secure our obedience, may we be good stewards of such a trust. "Whereby are given unto us Exceeding Great and Precious Promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2Peter 1:4). [See our article, "[Exceeding Great and Precious Promises](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Promises/Exceeding.Promises.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Promises/Exceeding.Promises.html> --.] And, yes, God's Promise does guarantee our obedience, IF we will trust Him for it. "Have faith in God" (Mark 11:22).

Maranatha!

God Cannot Wait

October 15, 2001

God cannot wait until we get to Heaven, for us to begin consistently walking obediently, being always focused on the LORD Jesus Christ, living continually without sin, and depending solely on the power of the Holy Spirit working in us for all things.

In these troublous times, what Christian wouldn't rather be Home in Heaven? But, is it possible that our Heavenly Father has just as intense a desire toward us down here *before* He invites us Home to Heaven? To show you the record of how intensely Jehovah may feel towards us, listen to our God vent His emotions about the people of His Old Covenant. "8 How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within Me, My repentings are kindled together. 9 I will not execute the fierceness of Mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee: and I will not enter into the city" (Hosea 11:8-9). God must feel with great intensity, or else it would be difficult for us to imagine any great yearning in His Heart for us, when He sent His Only Begotten Son to die for us. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life" (John 3:16). [For more on the emotions of God, read "[Affections and Emotions of God](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin_1839/OE1839.Emotions.of.God.html)" -- http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin_1839/OE1839.Emotions.of.God.html -- by [Charles G. Finney](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html> --.]

Walking Obediently. What True Saint would debate the necessity of obedience to Christ, if he claims to be a Christian? "3 And hereby we do know that we know Him, IF we keep His Commandments. 4 He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His Commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him" (1John 2:3-4). But, walking obediently *all the time*, seems to be "more than we are capable, too much to be expected, and unachievable until we get to Heaven." Absurd! "God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:2). Obviously, we measure differently than the Living God. "For My Thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My Ways, saith the LORD" (Isaiah 55:8). When we claim that we have a sinful nature that necessitates our sinning, then we are, in effect, telling God that, as Loving as He is, He is demanding too much that we would walk obediently *all the time*. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). This verse only means that we can and are to give 100% of our heart to Him as He has given 100% of His Heart to us. "We love Him, because He first loved us" (1John 4:19). We need to settle it in our heart that if our Loving Heavenly Father commanded it, then that is the Highest Possible Evidence that we are able to do it. "I can do ALL things through Christ which **strengtheneth** me" (Philippians 4:13). Our continual obedience to Christ is *The Way* that God has provided to demonstrate that we love Him. "For this is the Love of God, that we keep His Commandments: and His Commandments are NOT grievous [burdensome, unbearable, impossible]" (1John 5:3). [See our editorial, "[Is It](#)

[Possible to Guarantee Our Obedience?](#), for encouragement on this pivotal Promise of the New Covenant, i.e., "And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My Statutes, and ye shall keep My Judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:27).]

Focused on the LORD Jesus Christ. If we would constantly remind ourselves that the LORD Jesus Christ is the Focus of our religion, then we would not find ourselves wandering from the "straight paths" (Hebrew 12:13). It is not a novel thought that Jesus is the "Author and Finisher of Our Faith" (12:2). So then, why should it be thought strange that our life, ministry, and usefulness should be consumed with how we relate to Christ, Who "is made unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption" (1Corinthians 1:30). Exploring, Discovering, and Understanding better the LORD Jesus Christ is the Key to the present time, and it will be the Source of unending joy throughout Eternity. "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3). Our focus on the LORD Jesus Christ must be demonstrated by a complete trust in Him that engages all of our agency in our Salvation; but at the same time, it will be in union with His Divine Agency working in us, *causing* us "to walk in [His] Statutes" (Ezekiel 36:27). *That is the secret of our obedience.* "12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own Salvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12-13). [Read "[The Relations of Christ to the Believer](#)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Relations.Christ.Believer.html> - by C. G. Finney for help in "looking unto Jesus" (Hebrews 12:2).]

Without Sin. What is more harmful to the Kingdom of God, a Lost Sinner, who denies any necessity of being without the sin he loves, or a Professed Christian, who cannot see how he can be completely holy in conduct all the time? "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the LORD" (Hebrews 12:14). If we could conveniently define *holiness* as something that we are given in spite of our unwillingness to obey and abide in Christ, i.e., "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked" (1John 2:6), then all such talk of being without sin could be disposed of as unbalanced ramblings. But, if sin can be correctly demonstrated to be *only* a willful rebellion and transgression of the Law of Love, that "sin by the Commandment might become exceeding sinful" (Romans 7:13), then any defense that Christians are still sinners, would evaporate. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the Law: for sin is the transgression of the Law" (1John 3:4). [See our article, "[Must We Then Sin?](#)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Must.We.Then.Sin.html> --, to Scripturally think through this question.] Since the Law of Love, the Statutes, and Judgments are from God, then why would He not provide the children of Adam a remedy for their continual pattern of disobedience? HE HAS! He sent His Only Begotten Son to seal with His Own Blood the New Covenant, i.e., the "God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our LORD Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant" (Hebrews 13:20), that guarantees obedience to those who receive the Promise of the New Covenant in faith. "And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My Statutes, and ye shall keep My Judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:27).

By the Power of the Spirit. When will we cease to elevate ourselves to the level of trusting in ourselves as our own deliverer? "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" (Isaiah 2:22). Only when the Living God delivers us from destruction, Hell, the world, sin, the flesh, the Devil, and even ourselves, then are we truly delivered. "Through God we shall do valiantly: for He it is that shall tread down our enemies" (Psalm 108:13). God is not interested in teaching us how to be saved, sanctified, delivered, or glorified, without showing us our utter necessity of Himself as the Author of it all! "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the LORD of Hosts" (Zechariah 4:6). When we comprehend that the perfection that God demands of us is to totally and continually give Him our whole heart, i.e., "My son, give me thine heart" (Proverbs 23:26), then He finally has the opportunity to give us the influence of His Spirit of Promise. "13 In Whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your Salvation: in Whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of Promise, 14 Which is the Earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory. 15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the LORD Jesus, and love unto all the Saints, 16 cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; 17 that the God of our LORD Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation in the Knowledge of Him: 18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the Hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the Saints, 19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His Power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His Mighty Power" (Ephesians 1:13-19).

Maranatha!

Secret of Abiding in Christ

October 30, 2001

"I am the Vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing"

Everyone loves a secret. "His Secret is with the righteous" (Proverbs 3:32). All those who love the LORD, are privileged to be taught by the Holy Spirit of our blessed position of abiding as a branch in the Vine of the LORD Jesus Christ. "I am the Vine, ye are the branches" (John 15:5). Anything that has any value in the Kingdom of God, will come as a result of that abiding relationship with Christ, i.e., the "same bringeth forth much fruit" (15:5). The phrase, "without Me ye can do nothing" (15:5), is most telling, because it announces that we are entirely incapable of accomplishing anything of godly worth, independent of Christ. "Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise" (5:19). And for clarification, Jesus explains that our obedience is necessary for His abiding relationship with us. "If ye keep My Commandments, ye shall abide in My Love; even as I have kept My Father's Commandments, and abide in His Love" (15:10).

In the eternal counsels of God, it was ordained that the Father would manifest His Glory in Creation, the Son would magnify the Father in Redemption, and the Spirit would lift up the Son commencing with the Pentecostal outpouring. "But when the Comforter is come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me" (John 15:26). What we have been shown about God, has been demonstrated to us through the LORD Jesus Christ. "For God, Who commanded the Light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2Corinthians 4:6). We are taught that Jesus is the "True Vine" (John 15:1), which means that He is the Source of our life and fruitfulness. "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain" (15:16).

In the days of the Old Covenant, when the prophets were given the Promise of the future New Covenant, i.e., "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah" (Jeremiah 31:31), they were promised:

(1) an **Obedient Heart** to receive God's Law, i.e., "But this shall be the Covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put My Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts... and cause you to walk in My Statutes, and ye shall keep My Judgments, and do them" (Jeremiah 31:33; Ezekiel 36:27)-- *which is now fulfilled*: "For it is God which worketh in you both **to will and to do** of His good pleasure... For this is the Love of God, that we keep His Commandments: and His Commandments are NOT grievous" (Philippians 2:13; 1John 5:3).

(2) an **Intimate Relationship** with the Almighty, i.e., "and will be their God, and they shall be My people... And I will put My Spirit within you" (Jeremiah 31:33; Ezekiel 36:27)-- *which is now fulfilled*: "Even the Spirit of Truth; Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you... Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit" (John 14:17; 1John 4:13), and

(3) an **Intrinsic Understanding** of the LORD, i.e., "And I will give them an heart to know Me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be My people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto Me with their whole heart... And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jeremiah 24:7; 31:34)-- *which is now fulfilled*: "20 But ye have an Unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things... 27 But the Anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same Anointing teacheth you of all things, and is Truth, and is no lie, and even as It hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him" (1John 2:20, 27).

The history of God's dealings with man reveals that God provided man with the Promise of the New Covenant to ESTABLISH His Saints with a **relationship of obedience that is secured by the Power of His Spirit indwelling the Believer**. "But ye shall receive Power [Greek, *dunamis*, strength, power, ability], after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (Acts 1:8). This *Dunamis* of the Holy Spirit is the Dynamite of God's Ability to mold us, "for whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the Image of His Son" (Romans 8:29). The "Promise of the Spirit" (Galatians 3:14) was a common theme of the Old Testament writers, especially the prophets:

(1) Ezekiel, i.e., "And shall put My Spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD" (Ezekiel 37:14),

(2) Solomon, i.e., "Turn you at My reproof: behold, I will pour out My Spirit unto you, I will make known My Words unto you" (Proverbs 1:23),

(3) Isaiah, i.e., "For I will pour Water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My Blessing upon thine offspring" (Isaiah 44:3),

(4) Joel, i.e., "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions" (Joel 2:28), and

(5) Zechariah, i.e., "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of Grace and of Supplications: and they shall look upon Me Whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn" (Zechariah 12:10).

It was promised in the Old Testament that the giving of God's Spirit to His people would cause them to walk in obedience. "And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My Statutes, and ye shall keep My Judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:27). What happened? Why are we still seeing a type of Laodicean Professed Christianity all around us, with inconsistent or nonexistent obedience? In these New Testament times of New Covenant fulfillment, i.e., "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come... they were all filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:1,4), obedience to the Gospel yields the fruit of the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost" (2:38). Such obedience is necessary for the giving of the Spirit. "And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, Whom God hath given to them that obey Him" (5:32). And, disobedience grieves the Spirit, i.e., "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of Redemption" (Ephesians 4:30), robbing us of the Spirit's testimony of our sonship. "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His Commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him" (1John 2:4). The "obedience of faith" (Romans 16:26) introduces the Repenting Sinner to the wonderful ministry of "Another Comforter" (John 14:16), Who is the Holy Spirit, Whose blessed function is to reveal the Son of God to us, revealing Him in all of His Names, Titles, Relations, and Functions, as the Answer to our every need in life. "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption" (1Corinthians 1:30). In saying what the Scripture says about Christ, it is not possible to make too much of the LORD Jesus Christ. "1 For it pleased the Father that in Him [Jesus] should all fulness dwell... 3 In Whom are hid all the treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge... 9 For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 1:19; 2:3,9).

Abiding in Christ is a reciprocal relationship between our abiding in Christ and His abiding in us. "Abide in Me, and I in you" (John 15:4). **No more can we neglect our abiding in Him, than we will find ourselves deprived of His abiding in us.** "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (5:17). Though it may be objected that we cannot have such importance in such a vital relationship, our cooperation in our own Sanctification must be necessary, or we could be sanctified contrary to our will. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the LORD" (Hebrews 12:14). *The Secret of abiding in Christ is that our agency is necessary, though it is but to claim a Promise; otherwise our Sanctification would be without our cooperation, and could be represented as occurring, whether we like it or not-- which is unscriptural.* "Whereby are given unto us Exceeding Great and Precious Promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2Peter 1:4). [Read our article "[Exceeding Great and Precious Promises](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Promises/Exceeding.Promises.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Promises/Exceeding.Promises.html> --.] And, this is the very point which the Promise secures for the Believer-- **in faith, it is the Holy Spirit that causes us to walk obediently.** "And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My Statutes, and ye shall keep My Judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:27). This produces the abundant fruit that the LORD Jesus assured us that we would bring forth. "5 I am the Vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth **much fruit**: for without Me ye can do nothing... 8 Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear **much fruit**; so shall ye be My disciples" (John 15:5-8).

With what little time that may remain in our sojourn on this planet, may we glorify the Father by the fruit we produce in Christ through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. "24 Now unto Him that is able to **keep you from falling**, and to present you faultless before the presence of His Glory with exceeding joy, 25 to the Only Wise God our Saviour, be Glory and Majesty, Dominion and Power, both now and ever. Amen" (Jude 24-25).

Maranatha!

Related Topic:

[The Promise of the Spirit](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Promise.of.the.Spirit.html)

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by Tom Stewart

"That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the Promise of the Spirit through faith" (Galatians 3:14).

"The grand design of the Spirit's indwelling is to secure the perfect love, complete obedience, or entire sanctification that has ALWAYS been demanded by the Moral Law." 36 Master, which is the great Commandment in the Law? 37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great Commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the prophets' (Matthew 22:36-40). This Law of Love is understood in the New Testament as the Law of Christ. 'Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ' (Galatians 6:2). Always, it has been man's imperative to understand how to submit to this Law; and, now it is plain that a Covenant as old as Abraham has been **fulfilled** through the New Covenant's giving of the Holy Spirit-- which, **BY FAITH secures for us perfect obedience to God.** 'That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the Promise of the Spirit through faith' (Galatians 3:14)."

Christian, Be Ready!

November 18, 2001

Christian, JESUS IS COMING-- BE READY! "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36). Wherever we look, we see indications that Jesus is coming soon. "22 For we know that the whole Creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the Adoption, to wit, the Redemption of our body" (Romans 8:22-23). Every tragic event reported on the news only reinforces our confidence in the words of our LORD, "Behold, I come quickly" (Revelation 22:7). Keep your hand to the Gospel Plough, not "looking back" (Luke 9:62). Continue to seek the salvation of the Lost, the repentance of the Backslidden, the comfort of the Weak Saints, and the further maturity of the Willing Body of Christ, until our LORD comes for us. "40 Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not. 43 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing" (Luke 12:40, 43). [See our editorial, "[Behold, I Come Quickly](#)", to see what our LORD meant by "quickly".]

Many years ago, when this writer was attending a Middle School in New Jersey, a change in my father's employment required my family's relocation and a change of schools before the end of the term. I recall informing my teachers that this was to be my last day in their respective classes, feeling that "freedom from school" had all but begun for me. Math class had its customary in-class assignment, which was to be turned in at the end of the period. Though I was tempted to begin my "holiday" early, I completed the assignment, as I was accustomed. When I handed in my work, as I was leaving the room, my instructor informed me that she had been watching me to see whether or not I would complete the required daily assignment. Voicing her approval that I had decided to keep participating in the class until the class ended (for me), I was *also* glad that I had completed my final assignment! In a much greater way, our LORD is watching us to see that we "finish [our] course" (Acts 20:24). We have already "put [our] hand to the plough" (Luke 9:62); and, though the Moral Law, which demands supreme love of God and an equal love of our neighbour, *requires* an unending obligation of love, **it is the "love of Christ [that] constraineth us"** (2Corinthians 5:14) **to continue to the very end.** "We love Him, because He first loved us" (1John 4:19).

Our beloved Brother Paul warned the Thessalonians-- *and us*-- against walking disorderly, while waiting for Christ to return, i.e., the "patient waiting for Christ" (2Thessalonians 3:5). Disorderly conduct is discontinuing profitable work, while having the capacity to do such work. "For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies" (3:11). Though society promotes the concept of freedom from labour, True Christianity only seeks to save itself from one sphere of labour, to free itself for even greater labours, i.e., "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father" (John 14:12). "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat" (2Thessalonians 3:10). John Gill, the commentator, recorded concerning Second Thessalonians 3:10:-

"Not he that could not work through weakness, bodily diseases, or old age, the necessities of such are to be distributed to, and they are to be taken care of, and provided with the necessaries of life by the officers of the church; but **those that can work, and will not, ought to starve**, for any assistance that should be given them by the members of the church, or the officers of it."

Until Providence disables us, or until the LORD returns for us, we must continue to work, if not for our own sustenance, we ought to labour for the spiritual good of our neighbours. Love "seeketh not her own" (1Corinthians 13:5).

At the same time, the thoughtless, uncaring, worldly, lost, or backslidden, should be receiving the parallel message that JESUS IS COMING-- REPENT OR PERISH! "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3, 5). Now is not the time to engage in the theological polemics of "I know that I am a Christian, but I am just walking in sin," because the message to five of the Seven Churches of the Apocalypse (Revelation 2:5, 16, 22: 3:3, 19) is REPENT OR ELSE, e.g., "Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the Sword of My mouth" (2:16). No one is afforded the luxury of dwelling in the "pleasures of sin for a season" (Hebrews 11:25), while receiving the Blessed Assurance of the Holy Spirit's testimony that you are His and that you are ready to depart when Jesus comes, for the Holy Spirit is "given to them that obey Him" (Acts 5:32).

Christ's Parable of the Ten Virgins teaches us the necessity of continual readiness for the LORD's return. In this parable of Matthew 25, emphasis is not centered on our profession, but our readiness. "1 Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto ten virgins

[Professing Christians], which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the Bridegroom [Christ]. 2 And five of them were wise [True Professors], and five were foolish [False Professors]. 3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: 4 but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. 5 While the Bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. 6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him. 7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. 9 But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. 10 And while they went to buy, the Bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage: and the door was shut. 11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, LORD, LORD, open to us. 12 But He answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. 13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh" (Matthew 25:1-13). [See our article, "[A Tale of Ten Virgins](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/A.Tale.of.Ten.Virgins.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/A.Tale.of.Ten.Virgins.html> --, for more explanation of this passage.]

As the time of our departure approaches, our desire ought to be for the LORD to receive as much use from us, until we depart. "Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive Glory and Honour and Power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" (Revelation 4:11). We must continue to be ready:

(1) to minister the Gospel, i.e., "So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also" (Romans 1:15),

(2) to do whatever good we can, i.e., "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work" (Titus 3:1),

(3) to testify of Christ's power to both change and sustain the Christian's life, i.e., "But sanctify the LORD God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1Peter 3:15), and

(4) to be ready to die for Christ-- should we not be raptured first, i.e., "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand" (2Timothy 4:6).

Whatever time, possession, opportunity, or talent that we possess, ought to be employed to further His Kingdom-- for He is worthy. "14 For the Kingdom of Heaven is as a man [Christ, Who is the Son of Man] travelling into a far country, who called his own servants [the Professed Saints], and delivered unto them his goods [the Gospel and the gifts of the Spirit]. 15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey [ascended back to Heaven]. 16 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents [the Apostolic Church]. 17 And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two [hopefully, the rest of us]. 18 But he [un-elect professing Christian] that had received one went and digged in the Earth, and hid his lord's money. 19 After a long time the lord of those servants cometh [Second Coming of Christ, and the events before and after the Millennium], and reckoneth with them. 20 And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. 21 His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. 22 He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. 23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord [Bema Seat Judgment for Believers]. 24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: 25 and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the Earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. 26 His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: 27 thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. 28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. 29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. 30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth [White Throne Judgment of the Lost]" (Matthew 25:14-30). [See our article, "[The Judgment Seat of Christ](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Judgment.Seat.of.Christ.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Judgment.Seat.of.Christ.html> --, for a further discussion of the White Throne and Bema Seat Judgments.]

Maranatha! [Greek, our LORD cometh or will come.]

The Story Behind "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day"

December 20, 2001

One of America's best known poets, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882), contributed to the wealth of carols sung each Christmas season, when he composed the words to "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day" on December 25th 1864. "Glory to God in the Highest, and on Earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:14). The carol was originally a poem, "Christmas Bells," containing seven stanzas. Two stanzas were omitted, which contained references to the American Civil War, thus giving us the carol in its present form. The poem gave birth to the carol, "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day," and the remaining five stanzas were slightly rearranged in 1872 by John Baptiste Calkin (1827-1905), who also gave us the memorable tune. When Longfellow penned the words to his poem, America was still months away from Lee's surrender to Grant at Appomattox Court House on April 9th 1865; and, his poem reflected the prior years of the war's despair, while ending with a confident hope of triumphant peace. [Please read "[Lincoln's Proclamation Appointing a National Fast Day](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Stories/Lincoln.Prayer.Proclamation.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Stories/Lincoln.Prayer.Proclamation.html> -- from which this godly president prompted his countrymen to "rest humbly in the hope authorized by the Divine teachings, that the united cry of the Nation will be heard on high, and answered with blessings, no less than the pardon of our national sins, and the restoration of our now divided and suffering Country, to its former happy condition of unity and peace."]

"6 For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His Kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with Judgment and with Justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of Hosts will perform this"

(Isaiah 9:6-7). [Please read "[The Amazing Humanity of Jesus Christ](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Jehovah/Amazing.Humanity.of.Jesus.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Jehovah/Amazing.Humanity.of.Jesus.html> -- to learn of the blessed benefit of Christ's birth.]

As with any composition that touches the heart of the hearer, "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day" flowed from the experience of Longfellow-- involving the tragic death of his wife Fanny and the crippling injury of his son Charles from war wounds. "My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue" (Psalm 39:3). Henry married Frances Appleton on July 13th 1843, and they settled down in the historic Craige House overlooking the Charles River in Cambridge, Massachusetts. They were blessed with the birth of their first child, Charles, on June 9th 1844, and eventually, the Longfellow household numbered five children-- Charles, Ernest, Alice, Edith, and Allegra. "Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers" (Proverbs 17:6). Alice, the Longfellow's third child and first daughter, was delivered, while her mother was under the anesthetic influence of ether-- the first in North America. "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the Earth, and subdue it: and have dominion..." (Genesis 1:28).

Tragedy struck both the nation and the Longfellow family in 1861. Confederate Gen. Pierre G. T. Beauregard fired the opening salvos of the American Civil War on April 12th, and Fanny Longfellow was fatally burned in an accident in the library of Craige House on July 10th. "Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (James 4:14). The day before the accident, Fanny Longfellow recorded in her journal: "We are all sighing for the good sea breeze instead of this stifling land one filled with dust. Poor Allegra is very droopy with heat, and Edie has to get her hair in a net to free her neck from the weight." "LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am" (Psalm 39:4). After trimming some of seven year old Edith's beautiful curls, Fanny decided to preserve the clippings in sealing wax. Melting a bar of sealing wax with a candle, a few drops fell unnoticed upon her dress. The longed for sea breeze gusted through the window, igniting the light material of Fanny's dress-- immediately wrapping her in flames. In her attempt to protect Edith and Allegra, she ran to Henry's study in the next room, where Henry frantically attempted to extinguish the flames with a nearby, but undersized throw rug. "28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. 29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the LORD the Church" (Ephesians 5:28-29). Failing to stop the fire with the rug, he tried to smother the flames by throwing his arms around Frances-- severely burning his face, arms, and hands. Fanny Longfellow died the next morning. Too ill from his burns and grief, Henry did not attend her funeral. (Incidentally, the trademark full beard of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow arose from his inability to shave after this tragedy.)

The first Christmas after Fanny's death, Longfellow wrote, "How inexpressibly sad are all holidays." A year after the incident, he wrote, "I can make no record of these days. Better leave them wrapped in silence. Perhaps someday God will give me peace." Longfellow's journal entry for December 25th 1862 reads: "A merry Christmas! say the children, but that is no more for me." "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance" (Psalm 42:5). Almost a year later, Longfellow received word that his oldest son Charles, a lieutenant in the Army of the Potomac, had been severely wounded with a bullet passing under his shoulder blades and taking off one of the spinal processes. The Christmas of 1863 was silent in Longfellow's journal. "6:7 Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies. 31:9 Have mercy upon me, O LORD, for I am in trouble: mine eye is consumed with grief, yea, my soul and my belly" (6:7; 31:9). [Please read "[The Spirit of Slavery](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Spirit.of.Slavery.Part_1.html)" -- http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Spirit.of.Slavery.Part_1.html -- for more background on the American Civil War and its connection with Col. Joshua Chamberlain, the hero of Gettysburg, and president of Bowdoin College (from which Longfellow also graduated.)] Finally, on Christmas Day of 1864, he wrote the words of the poem, "Christmas Bells." The reelection of Abraham Lincoln or the possible end of the terrible war may have been the occasion for the poem. "The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy" (147:11). Lt. Charles Longfellow did not die that Christmas, but lived. So, contrary to popular belief, the occasion of writing that much loved Christmas carol was not due to Charles' death. "O give thanks unto the LORD; for He is Good; for His mercy

endureth for ever" (1Chronicles 16:34).

Longfellow's Christmas bells loudly proclaimed, "God is not dead." "The LORD liveth, in Truth, in Judgment, and in Righteousness; and the nations shall bless themselves in Him, and in Him shall they glory" (Jeremiah 4:2). Even more, the bells announced, "Nor doth He sleep." "Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep" (Psalm 121:4). God's Truth, Power, and Justice are affirmed, when Longfellow wrote: "The wrong shall fail, the right prevail." "To finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in Everlasting Righteousness" (Daniel 9:24). The message that the Living God is a God of Peace is proclaimed in the close of the carol: "Of peace on Earth, good will to men." "For it pleased the Father that in [Jesus] should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace through the Blood of His Cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself" (Colossians 1:19-20).

Merry Christmas! And, may the Prince of Peace grant you His peace!

"Christmas Bells"

(The original poem, complete with all seven stanzas)

"I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet
The words repeat
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along
The unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Till, ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day,
A voice, a chime
A chant sublime
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Then from each black accursed mouth
The cannon thundered in the South,
And with the sound
The carols drowned
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

It was as if an earthquake rent
The hearth-stones of a continent,
And made forlorn
The households born
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And in despair I bowed my head;
"There is no peace on earth," I said;
"For hate is strong,
And mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
"God is not dead; nor doth he sleep!
The Wrong shall fail,
The Right prevail,
With peace on earth, good-will to men!"

Christmas Links:

[The Christmas Story \(KJV\)](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Stories/The.Christmas.Story.html)

-- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Stories/The.Christmas.Story.html> --

[Christmas Verses \(KJV\)](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Stories/Christmas.Verses.html)

-- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Stories/Christmas.Verses.html> --

[The Wisdom of Seeking the Messiah](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Wisdom.Seeking.Messiah.html)

-- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Wisdom.Seeking.Messiah.html> --

[The Virgin Birth](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Stories/The.Virgin.Birth.html)

-- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Stories/The.Virgin.Birth.html> --

[Christmas In China](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Stories/Christmas.In.China.html)

-- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Stories/Christmas.In.China.html> --

[Charles Dickens- A Christmas Carol](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Stories/A.Christmas.Carol.html)

-- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Stories/A.Christmas.Carol.html> --

[Anne Bronte- Music On Christmas Morning](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Poetry/Poetry.Music.Christmas.html)

-- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Poetry/Poetry.Music.Christmas.html> --

[Daniel Helped the Wise Men Find the Messiah](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/1998.Year.of.Apocalypse.I.html#WiseMen)

-- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/1998.Year.of.Apocalypse.I.html#WiseMen> --

Pray for the Burnhams' Release

December 25, 2001

On May 27th 2001, American missionaries to the Philippines, Martin and Gracia (pronounced GRAY-shuh) Burnham, serving with [New Tribes Mission](http://www.ntm.org/connect/burnham/back.shtml) -- (NTM)-- a Bible based, Christian outreach, attempting to plant indigenous, New Testament churches "among every tribe within this generation"-- were kidnapped by the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)- whose name means "Bearer of the Sword." ASG is an Islamic separatist movement, which promotes an independent Islamic state in western Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago, areas in the southern Philippines, that are heavily populated by Muslims. The ASG has ties and funding from Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda terrorist network. "Remember [the Burnhams] that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body" (Hebrews 13:3). At Christmas 2001, as worldwide attention is drawn to American Special Forces and U.S. Marines searching for Osama bin Laden in the Tora Bora region of Afghanistan, Martin and Gracia Burnham have patiently endured more than seven months of captivity by the ASG, in part due to Osama bin Laden's support of the ASG. "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting" (1Timothy 2:8).

Martin is a pilot for the New Tribes Mission in the Philippines. He is the son of NTM missionaries Paul and Oreta Burnham, and was raised in the Philippines. Gracia serves with her husband in several support roles for the NTM aviation ministry. She is the daughter of Rev. Norvin and Betty Jo Jones of Arkansas. Martin and Gracia Burnham have three children: Jeff, 14; Mindy, 12; and Zach, 11. All three were born on the mission field in the Philippines. "4 As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. 5 Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate" (Psalm 127:4-5). On May 26th 2001, Martin and Gracia traveled to Dos Palmas Resort off Palawan Island to celebrate their 18th wedding anniversary. The Burnhams were among a group of twenty people that were kidnapped by the ASG on May 27th. They were taken by boat to the ASG stronghold on Basilian Island, along with Guillermo Sobero-- a naturalized American citizen, who resided in Southern California, but was subsequently executed by the ASG on June 12th. Though government troops initially surrounded the ASG on Basilian Island, the insurgents escaped with their hostages, along with newly captured Filipino nurse Deborah Yap. Presently, Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo continues to rely on military action to free the captives-- of course, exposing the hostages to the same danger as the hunted terrorists. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).

On May 30th 2001, the United States refused to pay a ransom demanded by the terrorists. Villagers have reported seeing hostages tied together with a rope, being led through the jungle. "Turn you to the strong hold, ye **prisoners of hope**: even to day do I declare that I will render double unto thee" (Zechariah 9:12). The ASG claims that Martin Burnham was shot in the back by the Filipino military in the crossfire of ongoing clashes on June 3rd 2001. "14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled... 17 For it is better, if the Will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing" (1Peter 3:14, 17). As of December 21st 2001, about 7,000 government troops are reported to be hunting down the ASG. Since President Arroyo has drawn the line forbidding American troops from participating in the hunt, they have only acted in training and advisory roles, such as the training of the counter-terrorist force known as the Light Reaction Company (LRC), which killed eleven of the rebels in a clash on December 7th 2001. "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the Name of the LORD our God" (Psalm 20:7). However, the possible uniting of the Abu Sayyaf Group with the larger Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), may complicate the release of the Burnhams, as the war between the Philippine government and the Muslim separatist groups would escalate. At the close of Christmas 2001, only the Burnhams and Deborah Yap are still being held on Basilian Island-- 600 miles south of Manila. "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans 5:5).

A television interview in November 2001 saw the graveness of Martin and Gracia's circumstances. Martin had lost an alarming amount of weight. Martin and Gracia report in a letter that they are "very weary, but God has protected our health and (we) have not suffered major sickness or injury. We do need medical attention though." May we be instructed by Martin and Gracia's patient suffering. "20 For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. 21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps" (1Peter 2:20-21). They indicate that food is often scarce, and with little protein. "But God always sends a provision and we've always had water," Gracia wrote. "Don't wish to complain -- just thought you'd want to know our situation." Do we who name the Name of Christ focus away from ourselves to the LORD? "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need" (Philippians 4:12). Gracia confided in the letter: "We think about everyone so often -- and I'll admit that I cry a lot... It doesn't mean that I've lost my faith -- I'm just incredibly sad, especially to be separated from the kids." "3 Blessed be God, even the Father of our LORD Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; 4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (2Corinthians 1:3-4). On December 21st 2001, representatives of the New Tribes Mission, family members of Martin and Gracia, and representatives of the U.S. government met in Washington, D.C. for what NTM described as an encouraging meeting. They were told that the United States will take a "more active role in efforts to secure freedom" for the Burnhams. Heather Mercer, recently freed from Taliban captivity in Afghanistan, also met with the families to encourage them that she and others were praying for them. "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

When the Early Christians of the Book of Acts were imprisoned for Christ, they knew that only an appeal to the Almighty would be of any value; but, like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, they were more concerned about the testimony of the LORD than their own security or deliverance. "29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. 30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. 31 Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. 32 And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him" (Acts 5:29-32). Likewise, it is reported by hostages freed by the Abu Sayyaf that "Martin and Gracia are shining lights for Christ among all the hostages and their captors." Remember, when Herod Agrippa imprisoned the Apostle Peter to deliver him up to death, the Church interceded. "Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for him" (Acts 12:5). God miraculously freed Peter from the two chains securing him between two soldiers, and opened all of his prison doors, without the notice of "four quaternions of soldiers" (Acts 12:5)-- sixteen soldiers. Though the Church was praying without ceasing at Mark's house, they were not expecting Peter to be released by a miracle. "13 And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda. 14 And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate. 15 And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel. 16 But Peter continued knocking; and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished" (Acts 12:13-16).

"The Spirit of the LORD GOD is upon Me; because the LORD hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound" (Isaiah 61:1).

May we pray in faith to our God for the deliverance of Martin and Gracia Burnham from the hands of wicked men. And, "He will deliver" (Daniel 3:17) them!

Seek God First

January 3, 2002

Jesus taught us, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His Righteousness" (Matthew 6:33), demonstrating that our true necessities go *beyond* food, clothing, and shelter; but, He promises that even those needs "shall be added unto you" (6:33), if we seek God first. From "The Beginning" (Genesis 1:1), it has never been a mystery that God must be the Primary Focus of our existence, and that any confusion to this First Truth must be actively introduced and entertained by man with the assistance of Satan. "For the invisible things of [God] from The Creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His Eternal Power and Godhead; so that [we] are without excuse" (Romans 1:20). The rebellion fomented by the Serpent in the Garden through our first parents has so fogged human understanding, that though the majority acknowledge the existence of God, it has become common to disregard the necessity to live "by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Because man has been created with the moral capability of choosing or denying God, multiple interpretations of the Scriptures have caused many to conclude that anything or nothing may be proved by Scripture. But, "what saith the Scripture?" (Romans 4:3). There is a unity of True Faith that can be seen in all of genuine Christianity. "4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One LORD, one faith, one baptism, 6 One God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Ephesians 4:4-6). For this reason, a call to seek God first, can rightly be declared as a Universal Truth, that is *not* to be privately interpreted. "20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. 21 For the Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2Peter 1:20-21).

When an interpreter and teacher of the Mosaic Law tempted Jesus, saying, "Master, which is the great Commandment in the Law?" (Matthew 22:36), he was hoping to catch the Master in a dispute over some oral tradition, which the Jews used, in lawyerly fashion, to keep themselves from obeying plain Commandments from God. For instance, it was the custom in Christ's day for one to disavow responsibility for the care of their elderly parents, as the Fifth Commandment of the Decalogue requires to "honour thy father and thy mother" (Exodus 20:12), by declaring, "It is Corban," i.e., a gift *offered* to the sacred treasury [Greek, korbanas], whether actually given or not. "11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. 12 And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; 13 making the Word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye" (Mark 7:11-13). But, what this Pharisee received, was a restatement of what every true son of Abraham already knew-- to seek God first. The lawyer was privileged, as we are, to receive a clarion call to seek God first, from none other than the Son of God Himself. "37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the First and Great Commandment. 39 And the Second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:37-40).

The concept that we ought to seek God first is the Primal Demand of our existence, as can be seen by Christ's affirmation of the inspired teaching of Moses. "And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in ALL His Ways, and to love Him, and to serve the LORD thy God with ALL thy heart and with ALL thy soul" (Deuteronomy 10:12). That we have so changed in the past few thousand years that we no longer need to seek God first, is only a convenient deception. Notice in the following passage that Christ outlines the fine points of True Religion, which obligates us always to seek God first. It is only our sinful departure from it, which necessitates our Salvation "24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon [i.e., material wealth]. 25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? 26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? 27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? 28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: 29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? 31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. 33 But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His Righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. 34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matthew 6:24-34).

Throughout the New Testament, the consistent Truth is our necessity to seek God first in ALL things. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do ALL to the glory of God" (1Corinthians 10:31). If life is to be transacted at all, it is to be done with a single eye of True Devotion toward God. "17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do ALL in the Name of the LORD Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him... 23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the LORD, and not unto men" (Colossians 3:17, 23). The Mystery of the Godhead reveals the consistency of seeking God first through the exaltation of Jesus Christ. "And without

controversy great is the Mystery of Godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1Timothy 3:16). Anything less than a wholehearted seeking of God first is *not* True Religion. "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of Righteousness unto God" (Romans 6:13). *Unless we can honestly justify our lives as devoted to God, then God cannot justify Himself in receiving us as those who seek Him first.* "7 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. 8 For whether we live, we live unto the LORD; and whether we die, we die unto the LORD: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the LORD's" (14:7-8). [Read a lecture by [Charles G. Finney](#) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html> -- on "[Devotion](#)" -- http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin_1839/OE1839.Devotion.html -- (1839) to see how this 19th century evangelist portrayed the concept of seeking God first, devotion to God, and consecration to God, e.g., "Simple faith in the character of God, as revealed in the Bible, naturally and necessarily begets a spirit of consecration to God."]

The substance of Evangelical Christianity emphasizes the office of Saviour for the Son of God. "30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. 31 Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. 32 And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, Whom God hath given to them that obey Him" (Acts 5:30-32). Humanity needs Salvation, in the first place, because it has already refused first allegiance to God. "And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind Me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the LORD thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve" (Luke 4:8). It can always be seen, whether we are truly seeking God first, if we are following the steps of the Saviour, i.e., "What would Jesus do?" [Read Charles M. Sheldon's "[In His Steps](#)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Stories/In.His.Steps.html> --, for a story about church members who choose to live by the maxim, "What would Jesus do?"] Once we have received Jesus as our Saviour from the sin of rejecting His Sovereignty over us, then Jesus must be introduced to us in His office of Sanctifier, Who keeps us seeking Him first. "And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My Statutes, and ye shall keep My Judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:27). [Read Charles G. Finney's "[The Relations of Christ to the Believer](#)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Relations.Christ.Believer.html> --, for a thoughtful treatment of this vital topic of the sanctified walk of those who seek God first.] Though we do not seek and serve God first for any selfish end, we have been promised by the LORD Jesus Himself, "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour" (John 12:26).

Maranatha!

The Beasts of the Apocalypse

March 11, 2002

In the study of the Book of Revelation, several beasts dominate the narrative, which, if not properly identified, will give the reader much confusion in the interpretation of this timely book. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the Words of this Prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand" (Revelation 1:3).

First, the four angelic seraphim around the Throne of God (Revelation 4:6-9; 5:6, 8, 11, 14; 14:3; 15:7; 19:4) are the godly "four beasts" (6:1)-- "second beast" (6:3), "third beast" (6:5), and "fourth beast" (6:7)-- who are delegated the task of announcing, i.e., "Come and see" (6:1, 3, 5, 7), the first four Seal Judgments (6:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8), and opening the Second, Third, and Fourth Seal Judgments. The Greek word *zoon* speaks here of living creatures, not wild animals (Greek, *therion*). And, these are the same "four living creatures" (Ezekiel 1:5), i.e., living creatures like a "lion... calf... a man, and... a flying eagle" (Revelation 4:7), of the prophet Ezekiel's vision.

Second, actual wild animals (*therion*) or "beasts of the Earth" (6:8) are described as part of the instruments used by the Almighty in connection with His killing of one-fourth of the human population of the planet under the Fourth Seal Judgment. "Beasts" (18:13) are also listed as part of the "merchandise" (18:11-12) of the "merchants of the Earth" (18:11), who "were made rich by [Babylon the Great]" (18:15).

Third, Satan is the "Beast that ascendeth out of the Bottomless Pit" (Revelation 11:7), who martyrs God's Two Witnesses (11:3)-- Moses and Elijah. In this instance, the Greek word *therion* describes Satan like a wild beast. "And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the Bottomless Pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon" (9:11). However, the Saints are reminded that Satan is a present foe that resides in this world-- coming and going from the Pit-- "whom resist steadfast in the faith" (1Peter 5:9), knowing that if you "resist the Devil... he will flee from you" (James 4:7). Satan's empowering of the Antichrist is for the selfish end that he will thereby gain the worship that he so fervently desires. "And they worshipped the Dragon ["the Great Dragon... that Old Serpent, called the Devil, and Satan" (Revelation 12:9)] which gave power unto the Beast [the Antichrist]:

and they worshipped the Beast, saying, Who is like unto the Beast? who is able to make war with him?" (Revelation 13:4).

Fourth, in the overwhelming majority of instances, the Antichrist is *the* Beast of the Apocalypse (13:1-4, 12, 14-15, 17, 18; 14:9, 11; 15:2; 16:2, 10, 13; 17:3, 7-8, 11-13, 16-17; 19:19-20; 20:4, 10) "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a Beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy" (Revelation 13:1). When distinguishing the difference between the person of the Antichrist and the Antichrist system that produces him, *the* Antichrist will be a specific human at a future time; whereas, he will arise out of the religious, political, economic, and social power structure of the world, which is the Antichrist system. "And the Beast [the Antichrist] which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the Dragon [Satan, the "prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2)] gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority" (Revelation 13:2). Keep in mind that whatsoever portion of this world, which is willfully kept in disobedience of King Jehovah, is the world or Antichrist system of Satan. "15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1John 2:15-16).

Fifth, the significant and twin beast of the Antichrist is the False Prophet. "And I beheld another Beast coming up out of the Earth; and he had two horns like a Lamb, and he spake as a Dragon" (Revelation 13:11). The False Prophet embodies the desire for worship that Satan has always possessed since his fall. "For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into Heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north" (Isaiah 14:13). Satan's imitation of the Trinity is the Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet. "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the Dragon, and out of the mouth of the Beast, and out of the mouth of the False Prophet" (16:13). The certain doom of the Antichrist and the False Prophet is that they will be "cast alive into a Lake of Fire burning with brimstone" (19:20) at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, while Satan's final judgment will be held in abeyance until his Post-Millennial Revolt is crushed by King Jesus. "And the Devil that deceived them was cast into the Lake of Fire and brimstone, where the Beast and the False Prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (20:10). Hallelujah!

Only through an active faith in the LORD Jesus Christ may the Saints overcome the Antichrist system. "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1John 5:4). This faith only "cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17). In particular, the weakest Saint has the overwhelming benefit of the weapon of the "Exceeding Great and Precious Promises" (2Peter 1:3) of God's Word, that must be claimed in prayer at all times; but especially, when the "enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him" (Isaiah 59:19). May our understanding of the Apocalypse not cause us to be puffed up, but "in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" (Philippians 2:3). Thus, the Scripture may be fulfilled that the "meek shall inherit the Earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace" (Psalm 37:11).

Maranatha!

Our Light Afflictions Work For Us, Not Against Us

March 24, 2002

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory"
(2Corinthians 4:17).

At times, even the world tells us to speak positively about what may be very brutal or grim circumstances. "For after that in the Wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1Corinthians 1:21). Recently, I heard a secular author say that it has been cause-and-effect demonstrated that often the best thing to say to sufferers is that the worse is over. "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver" (Proverbs 25:11). We may immediately think of instances when such brave talk presages imminent death or destruction, e.g., a nurse in a field hospital on a battlefield, who is overwhelmed with casualties, rating the wounded soldiers' priority for treatment, as well as survivability, may comfort their mental anguish, knowing full well that their efforts will be better expended with someone else, whose physical anguish can be assuaged with timely treatment. "To the one we are the savour of death unto Death; and to the other the savour of life unto Life. And who is sufficient for these things?" (2Corinthians 2:16). But, only the True Christian understands the life-begetting nature of the confident speech that is based upon the certainty of God's divinely inspired, Infallible Word. "For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a Discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

It is certain that only a sinner saved by the the "Grace of the LORD Jesus Christ" (Acts 15:11) can have the Eternal Optimism that "all things work together for good to them that love God" (Romans 8:28); and thereby, can claim alongside the Apostle Paul that "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory" (2Corinthians 4:17). Think of it. Inspiration has it that our afflictions work for us, not against us. To the world, this is strange metaphysics, but to the Godly, this is the Truth. "For My Thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My Ways, saith the LORD" (Isaiah 55:8). The world system in which we live is so different from the holy atmosphere of the Almighty that even Christians are prone to react with the world's amazement at the plain statements of Holy Writ, unless we allow ourselves to be governed by the "still small voice" (1Kings 19:12) of the Holy Spirit. "This is the Way, walk ye in it" (Isaiah 30:21). Does it not take faith to believe that *our* afflictions are light? But, lightness is a relative thing. Light compared to what? Alongside eternity, *none* of our afflictions can be so heavy. Even "our beloved brother Paul" (2Peter 3:15) must have considered his afflictions light. "23 Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. 24 Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. 25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27 in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness... 9 And He said unto me, My Grace is sufficient for thee: for My Strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the Power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2Corinthians 11:23-27; 12:9-10).

The holy atmosphere of Heaven must be so different from the world in which our senses live that our preparation to experience those joys must require the utmost of God's effort-- and ours. "God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life" (John 3:16). But, our New Birth is only the beginning of that preparation. We could not save ourselves. Neither can we sanctify ourselves. But, we do know Someone who is able "to subdue all things unto Himself" (Philippians 3:21). We must again cooperate in faith with new and renewed revelations of the fulness and sufficiency of the LORD Jesus Christ to meet not simply our physical needs, but our every spiritual need of preparation for the soon destination of Heaven. "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). We are prone to focus on the immediacy of our physical circumstances-- which cannot be helped-- but, we need to see beyond those necessities for our preparatory education to be complete. We need to see that Jesus has always been our Saviour, Friend, and Guide to supply the needed spiritual instruction through the Spirit of Christ to make our light afflictions, which are "but for a moment" (2Corinthians 4:17), to work for us a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory" (4:17). If we would avail ourselves more of the advocacy of our Heavenly Paraklete, we would find ourselves living that phrase in the LORD's Prayer, "Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven" (Matthew 6:10). Our personal preparation, as much as our soul-winning efforts to the Lost, may be the very thing needed to bring about the soon return of the LORD Jesus Christ-- and our departure! "Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the Day of God" (2Peter 3:12). [See our article, "[Hastening the LORD's Return](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/Hastening.Lords.Return.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/Hastening.Lords.Return.html> --, for additional insight on the relationship of the Second Coming of Christ to our day-to-day walk of faith. Also, A. T. Pierson's "[In Christ Jesus](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/In.Christ.Jesus.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/In.Christ.Jesus.html> -- will give valuable instruction in how to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in fashioning yourself in the pattern of Christ. If you are curious about the identity of the 19th century [A. T. Pierson](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/A.T.Pierson.html) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/A.T.Pierson.html> --, read "[Meet Mr. Philadelphia](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Meet.Mr.Philadelphia.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Meet.Mr.Philadelphia.html> --.]

Maranatha!

The Beast That Was, and Is Not, and Yet Is

March 27, 2002

"The Beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the Bottomless Pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the Earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the Beast that was, and is not, and yet is"

(Revelation 17:8).

It is understandable that the subject of the Antichrist would arouse our attention, for even the writer of the Book of Revelation-- the Apostle John-- did find the manifestation of the harlot system of the Beast, a source of amazement. "And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the Saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration" (Revelation 17:6). However, many of the Biblical descriptions of the Antichrist are purposely couched in highly symbolic and acrostic language that "seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be

converted, and their sins should be forgiven them" (Mark 4:12). Why possibly withhold salvation and hide understanding from the many that will peruse the difficult words of the Revelation in the ensuing millennia? The Most High God has deemed it unwise to reward the casual and chance hearing of His prophecies with the same enlightenment as those who "do hunger and thirst after righteousness" (Matthew 5:6). Though repentance at the time of death may be possible, e.g., Jesus told the penitent thief on the adjacent cross, "To day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43), the Almighty has warned us not to rely upon harvesting the benefits of the present world system, while expecting to repent in time to experience the joys of Heaven. "Ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (James 4:14). Even the Saviour is not interested in saving everyone at all times, for Jesus said, "He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of Eternal Damnation" (Mark 3:29). For this reason, understanding of the cryptic language of the Apocalypse is withheld from the Truly Unsubmissive to prevent its illicit use for temporary and self-centered purposes. Simon the Sorcerer attempted to purchase the power of the Holy Spirit for selfish gain, but was denied the blessing, i.e., "18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, 19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. 20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money" (Acts 8:18-20). Understanding is only distributed by the Holy Spirit to the willing hearer, i.e., "he that hath an ear" (Revelation 2:7), on a need-to-know basis. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the Doctrine" (John 7:17).

Who Is the Beast That Was, and Is Not, and Yet Is?

(1) Satan is the Beast that "was" (17:8), and as Apollyon, he but again "shall ascend out of the Bottomless Pit" (17:8). This Beelzebub (Matthew 10:25), the so-called Lord of the Flies-- "the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to enquire of Baalzebub [Hebrew, lord of the fly] the god of Ekron?" (2Kings 1:3)-- though he is as a "roaring lion, [that] walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1Peter 5:8) and as a "serpent" (Genesis 3:4) that did "bruise [the] heel" (3:15) of the Son of Man on the Cross of Calvary, when Christ was "wounded for our transgressions [and] was bruised for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:5), at that time the LORD Our Substitute did mortally "bruise [the] head" (Genesis 3:15) of Satan, the creaturely Beast. This leaves the wild Beast in a wounded and raging condition, requiring the meek Saints to "submit [themselves] to God [and to] resist the Devil [knowing that only then] he will flee from you" (James 4:7), until he shall finally "go into perdition" (Revelation 17:8). Perdition is the Greek word *apoleia*, meaning destruction and utter ruin, which is the exquisite destruction designed by the Almighty to divorce the Devil from interfering with the happiness of the Godly, while preventing Satan's eternal soul from experiencing anything but the "blackness of darkness for ever" (Jude 13).

(2) The Antichrist is the Beast that "is not" (17:8)-- at least, at the time of the writing of the Apocalypse. This second person in the Trinity of Evil is the Counterfeit Christ that triumphantly enters the Tribulation Week as a Messiah-like peacemaker, speaking "great swelling words" (Jude 16), to "confirm the covenant with many [but not with all, i.e., the recently awakened Tribulation Saints] for one week" (Daniel 9:27). The character of the Antichrist can be seen in the first four Seal Judgments. He will imitate Christ the Conqueror-- Who "ascended on high... [and] led captivity captive... [to give] gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also" (Psalm 68:18)-- when he, the arch Son of Satan, goes forth "conquering, and to conquer" (Revelation 6:2) in the First Seal Judgment, gaining for himself world domination through diplomacy. Antichrist the Little Horn (Daniel 7:8) will mimic Christ the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6) in the Second Seal Judgment, when he takes True "Peace from the Earth... [with] a great sword" (Revelation 6:4), no doubt to establish the peace of no further opposition to himself. Antichrist the Lawless One-- "then shall that Wicked [literally, the Lawless One] be revealed" (2Thessalonians 2:8)-- will copy the Abundant Christ-- Whose rain falls "on the just and on the unjust" (Matthew 5:45)-- in the Third Seal Judgment, when Antichrist's policies and leadership introduce the world to the "black horse" (Revelation 6:5) of famine, sharing the abundance of his administration. In the Fourth Seal Judgment, the Man of Sin (2Thessalonians 2:3) will bless the world with "Death, and Hell" (6:8) in his abortive attempt to counterfeit for his people the life that comes only from Christ the Life (John 14:6).

(3) The Antichrist system of the world, i.e., the religious, political, economic, and social power structure of the world, is the Beast that "yet is" (17:8). We are informed through the Apostles John's First Epistle that even in the First Century there were "many antichrists" (1John 2:18). This system of antichrists has spanned the ages of humankind, for the human antithesis of God has always been the Antichrist. "The fool [Hebrew, *nabal*-- signifying the Arch Fool, Antichrist] hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Psalm 14:1). The world system that spawns the Antichrist has always been at enmity with the Saints-- only variously employing the crafty means of Vanity Fair Friendship to confuse and disarm unwary Pilgrims. "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4). Why does the Antichrist system of the world have such animosity to the Holy Jehovah? "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:7). Until the miracle of the New Birth begets a renewed heart and mind in the life of one of Satan's former serfs, the Royal Law of Love will be odious; and, the Antichrist world system will continue to persuade its benighted masses of the indispensability, and yea further, of the supreme

good of self-love-- without the slightest hint of our overpowering necessity of seeking, trusting, loving, and obeying the Living God. "Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" (Revelation 4:11).

The most profound understanding of the elements of prophecy is based upon the simplicity of faith in Christ. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 18:3). Willingness to follow and obey Christ wherever He leads and directs is necessary for Him to manifest the "Spirit of Prophecy" (Revelation 19:10) to us. "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him" (John 14:21). Even if we were to read the words of explanation of any Biblical prophecy, what value would it be to us or the Kingdom of God, if we did not have a heart of loving obedience to the LORD Jesus Christ? "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26). For this reason, the reader is implored to "examine yourselves, whether ye be in the Faith" (2Corinthians 13:5). You are invited to read "Do You Really Want to Be a Christian?" to aid you in this examination. May the "Grace of the LORD Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all" (13:14).

Maranatha!

Stand Right and Stand Fast

April 15, 2002

Mankind in general-- and especially the Professed Body of Christ-- is sadly disappointing; but, our "hope is in the LORD" (Psalm 146:5). "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" (Isaiah 2:22). It is the great novelty of these Laodicean times to find those who truly do live "by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). We ought to take great consolation in the fact that the LORD Jesus Christ, Who promised to "come quickly" (Revelation 22:20), forewarned us that a sign of the nearness of His return would be the Great Falling Away. "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that Man of Sin be revealed, the Son of Perdition" (2Thessalonians 2:3). Only the LORD Jesus, Who redeemed us "by His Own Blood" (Hebrews 9:12), is able to keep even ourselves from apostatizing. "Keep back Thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the Great Transgression" (Psalm 19:13). If we truly trust in the Sovereignty of our God to "keep [us] from falling" (Jude 24), then we will "lean not unto [our] own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5) and actively trust the Living God to preserve and deliver us until He returns. "And the LORD shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His Heavenly Kingdom: to Whom be Glory for ever and ever. Amen" (2Timothy 4:18).

Though we know that the Great Apostasy is already under way, we believe that the very reason that such a falling away has taken place is because the Church of the LORD Jesus Christ has not laid hold of the "Promise of the Spirit through Faith" (Galatians 3:14). We have been correctly taught that the Holy Spirit resides in Born Again Believers, i.e., the "Holy Ghost, Whom God hath given to them that **obey Him**" (Acts 5:32); and thus, Jesus "became the Author of Eternal Salvation unto all them that **obey Him**" (Hebrews 5:9). But, the secret to obedience is that **we must trust the LORD to cause us** to "will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). Long ago, the prophet Ezekiel wrote: "And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My Statutes, and ye shall keep My Judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:27). That's the Secret. The New Covenant is that the Spirit of God was given at Pentecost, not merely to make us happy, but to make us lovingly obedient.

"³¹ Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: ³² Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: ³³ But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put My Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people. ³⁴ And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

As much as we hope that you would find understanding and agreement with the articles about Bible prophecy at our website, we're even more desirous that you bolster and fortify your End Time relationship with the LORD Jesus Christ. "Who are kept by the Power of God through Faith unto Salvation ready to be revealed in the Last Time" (1Peter 1:5). If you Stand Right and Stand Fast in the LORD, you do well. "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12). Cling tenaciously to the End Time

promises, as you would cling to the Living God that gave them. "Because thou hast kept the Word of My Patience, I also will keep thee from the Hour of Temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the Earth" (Revelation 3:10). "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36). "And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming" (1John 2:28). "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24).

Maranatha!

[See our editorial, "[Behold, I Come Quickly](#)", to see how Christ's promise is true and not contradictory. Our article, "[Exceeding Great and Precious Promises](#)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Promises/Exceeding.Promises.html> --, outlines how we are sanctified through the Promises of God. And, our editorial, "[Is It Possible to Guarantee Our Obedience?](#)", demonstrates the validity of Ezekiel 36:27.]

Sex Scandal in the Catholic Church

May 26, 2002

Skandilizo is the Greek word from which we get the word scandalize. It is to entrap, trip up, or entice, as to sin; and it is translated *offend* or *make to offend* in the New Testament. "And whosoever shall offend [Greek, skandilizo] one of these little ones that believe in Me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea" (Mark 9:42). Since the sex abuse scandal erupted earlier this year (2002) in Boston, more than 177 priests have been dismissed or resigned. Allegations of priests molesting young boys have surfaced across the country; further, it appears that such abuse is worldwide throughout the Roman Catholic system, as similar abuse has been charged to have occurred in France and Poland, as related in a March 20th 2002 CNN.com article, "Vatican wrestles with pedophilia scandals." "There is no new thing under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9). The uproar in the headlines became so serious that the Pope convened a meeting in Rome to demonstrate Catholic concern and to attempt to isolate the problem. At a standing room only "listening session" on May 16th in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, church officials were provided with plentiful feedback from the rank and file attendees, as reported in a May 17th 2002 CNN.com article, "Parishioners discuss effects of church sex scandal." The article reported: "The top is rotten,' said Faythe Weber during a discussion at St. Gregory the Great Church on Thursday. 'I don't believe a word they say right now. It was cover-up, cover-up, cover-up.'" Not all comments were as harsh. Though 78% of American Catholics recently polled still had a favorable opinion of Pope John Paul II, a CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll conducted on April 29 - May 1 revealed that the vast majority (70%) of American Catholics disapproved of the Church's handling of the sex abuse problem, e.g., "Overall, do you think the Catholic Church has done a good job or bad job in dealing with the problem of sexual abuse committed by its priests?" "For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed" (Isaiah 9:16).

Though current events paint a dismal picture of the conduct of Roman Catholic priests toward their young parishioners, does the history of the Church of Rome demonstrate a different pattern? A candid look at Rome's history may be found in "Halley's Bible Handbook: An Abbreviated Bible Commentary"-- originally copyrighted in 1927, but the Twenty-Fourth Edition copyrighted in 1965 was consulted for the following quotations. Henry H. Halley wrote: "The 200 years between [the Popes] Nicolas I [858-867 AD] and Gregory VII [1073-1085 AD] is called by historians the MIDNIGHT OF THE DARK AGES... Sergius III (A.D. 904-911). Said to have had a mistress, Marozia. She, her mother Theodora, and her sister, 'filled the Papal chair with their paramours and bastard sons, and turned the Papal Palace into a den of robbers.' Called in history The Rule of the Harlots (904-963)... [Pope] John XII (955-963), a grandson of Marozia, was 'guilty of almost every crime; violated virgins and widows, high and low; lived with his father's mistress; made the Papal Palace a brothel; was killed while in the act of adultery by the woman's enraged husband'" (p. 774). "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?" (Proverbs 1:22). Hundreds of years later, during the Papal Schism (1377-1417 AD), in which there were *two* rival Popes in both Rome and Avignon, France, Rome's Vicar of Christ John XXIII (1410-1415) was "called by some the most depraved criminal who ever sat on the Papal Throne; guilty of almost every crime; as cardinal in Bologna, 200 maidens, nuns and married women fell victim to his amours; as Pope he violated virgins and nuns; lived in adultery with his brother's wife; was guilty of sodomy and other nameless vices; bought the Papal Office; sold Cardinalates to children of wealthy families; and openly denied the future life" (pp. 778-779). "From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment" (Isaiah 1:6). The Renaissance produced Popes of little different morals, such as "Nicolas V (1447-1455), [who] authorized the King of Portugal to war on African peoples, take their property and enslave people... Pius II (1458-1464), was said to have been the father of many illegitimate children, spoke openly of the methods he used to seduce women, encouraged young men to, and even offered to instruct them in methods of self-indulgence. Paul II (1464-1471), 'filled his house with

concubines'... Innocent VIII (1484-1492). Had 16 children by various married women... Appointed the brutal Thomas of Torquemada Inquisitor General of Spain, and ordered all rulers to deliver up Heretics to him" (p. 779). "We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed: forsake her, and let us go every one into his own country: for her judgment reacheth unto Heaven, and is lifted up even to the skies" (Jeremiah 51:9). [See our article, "[The Reformation and the Church of Rome](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/Babylon.The.Great.Part.2.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/Babylon.The.Great.Part.2.html> --, for background on the Protestant Reformation.]

Is the institution of the Church of Rome any more salvageable in its present condition than in the day of the Protestant Reformer Martin Luther? The whole idea of coming "out from among them, and be ye separate" (2Corinthians 6:17) is that Personal Holiness is not to be sacrificed even for the Corporate Holiness of the Church. "15 But as He which hath called you is Holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; 16 because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am Holy" (1Peter 1:15-16). When will the thoughtful Roman Catholic leave the Roman Catholic Church? At the point that it is realized that protest against the immorality of the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church will *not* truly change them-- knowing that only personal holiness will be sacrificed by remaining-- then that individual must leave. Evil company corrupts good morals, i.e., "evil communications [Greek, *homilia*, meaning companionship, intercourse, communion] corrupt good manners [Greek, *ethos*, meaning custom, usage, morals, character]" (1Corinthians 15:33). And, personal holiness is more important than saving the Church. "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4). Of course, this assumes that it is already understood that salvation lies *solely* in Jesus Christ and *not* in the Roman Catholic Church or any other manmade institution. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Salvation is irrespective of church affiliation and comes *only* by Jesus Christ, i.e., "the church of God, which He hath purchased with His Own Blood" (Acts 20:28).

What is the significance of this latest sex scandal in the Catholic Church? The very fact that such scandal has been allowed to surface for candid examination means that God is warning all that the Church of Rome cannot save those who trust her. "It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man" (Psalm 118:8). Trusting the ex cathedra declarations of the Roman Pontiff in faith and morals as infallible, elevates the Pope's word to the level of the Infallible Scriptures-- but "the Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). The thoughtful Catholic must choose to pay homage to the Living Word or to a breathing Pope. "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" (Isaiah 2:22). If God's Word can be trusted at all, should we not trust It for all? "16 All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2Timothy 3:16-17). Likewise, are we given the liberty to elevate the priest to the prominence of trust that he would be addressed as "Father"? Does not the Scripture teach us to reject these artificial titles designed to give mere men authoritative power over men's consciences? "2 Saying, The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: 3 all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. 4 For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. 5 But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, 6 and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, 7 and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. 8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. 9 And call no man your father upon the Earth: for one is your Father, which is in Heaven" (Matthew 23:2-9).

Where has Auricular Confession the right to give a mere human priest the ability to grant absolution for sins committed against God or man? Does not the Scripture teach us to go to the offended party and make amends directly without priestly intervention? "23 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; 24 leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matthew 5:23-24). Where has God granted a mere human priest the divine, transubstantive capacity to create Christ in the Mass? Does this not blasphemously make a human priest the creator of Christ the Creator? "1 In The Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The Same was in The Beginning with God. 3 All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:1-3). The thoughtful Roman Catholic must ultimately choose salvation through Christ alone or salvation by the Church of Rome, whose salvation will rival the deliverance of those abused, young boys at the hands of their trusted Fathers. "Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD" (Jeremiah 17:5). [See our article, "[An Earnest Appeal to Roman Catholics](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/An.Earnest.Appeal.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/An.Earnest.Appeal.html> --, for a more thorough, Scriptural treatment of Catholic doctrine.]

May God give thoughtful Roman Catholics the Grace and Mercy to thoroughly turn away from Rome and turn to the LORD Jesus Christ, Who is soon returning for His people. "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach" (Hebrews 13:13).

Why God Must Prove Us

June 25, 2002

"Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart"

(Psalm 26:2).

God is our Maker, and as the Supreme Potter, He has the right to modify and fashion us in the way that best pleases Him. "4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. 5 Then the Word of the LORD came to me, saying, 6 O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in Mine hand, O house of Israel" (Jeremiah 18:4-6). On our part, we can be assured that faith and confidence in God pleases Him. "But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6). But, what binds our heart to Him is the absolute assurance that the Infinite God loves us. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life" (John 3:16). If only the world would understand that God loves everyone unconditionally; but additionally, and even more important, the Christian *must* comprehend that God has a Special Love for *only* those that trust and obey Him. "He that hath My Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him" (John 14:21). For those who are truly following hard after Him, He is more interested in our sanctification and safe passage into Heaven than we are. "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6). That Special Kind of Love is the substance of most of the New Testament, when addressing His faithful interest in the present walk of His Saints. "Faithful is He that calleth you, Who also will do it" (1Thessalonians 5:24).

Those who truly love God, obey Him. "If ye love Me, keep My Commandments" (John 14:15). And, those are the people that God must prove. "And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that His fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not" (Exodus 20:20). But, why must God prove us? It is certain that the Omniscient God already knows what we will do before we do it. "Great is our LORD, and of great Power: His Understanding is infinite" (Psalm 147:5). For this reason, we can conclude that God is *not* proving what *He* did not already know, but He is proving the point for *our* benefit, i.e., "Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that He might humble thee, and that He might prove thee, **to do thee good** at thy latter end" (Deuteronomy 8:16). Humanly speaking, we think that we know what we know; but, until the LORD proves it in us, only then do we truly know it. "5 I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee. 6 Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5-6). Our flesh repels at the thought of being tested, i.e., for "no man ever yet hated his own flesh" (Ephesians 5:29). Remember our school days, when even after thorough preparation, tests were not relished? The Apostle Paul well understood those feelings, i.e., "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure" (2Corinthians 12:7). Paul petitioned "that it might depart from me" (12:8), and the LORD answered, "My Grace is sufficient for thee: for My Strength is made perfect in weakness" (12:9). Paul willingly submitted to the LORD's answer-- "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the Power of Christ may rest upon me" (12:9). Paul concluded, "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (12:10). *We will never discover the LORD's strength in our lives until we willingly submit to our Heavenly Father's testing and proving of us.* "23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: 24 and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the Way Everlasting" (Psalm 139:23-24).

In conclusion, if the LORD proves it in us, then it is truly so. "And God said... and it was so" (Genesis 1:9). May we adopt the attitude of the LORD when He implored us, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and **prove Me** now herewith, saith the LORD of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of Heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Malachi 3:10). **If the LORD of Hosts must be proved, how much more do we need to be proved?** "Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart" (Psalm 26:2). Why so many tests and provings? We must be proved to this degree, because it is necessary to "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church" (Colossians 1:24) that we "may stand perfect and complete in all the Will of God" (4:12). May we expect to be proved by God and prepare our hearts accordingly, "and then shall every man have praise of God" (1Corinthians 4:5). This particularly fits our End Time scenario of readiness for the Rapture. "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36).

Maranatha!

A Place Called Safe

July 4, 2002

"In the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice"

(Psalm 63:7).

From a current events perspective, good news is rare. "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2Timothy 3:13). Think about it. Were it not for the Gospel, there would be *nothing* about which to be glad. "10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you Good Tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the LORD" (Luke 2:10-11). God created us so that "no man ever yet hated his own flesh" (Ephesians 5:29); and, when someone abducts a child in our neighbourhood, starts a fire close by, threatens to shut down the cyber controlled infrastructure of emergency response, utilities, etc., then we begin to take notice of the fragile nature of safety. "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of Me, saith the LORD" (Isaiah 54:17). The safety of the space that surrounds us is affected even by the security of our employment situation and the prosperity of our economic environment; indeed, the world observes that crime and homelessness can often be traced back to the lack of decent paying jobs. "Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry" (Proverbs 6:30). But, the Saints are to *continually* hope in the LORD's provision. "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the Righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Psalm 37:25). [See our article, "[Provision in the LORD](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Promises/Promises.Provision.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Promises/Promises.Provision.html> --, for Promises on Provision.]

Until we have reached the end of confidence in self, we shall forever wonder at those Saints who notice the difficultness and insecurities of the times; but, how can we genuinely yearn for His appearing, if we have too great a confidence in our earthly circumstances? "Set your affection on things Above, not on things on the Earth" (Colossians 3:2). The secret is that God will preserve those who trust Him from the dangers surrounding them, until He promotes them to Glory. "Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of Thy wings" (Psalm 17:8). Until the Sovereign LORD chooses to remove us from this planet, He must hide us in His safety. "Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in Thee: yea, in the shadow of Thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast" (Psalm 57:1). Our safety is not our ignorance of our circumstances, but it is our supreme confidence that "safety is of the LORD" (Proverbs 21:31).

We must cooperate with the LORD in promoting our own safety:

- (1) by avoiding unnecessary confrontation with trouble, i.e., "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished" (Proverbs 22:3; 27:12-- repeated twice to emphasize the point);
- (2) by preparing lawful means of self-defense, i.e., "36 Then said He unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. 37 For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in Me, And He was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning Me have an end. 38 And they said, LORD, behold, here are two swords. And He said unto them, It is enough [But, how will two swords be enough to defend eleven apostles? It must still be a cooperative defense of God supernaturally working with man.]" (Luke 22:36-38); and
- (3) by our willingness to fight to personally defend ourselves-- or by police or military intervention or participation, i.e., "3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: 4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil" (Romans 13:3-4).

Though we have every justification within the Law of Love, i.e., "Thou shalt love thy neighbour **as thyself** [not less or more]" (Matthew 22:39), to promote our own safety, and though we can be Divinely called to set aside our safety to do good for someone else, i.e., "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13), it must become soon apparent to the Saints that we need more than our personal willingness to promote our safety, for even the world does the same. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the LORD of Hosts" (Zechariah 4:6). Instead, enough cannot be made of the promises of God for safety, since our need of safety is only another means by which the LORD of Armies causes us to trust Him, and thereby be "sanctified by faith that is in [Jesus]" (Acts 26:18). [See the collection of Promises for safety in our article, "[Safety in the LORD](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Promises/Promises.Safety.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Promises/Promises.Safety.html> --, in the [Promises Section](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/WStS.Promises.html) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/WStS.Promises.html> -- of our website.] Collectively, our confidence in the LORD to keep us safely is founded in His Promises. "Whereby are given unto us Exceeding Great

and Precious Promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2Peter 1:4). Our confidence of safety must be firmly in the LORD's presence. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me" (Psalm 23:4). But, we must not forget that our safety is never more important than our sanctification, that is, we must be more concerned about increasing our relationship of trusting God than to be merely content with our personal safety. "The just shall live by faith" (Hebrews 10:38).

A sobering example of the Christian's necessity to comprehend the gravity of their dangerous circumstances, while confidently abiding in the safety of the LORD, is the recent death of missionary aviator Martin Burnham, held captive with his wife Gracia for more than a year by the al Qaida linked Abu Sayyaf in the jungles of the Philippines. Shortly before his death, he said, "We might not leave this jungle alive, but at least we can leave this world serving the Lord with gladness. We can serve Him right here where we are, and with gladness." "Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in Thee: yea, in the shadow of Thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast" (Psalm 57:1). [See our article, "[Martin Burnham Went to Heaven](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Martin.Burnham.Heaven.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Martin.Burnham.Heaven.html> --, for more background on Martin's June 7th 2002 homegoing.] Is there a conflict between the LORD preserving us safely and His need of completing the work of sanctification in us? "God forbid" (Romans 6:2)! Are we also to conclude that the New Testament martyrs, John the Baptist, Stephen, Peter, and Paul, were not familiar with the safety of the LORD? Certainly not! "Because Thou hast been my Help, therefore in the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice" (Psalm 63:7). God will wisely and perfectly balance the need of our safety with the needs of our usefulness and sanctification. "How excellent is Thy Lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings" (Psalm 36:7).

The first recorded Christian martyr, deacon Stephen, "a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 6:5), surely comprehended the threat to his physical safety, when he responded to the Jews, who were disputing with his wise presentation of the Crucified Saviour. "10 And they were not able to resist the Wisdom and the Spirit by which [Stephen] spake. 11 Then they suborned men [induced them to give false testimony]... 12 And they stirred up the people... 13 And set up false witnesses..." (Acts 6:10, 11, 12, 13). Before they violently, emotionally, and with great malice, pronounced the death sentence on Stephen-- without the formality of the permission of their Roman occupiers to do so-- Stephen summarized the Truth of *their* awful circumstances. "51 Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. 52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: 53 Who have received the Law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it" (Acts 7:51-53). Even as this Spirit filled servant of God died-- who willingly and obediently set aside the safety that He had a Divine *right* to claim-- he planted seeds to flourish the Church. "58 And [they] cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. 59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, LORD Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts 7:58-59). Who does not see that the blood of Christ that bought Stephen, caused him to sacrifice his safety, that his blood would water the Church, which would produce the harvest of the Apostle Paul-- formerly, Saul, the great persecutor of the Early Church. "And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him" (Acts 22:20). [See our article, "[Martyrdom: They Loved Not Their Lives Unto the Death](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Prophecy.Martyrdom.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Prophecy.Martyrdom.html> --.]

Only the Spirit of God can tell us when it is appropriate to expect our safety or to trust Him for the bold witness of faith in Jesus that we know will take place at the completion of the Church Age. "10 And I heard a loud voice saying in Heaven, Now is come Salvation, and Strength, and the Kingdom of our God, and the Power of His Christ: for the accuser of our Brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. 11 And they overcame him by the Blood of the Lamb, and by the Word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. 12 Therefore rejoice, ye Heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the Earth and of the sea! for the Devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time" (Revelation 12:10-12). Unless we are shown otherwise, seek the promises of God for safety. "But when ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the LORD your God giveth you to inherit, and when He giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety; then there shall be a place which the LORD your God shall choose to cause His name to dwell there" (Deuteronomy 12:10, 11).

Maranatha!

[You may also like to examine our article, "[Must There Be a Pre-Tribulational Rapture?](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Must.Pre.Trib.Rapture.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Must.Pre.Trib.Rapture.html> --]

Things Don't Just Happen

July 9, 2002

"Being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things after the Counsel of His Own Will"

(Ephesians 1:11).

Evolution makes life the result of natural selection. For no particular reason, nothing became something. Then, it slowly but gradually struggled into the form that you presently see. Evolution lends itself to an Accidental Theory of History. With just such ridiculous argumentation, Aaron defended to Moses his fashioning of an idol for Israel. "And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf" (Exodus 32:24). *Humanism* with its supreme confidence in self, reinforces a Destiny Theory of History, i.e., the belief that history is only what you make it. Moments before the great Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar was humbled by the Almighty, he extolled his accomplishments with just such proud humanism. "The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" (Daniel 4:30). *Conspiratorialism*, which conceives of the control of history by the arrangement of human events by supremely evil men from the highest levels of religion, politics, economics, etc., has been characterized as a Devil Theory of History. It was such a viewpoint employed by Diabolos, when he unsuccessfully attempted to seduce Jesus into worshipping him, i.e., "8 Again, the Devil taketh [Jesus] up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; 9 and saith unto Him, All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me" (Matthew 4:8-9). And, this same worship, Antichrist will soon attempt to impose upon the world. "3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that Man of Sin be revealed, the Son of Perdition; 4 who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (2Thessalonians 2:3-4).

In contrast, *Christianity* promotes a Providential Outlook on History, which appropriately sees the hand of God in *all* the affairs of man. "Let the Heavens be glad, and let the Earth rejoice: and let men say among the nations, The LORD reigneth" (1Chronicles 16:31). The Righteous hang upon the gracious interposition of the LORD to cause them "to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13), while the Wicked cannot even conceive that the Holy Judge of All the Earth (Genesis 18:25) so manages their affairs without authoring their sin that He can confidently declare, "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things" (Isaiah 45:7). The Apostle Peter refers to these Wicked "as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed" (2Peter 2:12). "28:22 Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong: for I have heard from the LORD GOD of Hosts a consumption, even determined upon the whole Earth... 29:20 For the terrible one is brought to nought, and the scorner is consumed, and all that watch for iniquity are cut off" (Isaiah 28:22; 29:20). Christianity presents to the world a consistent view of sinners saved from their sins, i.e., "Much more then, being now justified by His Blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Romans 5:9), sanctified by their sufferings, i.e., "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered" (Hebrews 5:8), and glorified in their Destination, i.e., "Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Romans 8:30), that the only surprise to the Saints is that we still are here. "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Revelation 22:12).

Using this key understanding that *things don't just happen*, the Professing Christian should not sit as an aloof spectator to life, analyzing the fortunes and misfortunes of others, i.e., "Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou" (Isaiah 65:5). Neither are we to be consumed by the surf and tide of events providentially designed by our Father to form us in His crucible into a "perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13). The ability to think about the things happening to us means that the Living God is allowing us the opportunity to cooperate with Him in our own sanctification by requiring us to consider how to walk holy in our continually changing circumstances, for we cannot yet see Him without a Practical Holiness, i.e., "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the LORD" (Hebrews 12:14). If the "High and Lofty One That Inhabiteth Eternity" (Isaiah 57:15) was pleased to save us only to immediately reward us with Heaven, we would already be at home in the Celestial City; but, we are still here. Instead, we must use the moral agency of the image of God given to us to seek His Wisdom concerning our circumstances to find what attribute or characteristic of the LORD Jesus Christ that we may claim by faith to assist us in conforming to Him. "3 According as His Divine Power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the Knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4 whereby are given unto us Exceeding Great and Precious Promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2Peter 1:3-4).

For example, if the attribute that the Spirit of God is attempting to fashion and increase in us is *patience*, then be it known that our Elder Brother Jesus-- "He is not ashamed to call [us] brethren" (Hebrews 2:11)-- patiently but unsuccessfully waited His entire earthly life for the conversion of His brothers, James, Joses, Juda, and Simon, and His sisters (Mark 6:3)-- "For neither did His brethren believe in Him" (John 7:5). But, we know that subsequently, the Apostle Paul mentions meeting an apostle, who was one of Jesus' brothers. "But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the LORD's brother" (Galatians 1:19). The moral is that we must likewise patiently "follow His steps" (1Peter 2:21). When we willingly "hope and quietly wait for the Salvation of the LORD" (Lamentations 3:26), then we will "grow in grace, and in the Knowledge of our LORD and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2Peter 3:18). The grace of patience will flourish in us, as will the "much fruit" (John 15:5) of the Spirit, i.e., "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Galatians 5:22, 23). Because we know that *things don't just happen*, we willingly allow the LORD to work the attribute of *patience* in us, though it means that we must "glory in tribulations." "3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; 4 and patience, experience; and experience, hope: 5 and hope maketh not ashamed; because the Love

of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans 5:3-5).

Since wisdom is seeing things from God's point of view, then if the All Wise God allows us to understand His hand in Current Events, we can demonstrate to our own satisfaction that *things don't just happen*. "And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do" (1Chronicles 12:32). There must be great value in "understanding what the will of the LORD is" (Ephesians 5:17), for it not only enables us to "do the will of God" (Mark 3:35), but we will also be able to intelligently fellowship with our Creator both now and in Eternity. "Thou shalt guide me with Thy Counsel, and afterward receive me to Glory" (Psalm 73:24). The Spirit of Prophecy (Revelation 19:10) will teach us of "things to come" (John 16:13), enabling us to cooperate with Him "to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy" (Daniel 9:24). Jesus taught even His youngest disciple to pray, "Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven" (Matthew 6:10). Since *things don't just happen*, we must truly trust the Saviour for all things, for then we will rejoice in the opportunity to be conformed to Him, to cooperate with Him, and to fellowship with Him. "For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the Living God, Who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe" (1Timothy 4:10).

Maranatha!

The Eyes of Faith

July 14, 2002

"As seeing Him Who is Invisible"
(Hebrews 11:27).

The great mystery about Faith, to those who do *not* understand it, is the *Invisible Who* that they see you acknowledging. "Whom having not seen, ye love; in Whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory" (1Peter 1:8). It is common to call someone crazy, mad, unstable, or unbalanced, if they see you talking to Someone that is invisible, but faith in the True God causes the Christian to pray to the Unseen Father-- and, *expect* to hear an answer! "1 God, Who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 hath in these last days **spoken unto us** by His Son, Whom He hath appointed Heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds; 3 Who being the Brightness of His Glory, and the Express Image of His Person, and upholding all things by the Word of His Power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High" (Hebrews 1:1-3).

Humanists do not see the Invisible God; and thus, they do not trust Him. "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD" (Jeremiah 17:5). They believe in themselves, for they cannot truly say, "I can of mine own self do nothing" (John 5:30). Until the humanist has arrived at utter disappointment in his own finite resources, he has no motivation to trust God. "35 I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. 36 Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found" (Psalm 37:35-36). If God in His mercy does not allow the humanist to come to the end of self-trust, then the "prosperity of fools shall destroy them" (Proverbs 1:32). The good that a humanist receives, if he does not acknowledge that it came from the Unseen Father, i.e., "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from Above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights" (James 1:17), will only harden him until God is justified in his final judgment. "15 Which in His times He [Jesus] shall shew, Who is the Blessed and Only Potentate, the KING of Kings, and LORD of Lords; 16 Who only hath Immortality, dwelling in the Light which no man can approach unto; Whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to Whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen" (1Timothy 6:15-16).

Jesus is the focus of the eyes of faith. "Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2). And, the "Holy Scriptures" (2Timothy 3:15) are the appointed means through which the eyes of faith may gaze upon the Saviour. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17). Though it is possible to be well versed in Scripture without actually trusting God, e.g., Satan quoted but purposely misapplied Scripture when tempting Jesus in the wilderness (Matthew 4), the true eyes of faith are extremely eager to look to the "Rock that is higher than I" (Psalm 61:2). If it were not for the Divinely implanted desire that the blessings of faith in the LORD Jesus Christ should be spread to all mankind, we would have but little interest in proving to the world the truthfulness of the foundation upon which we stand. "Brethren, warn them that are unruly" (1Thessalonians 5:14). The seeds of faith may be laid by an innocent Bible verse given to a young Sunday School child or more likely from Scripture taught by parents, who hope to do the right thing by their children, but the ultimate result will be the salvation of another soul, who will walk and fellowship with the God of the Universe for Eternity. "And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to

make thee wise unto Salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2Timothy 3:15).

Aspire not for the esteem of man, but for greater confidence in the God That Is. "24 But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. 25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. 26 And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. 27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. 28 And Peter answered him and said, LORD, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water. 29 And He said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, LORD, save me. 31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? 32 And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. 33 Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped Him, saying, Of a truth Thou art the Son of God" (Matthew 14:24-33).

The True Saint is one that walks "by faith, not by sight" (2Corinthians 5:7). This means that we *must* actively place *more emphasis* upon our *confidence in God* to do what we ought to do, than just our doing of it. "The just shall live by his faith" (Habakkuk 2:4). Christianity must be more than coasting upon the glories of our fragile memories of first trusting in the LORD Jesus Christ for salvation from our sins; but, there must be a continual seeking in faith of His grace for the overcoming of the "sin which doth so easily beset us" (Hebrews 12:1). And, even more important than just overcoming the daily obstacles of sin, faith in God *must have* the positive, sanctifying effect of *even greater confidence* in the character and person of the Living God. "The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under Whose wings thou art come to trust" (Ruth 2:12). When the Devil tempts us to call the proving of our faith in the Living God tedious, overly picky, and never-ending, we *must respond* that the increase of our confidence in God is actually the Almighty's opportunity to more perfectly conform us to trust, fellowship, and worship Him for now and for Eternity. "The God of my rock; in Him will I trust: He is my Shield, and the Horn of my Salvation, my High Tower, and my Refuge, my Saviour; Thou savest me from violence" (2Samuel 22:3). We should not fight a purely defensive battle of avoiding sin and sinning, but we must also actively seek to trust the LORD God in every conceivable circumstance that we find ourselves-- in ever new and unusual ways. "As for God, His Way is perfect; the Word of the LORD is tried: He is a Buckler to all them that trust in Him" (22:31). [See our editorial for more of an explanation of "[Why God Must Prove Us](#)".]

George Mueller (1805-1898) of Bristol, England was a Philadelphian Church Age Saint, who sought to encourage his Brethren to have confidence in God by conducting an orphan house supported only by prayer without the benefit of advertising his needs to man. "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). George Mueller was unusual in that he did something about his perception that the Average Professing Christian needed to be encouraged to actually trust or more fully trust the LORD Jesus Christ for "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (2Peter 1:3). A. T. Pierson's authorized biography, "George Mueller of Bristol: And His Witness to a Prayer Hearing God" (1899), contains a wealth of spiritual nuggets for the eyes of faith-- to those willing to invest the time-- to uncover the myriads of instances in which the Word of God gave George Mueller the faith to feed orphans, strive for their spiritual blessing, support foreign missionaries, and distribute the Word of God through the Scriptural Knowledge Institution for Home and Abroad. "Where is the LORD God of Elijah?" (2Kings 2:14). George Mueller's successor, son-in-law, and "true yokefellow" (Philippians 4:3) was James Wright, who wrote:

"It is written (Job xxvi.7): 'He hangeth the earth upon nothing' -- that is, no visible support. And so we exult in the fact that 'the Scriptural Knowledge Institution for Home and Abroad' hangs, as it has ever hung, since its commencement, now more than sixty-four years ago, 'upon nothing,' that is, upon no VISIBLE support. It hangs upon no human patron, upon no endowment or funded property, but solely upon the good pleasure of the blessed God."

To this, [A. T. Pierson](#) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/A.T.Pierson.html> -- wisely added his observation:

"Blessed lesson to learn! that to hang upon the invisible God is not to hang 'upon nothing,' though it be upon nothing visible. The power and permanence of the invisible forces that hold up the earth after sixty centuries of human history are sufficiently shown by the fact that this great globe still swings securely in space and is whirled through its vast orbit, and that, without variation of a second, it still moves with divine exactness in its appointed path. We can therefore trust the same invisible God to sustain with His unseen power all the work which faith depends upon His truth and love and unfailing word of promise, though to the natural eye all these may seem as nothing" (extracted from "George Mueller of Bristol".)

[Also, read our article *about* A. T. Pierson, "[Meet Mr. Philadelphia](#)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Meet.Mr.Philadelphia.html> --, concerning his stalwart leadership of the modern missions movement, his friendship and successorship to [C. H. Spurgeon](#) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.Haddon.Spurgeon.html> --, and his advocacy of the deeper life "[In Christ Jesus](#)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/In.Christ.Jesus.html> --.]

May God grant us the grace to grow in faith as we are "looking unto Jesus" (Hebrews 12:2).

Maranatha!

Man-Made Earthquakes and the Rapture

July 20, 2002

As a Baby Boomer, this writer vaguely recalls a science teacher speaking in jest to our class about the possibility of the Communist government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) using its vast populace to jump up and down in unison to cause an earthquake that would trigger a tidal wave (tsunami) that would devastate the Pacific Coast of the United States of America. "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (1Corinthians 13:11). On September 7th 2001, one million British school children were recruited by their teachers to participate in an experiment on their playgrounds at 11:00 AM (London time), where they jumped up and down for one full minute without stopping. The organizers of "The Giant Jump Event" were attempting to create a "measurable earthquake" in order to stimulate the imagination of their students about science and technology. This event marked the launch of the government's Science Year. Seismographs around the United Kingdom (UK) measured "something like a hundredth of a serious Earthquake." Earlier, it was projected that 75,000 tons of energy would be released during that minute of jumping. Devastating, if it was directed on one spot, but completely tolerable, if spread across the UK. Scientists had calculated that a "million children with an average weight of 110 pounds jumping 20 times in a minute would release two billion joules of energy and trigger the equivalent of an Earthquake measuring three on the Richter scale." 3.0 on the Richter Scale would be unnoticeable to most humans. The combined energy released from the jumping was dissipated before combining to form a national earthquake. Though it was difficult to scientifically conclude that a "measurable earthquake" was produced, micro-tremors were recorded across the country. Thus, the fanciful notion of man-made earthquakes was not proved, but neither was it completely removed from the realm of possibility. And, it should be noted that nuclear testing is recorded by seismographs worldwide, indicating that the idea of man-made earthquakes is *not* ridiculous. "I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit" (Ecclesiastes 1:14).

But, how does this relate to the prophetic discussion of the Rapture? Significant man-made events do *not* necessarily force the Hand of God to cause the event known by Christians as the Rapture. "And all the inhabitants of the Earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to His will in the army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the Earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Daniel 4:35). If significant man-made events were necessary to trigger the Rapture, then the September 11th 2001 destruction of the World Trade Center would have been a good opportunity to do so. Or, what about the wildly fluctuating Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJIA), the Enron bankruptcy, the Kmart bankruptcy, and the WorldCom earnings coverup and expectation of imminent collapse? "By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of His nostrils are they consumed" (Job 4:9). However, **God-inspired faith is God's prescribed means to influence Him concerning the Rapture.** "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:24). God expects His people to pray to Him about the fulfilling of prophecy. "Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons, and concerning the work of My hands command ye Me" (Isaiah 45:11). In particular, He expects His Saints to pray that the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and the attendant Rapture would occur soon, as it is recorded in the second to the last verse in the Bible. "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, LORD Jesus" (Revelation 22:20). This has been part of the Christian program for Young Believers since the inception of Christianity. "Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven" (Matthew 6:10). What little we understand of prophecy, we do know that we have been told to earnestly pray that we would be raptured. "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things [i.e., all the events of the Tribulation Week] that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36).

Man may speak facetiously of man-made earthquakes, but we are to be as serious as we know how, when we say that **all thoughtful Saints should be praying, "Come [quickly] LORD Jesus."** "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matthew 21:22). This is not to say that we should cease to labour for the support of ourselves and our families. "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat" (2Thessalonians 3:10). Neither should we cease to labour for the salvation of souls and the sanctification of the Body of Christ, for we know that the End will not come without first the Gospel being preached in all the world. "And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall The End come" (Matthew 24:14). Our continual and earnest prayer for a soon Rapture is actively solicited by the Almighty. "Thus saith the LORD GOD; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them" (Ezekiel 36:37). In fact, any activity engaged in by faith in the LORD-- but especially with the understanding that faith influences the soonness of His Return and our Rapture-- promotes the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and the Rapture of His Saints. "But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

"Even so, come, LORD Jesus" (Revelation 22:20).

Maranatha!

[Now would be a good time to review our article, "[Must There Be a Pre-Tribulational Rapture?](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Must.Pre.Trib.Rapture.html)" --
<http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Must.Pre.Trib.Rapture.html> --.]

DNA: Who Owns the Book of Life?

September 5, 2002

"Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect;
and in Thy Book all my members were written,
which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them"

(Psalm 139:16).

Have you ever heard someone complain that life or kids do not come with an instruction manual? Christians will often rightly object and retort that the Bible or Word of God provides individuals and parents, in particular, with all kinds of instructions, commands, warnings, and promises from the mouth of God Himself. "16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2Timothy 3:16-17). In fact, the Promises of God alone are Divinely Guaranteed to be sufficient to give merely mortal man a present taste of the Eternal Life that the Almighty is. "3 According as His Divine Power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4 whereby are given unto us Exceeding Great and Precious Promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2Peter 1:3-4). But, the humanists may respond that they were thinking of and referring to more of an Owner's Manual complete with specifications that detail the *physical* parameters, the consequent *physical* operating scope, and even the expected *physical* limitations of what they might call the human animal. "Understand, ye brutish among the people: and ye fools, when will ye be wise?" (Psalm 94:8).

Human Genome Project

Interestingly, geneticists working with the U.S. Department of Energy Human Genome Project (HGP) in coordination with scientists in the United Kingdom, and worldwide, have already completed a rough draft of the human genome, which is the "genetic blueprint for human beings," as announced by President Bill Clinton and British Prime Minister Tony Blair from the White House on June 25th 2000. Celebrated as the new beginning to prevent, diagnose, treat, and cure disease through genetic medicine, the implications of the Human Genome Project will greatly affect issues concerning the biological cloning of humans, plants, and animals (e.g., the ethics of human research, the catastrophic effect of genetically altered animals escaping back into their natural habitats, etc.), gene patenting in the production of pharmaceuticals (exclusive ownership of genetic information), nuclear-biological-chemical (NBC) warfare, governmental decision-making about demographic populations (e.g., the abnormally high concentration of AIDS in Africa), and other risk factors in the public and private sectors (employability and insurability of identifiable risk groups). President Clinton assured that genetic discrimination would not be tolerated, e.g., his support for the bill, the Genetic Nondiscrimination in Health Insurance and Employment Act of 1999, and that the Human Genome Project "will continue its longstanding practice of making all of its sequencing data available to public and privately funded researchers worldwide at no cost," while reaffirming "his support for patenting genetic discoveries." Though man may discover and control the dissemination and use of the "genetic blueprint for human beings" or the Book of Life (as some enthusiastic scientists have christened it), *the genetic code must belong to its Creator*. "Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in Thy Book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them" (Psalm 139:16).

DNA

There are 100 trillion cells in the human body. Inside the nucleus of a normal human cell, there are 46 chromosomes. Human chromosomes carry about 30,000 genes, which in turn, are composed of strands of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA). There are six feet of DNA in each of our cells packed into a structure only 0.0004 inches across. All living things, single-celled bacteria, e.g., E. coli and anthrax, and submicroscopic viruses, e.g., the AIDS causing HIV retrovirus and the mosquito-borne West Nile virus, contain DNA. A DNA molecule is a double helix, which looks like a twisted ladder. Four chemical bases-- A (adenine), which is always paired with T (thymine), and C (cytosine), which is always paired with G (guanine)-- are found in the DNA. It is the sequencing of about three

billion pairs of bases in the human genome-- a genome being an entire set of genes-- that contains all of the genetic information that determine such traits as sex, other heritable physical characteristics, and the disposition for particular diseases. 99.9% of that sequence is the same for every human being on Earth, but the small amount of difference is *the* difference to the more than six billion inhabitants of this planet for such things as their probability of dying of cancer, contracting diabetes, or facing the long goodbye of Alzheimer's disease, if the selfishness of crime, war, famine, the planet's overcrowding, and misuse of its natural resources have not already taken their toll upon them. "3 When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; 4 what is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him?... 9 O LORD our Lord, how excellent is Thy Name in all the Earth!" (Psalm 8:3-4, 9).

The Book of Life

The phrase "Book of Life" (Philippians 4:3; Revelation 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27; 22:19) occurs eight times in the New Testament; but there, it refers to Spiritual Life and *not* simply Physical Life. For a name to appear in the Book of Life means that the possessor has "Eternal Life, and this Life is in His Son" (1John 5:11). "And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the Gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the Book of Life" (Philippians 4:3). That same Book belongs to Jesus Christ, of whom John the Baptist called the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). "And all that dwell upon the Earth shall worship him [the Antichrist], whose names are not written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8). The obvious implication of the Book of Life to the Saints is to live forever in the presence of God in the "fulness of joy" (Psalm 16:11) as the fulfillment of everlasting existence, while humanists hope simply to find prolonged yet temporary solutions to their present existence. "A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself" (Proverbs 18:2). The deliverance of the humanist is *limited* to such things as to further read the as yet unsequenced regions of the human genome and to further refine the rough draft of the genetic database that all the code may be "proofed" to a higher degree of accuracy. "So shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been. But upon Mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions" (Obadiah 1:16, 17). The addition of "annotations" to the database of genetic information will unimaginably increase the already huge storehouse of knowledge decoded by geneticists. The database on the DNA is immense, but consider that it is documenting all of the DNA in the human body, which if it (the DNA) were placed end to end, it would reach to the Sun and back more than 600 times. Additionally, it would fill a stack of paperback books 200 feet high, or 200 500-page telephone directories. "Great is our LORD, and of great Power: His Understanding is infinite" (Psalm 147:5).

Psalm 139: An Abbreviated Commentary Considered in Light of the Human Genome Project

- 1 "O LORD, Thou hast searched me, and known me."
- 2 "Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, Thou understandest my thought afar off."
- 3 "Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways."
- 4 "For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, Thou knowest it altogether."

The Psalmist David speaks of the excellencies of God in light of His providential relations with those who trust Him. These verses point out that God is Omniscient. He knows all things. Unlike the best efforts of the geneticists, the Almighty has *absolutely* searched and known me. "I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings" (Jeremiah 17:10). He knows my movements, my thoughts, my ways, and my words. "For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and He pondereth all his goings" (Proverbs 5:21).

- 5 "Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid Thine hand upon me."
- 6 "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it."
- 7 "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?"
- 8 "If I ascend up into Heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there."
- 9 "If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;"
- 10 "Even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me."
- 11 "If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me."
- 12 "Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee."

God is Omnipresent. He personally surrounds and encloses the Saints. I cannot go where He is not. Though God has authorized us to have dominion over the planet through science and research, that dominion must be governed and limited by our appreciation that *understanding God is our highest privilege and pursuit*. "23 Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: 24 But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the LORD which exercise Lovingkindness, Judgment, and Righteousness, in the Earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD" (Jeremiah 9:23-24). Unlike the jailer, who incarcerates the condemned, God's omnipresence allies with the Faithful to guide and preserve, because we have chosen to trust Him. "5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and

lean not unto thine own understanding. 6 In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6).

13 "For Thou hast possessed my reins: Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb."

14 "I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well."

15 "My substance was not hid from Thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the Earth."

16 "Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in Thy Book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them."

The Creator is the possessor and trier of our "hearts and reins [inner man]" (Psalm 7:9). He covers the fetus in the womb with the protective amniotic membranes and fluid. We are astonishingly and wonderfully made by our Loving Creator, and those who love and trust Him know it very well. "The works of the LORD are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein" (Psalm 111:2). As if to emphasize man's earthiness or finiteness, we are told that the Creator formed us from the "lowest parts of the Earth" (139:15), e.g., we were formed from the "dust of the ground" (Genesis 2:7). The Hebrew word *golem* is here translated as "my substance, yet being imperfect" (139:15), and means fetus or embryo. The inspired Psalmist proclaims God to be the owner of the Book of Life, containing all the components or "members" (139:15) of the human embryo or fetus, before "there was none of them" (139:15). In creation, *ex nihilo* (Latin, out of nothing) God spoke "and it was so" (Genesis 1:9, 11, 24), creating everything that scientists have only recently begun to discover.

17 "How precious also are Thy Thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!"

18 "If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with Thee."

Googolplex-- mathematically, 10 to the power of googol, or a 1 followed by 10 to the power of 100 zeros-- symbolizes a finite but difficult to imagine number or quantity. Just so, the Psalmist compares the numbering of the sand as less than the thoughts of the Almighty. "Great is our LORD, and of great Power: His Understanding is infinite" (Psalm 147:5). Though scientists have impressively discovered, sequenced, and annotated a great body of knowledge of the human genome, they have but scarcely begun to touch the threshold of God's understanding. "How much less man, that is a worm? and the son of man, which is a worm?" (Job 25:6).

19 "Surely Thou wilt slay the wicked, O God: depart from me therefore, ye bloody men."

20 "For they speak against Thee wickedly, and Thine enemies take Thy Name in vain."

21 "Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate Thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against Thee?"

22 "I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies."

Unfortunately, much of what is done in the name of science, wickedly attempts to prove that a so-called process of natural selection (evolution), as "proved" by genetics, has been responsible for the human genome. "For the invisible things of Him from The Creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His Eternal Power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20). The emptiness and vanity of such men amounts to hatred of the Almighty. The Second Commandment warns the humanistic scientist, who would elevate his compilation of the human genome database as more worthy of admiration than the Creator, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in Heaven above, or that is in the Earth beneath, or that is in the water under the Earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me" (Exodus 20:4-5). Rightly, those that love God would hate the character and works of such evil men with Perfect Hatred. "Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the LORD God of Hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph" (Amos 5:15).

23 "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:"

24 "and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the Way Everlasting"

The only right response to the compilation and understanding of the human genome database is to humble ourselves in the presence of the Owner and Creator of both ourselves and the Book of Life that enumerates our "members" (139:16). When the Omniscient God-- which is Jesus Christ, Whose "Name is called The Word of God" (Revelation 19:13)-- searches and tries us, He knows intimately and absolutely our hearts and thoughts. "12 For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a Discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. 13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:12-13). Those who have consciously confessed their treachery of not having trusted Jesus Christ as the solution for Life and Eternity, will receive the blessedness of being led "in the Way Everlasting" (139:24). "6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the LORD, so walk ye in Him: 7 rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. 8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. 9 For in Him [Christ] dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 10 And ye

are complete in Him, which is the Head of all principality and power" (Colossians 2:6-10).

It comes as no surprise that True Christians would acknowledge the LORD Jesus Christ to be the rightful owner of the Book of Life and its database of the DNA of the human genome. "Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable" (Psalm 145:3). Though there is a Spiritual Book of Life enumerating all those who have trusted in Jesus Christ to deliver them from their sins, there is also a Physical Book of Life detailing all of our physical substance. "Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in Thy Book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them" (Psalm 139:16). This is further testimony to the Saints to trust the Omniscient and Omnipresent God for all things pertaining "unto life and godliness" (2Peter 1:3), while it is a warning to the skeptical humanists that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God" (Hebrews 10:31), Who will judge them for their willing disbelief, i.e., "And whosoever was not found written in the [Spiritual] Book of Life was cast into the Lake of Fire" (Revelation 20:15). Deliverance from judgment only comes from a penitent change of heart. "22 Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver. 23 Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the Salvation of God" (Psalm 50:22-23).

We are witnessing the beginning of a new era of change in our perception of what is scientifically possible in managing the affairs of man through the continuing research on the human genome. "22 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of Us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the Tree of Life, and eat, and live for ever: 23 therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken" (Genesis 3:22-23). But, if this newfound genetic knowledge is *not* God rewarding us for our righteousness, then He is giving mankind the rope to judge itself in a way hitherto unimagined. "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8). May the Righteous approach this genetic research, praying for wisdom that the resulting knowledge will only be used in ways that would benefit man and honor God, i.e., *possibly* for forensics, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, industrial resources, etc. "17 But the Wisdom that is from Above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. 18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace" (James 3:17-18). But, if the research is used for selfish, devious, evil, or sinister purposes, may God use that also to accomplish His purposes in the judgment of the world and the Return of the LORD Jesus Christ to set up His Millennial Kingdom. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee: the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain" (Psalm 76:10).

Amen, and Amen.

Social Security, the Stock Market, and Unemployment

October 5, 2002

Social Security and Abortion

Scripture declares the blessedness of having children, i.e., "Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them" (Psalm 127:5), especially when the population of a nation trusts God, i.e., "Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the LORD" (144:15). In particular, the Saints have the greatest confidence that old age will not stop the Almighty from continuing to take care of them. "And even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs [old age] will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you" (Isaiah 46:4). In contrast, Americans will soon see little of economic blessedness for workers, their families, and retirees, since the population of American workers (contributors) and retirees (beneficiaries) is fast becoming so out of balance that the safety net of Social Security will break under a load of insolvency. Some do not even accept the government's current statement of Social Security's solvency. It has been projected by organizations interested in Social Security reform that in the year 2017, the federal government will pay out more in benefits than it collects in taxes, and between 2017 and 2075 Social Security's unfunded liability will be a deficit of \$24.2 trillion, which is 12 times the size of the 2002 federal budget (from the National Center for Policy Analysis-- <http://www.mysocialsecurity.org/quickfacts/>). "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the Righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Psalm 37:25). In the United States, the Social Security Administration projects that the population will increase from 272,874,000 in 1995 to 381,272,000 in 2080. During that time, the retirement age will begin to rise from age 65 (1995) to age 66 (2005) and finally to age 67 (2022). Though cancer is projected to overtake heart disease as the number one cause of death by 2005, and diabetes and respiratory disease have seen a substantial increase in persons 65 years and older during 1982 through 1994, *the death rate is decreasing*. Life expectancy is expected to increase for males from 72.2 years (1994) to 83.4 years (2080) and for females from 79.0 years (1994) to 88.8 years (2080). Added to this, the fertility rate for American women has decreased from 3.1 children per woman in 1924 to 2.2 children (1940), but increased since 1940 (especially following WW2 for the Baby Boom) to a peak of 3.7 in 1957. Again, the fertility rate dropped to a low of 1.74 children per woman in 1976. It climbed back

to 2.07 in 1990, but the actuaries at the Social Security Administration concluded: "Therefore, it is plausible that the total fertility rate could be as low as 1.6 children per woman over a long period of time. Thus, we have selected 1.6 as the pessimistic, high cost assumption" (from "[Social Security Area Population Projections: 1997: Actuarial Study No. 112](#)"). Question: If children, who mature into taxpayers of the Social Security tax, are so important to the older retiring generations, why are they being aborted? It would seem that the abortionist (for purely self interested reasons) would then have to agree with the anti-abortionist that aborting babies is suicidal to the future of *their* Social Security program. "13 Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. 14 I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. 15 My substance was not hid from Thee, when I was made in secret... 16 Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect [i.e., embryo, fetus, not yet fully formed]; and in Thy Book all my members [limbs] were written, which in continuance [or, period of time] were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them [not yet fully formed]" (Psalm 139:13-16). [See our article, "[What the Bible Says About Abortion](#)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/What.Bible.Says.Abortion.html> --, for more about this important subject.]

The Stock Market and Retirement

The stock market is viewed by most people as an indicator of the economic health and prosperity of a nation, as well as a gauge of the success of the New Global Economy, i.e., the One World Economy; but, the truth is, *the true wealth of nations is God Himself*, i.e., "Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom He hath chosen for His Own inheritance" (Psalm 33:12). "For God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life" (John 3:16). A gathering place for the buying and selling of goods, merchandise, and commodities is a market; and, a stock market, in particular, is the place for both buyer and seller to make a fair exchange-- the seller to attempt to raise capital to do business, and the buyer to attempt to increase profits by joint ownership in the success of the company. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:39). Abuse of the stock market, e.g., insider trading, only illustrates how the evil of greed dominates so much of human action. "He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor" (Proverbs 28:8). Though the stock market may be a legitimate tool for raising money for a company by broadening its base of ownership through the selling of stock in that company, as well as the potential of future income for the stockholders, greed and speculation by both sellers and buyers too often turns the stock market into a tool for unbridled covetousness. "13 Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: 14 whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. 15 For that ye ought to say, If the LORD will, we shall live, and do this, or that. 16 But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil" (James 4:13-16).

Some desire to turn Social Security into a type of 401(k) account, where a portion of a worker's Social Security payroll tax is deposited for private investment in stocks, bonds and other assets, and is the private property of the account owner; but, the Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJIA) third quarter 2002 has seen its worst performance since the 1987 crash and its worst September since the Great Depression, even as sales slowed for Wal-Mart (the world's largest retailer). "How should we then live?" (Ezekiel 33:10). Traditionally, the purchase price of a share of stock was returned to the investor in the form of stock dividends in a 7 to 15 year period; however, the emphasis upon 'growth before profits' has seen the emergence of e-commerce giants such as Amazon.com (books, music, video, etc.), whose CEO Jeff Bezos posted its first quarterly profit of its seven year history on January 22nd 2002. For the Christian, "in the fear of the LORD is strong confidence: and His children shall have a place of refuge" (Proverbs 14:26). Amazon.com has a high debt structure (\$2.2 billion in notes and bonds), and its stated intention of not paying dividends, i.e., "We intend to retain all future earnings to finance future growth and, therefore, do not anticipate paying any cash dividends in the foreseeable future" (from Amazon.com's FAQ: "Does Amazon.com distribute dividends or have a Direct Stock Purchase Plan?"), has motivated some to profit from Amazon.com by selling the stock short. (In short selling, an investor is gambling that the stock will decline in value, i.e., borrowing the stock, selling it at today's prices, then buying it back in the future when prices are expected to be lower. If the stock unexpectedly increases in value, the short seller assumes the loss.) [See our article, "[What the Bible Says About Gambling](#)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/What.Bible.Says.Gambling.html> --.] "8 It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. 9 It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes" (Psalm 118:8-9). Though the shakeout continues, several other Internet giants have also carved out a niche for their particular services, e.g., Yahoo.com (directory), eBay.com (auction), MapQuest.com (maps), Google.com (search engine), Expedia.com and Travelocity.com (travel), etc. "Since the height of the dot-com frenzy in January 2000, at least 862 dot-com companies have failed, according to Webmergers.com data" (excerpted from InternetNews.com, a July 8th 2002 article, "Is the Dot-Com Bust Coming to an End?"). "A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children: and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just" (Proverbs 13:22). Remember: As a Christian, your goal is not to be rich, but you are to "be content with such things as ye have" (Hebrews 13:5). "7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. 9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1Timothy 6:7-10). [See our article, "[The Essence of Evil](#)" -- http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/The_Essence_of_Evil.html --, to see how "evil is the willful negation or refusal of God," as when money is wickedly chosen to supplant God. Also, John Wesley's sermon, "[The Use of Money](#)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/The.Use.of.Money.html> --, outlines the concept that the Christian ought to gain all you can, save all you can, and give all you can, when it comes to money. Further, the lecture, "[Being in Debt](#)" -- http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin_1839/OE1839.Being.in.Debt.html -- (1839), by [Charles G. Finney](#) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html> --, illuminates the passage, "Owe no man anything" (Romans 13:8).]

Unemployment and the "Right Not to Work"

Living right and *not* retirement was the issue that Jesus addressed about 2,000 years ago, and it is still the issue today. "31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. 33 But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. 34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matthew 6:31-34). Today, retirement annuities, *which rely on the overall health of the stock market*, have made possible a leisurely picture of retirement (at least, for those who have more than Social Security and no debt), e.g., time to travel, play golf, eat a late breakfast, go shopping during the hours that most people are working, in short, doing whatever they like, whenever they like, if the nation's prosperous circumstances continue, and they have the health to accomplish it and the money to afford it. *But, is that the purpose for which you live?* "16 And He spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: 17 and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? 18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. 20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? 21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:16-21).

Just because unemployment is not directly an issue for retirees, it does not mean that unemployment does not affect them, since the unhealthiness of companies affects the stock market, which affects their retirement annuities, e.g., employees of bankrupt Enron lost their 401 (k) investments. "Let no man seek his own [self-seeking, selfishness], but every man another's wealth [consult the wellbeing and edification of others, as well]" (1Corinthians 10:24). Unemployment is the condition of being without a job or paycheck, which is a sizeable problem for those who live from paycheck to paycheck; but, in this increasingly have and have-not world, most are opting to retire from working as soon as it is possible. In 1994, an adult male was expected to live 72.2 years, which was only 7.2 years after the Social Security retirement age of 65 years old. Usefulness to God and not just to oneself or society is the goal of a productive Christian life. "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21). Our short life is only a vapour, but it is all that we have to prepare for Eternity. "11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (1Corinthians 3:11-15). Question: Can we, in good conscience, prepare ourselves for the "golden years" of retirement as if we finally can do something for ourselves, ingratiating ourselves with the "right not to work," when the truth is that the Finish Line is Heaven and *not* retirement? "23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: 24 nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. 25 And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith" (Philippians 1:23-25).

May God bless us with a useful life for Christ. "As thy days, so shall thy strength be" (Deuteronomy 33:25).

Maranatha!

[See our article, "[Exceeding Great and Precious Promises](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Promises/Exceeding.Promises.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Promises/Exceeding.Promises.html> --, to see how God's promises have made provision for a useful Christian life.]

The Magi and the Star of Bethlehem

December 2, 2002

The birth of Jesus Christ is of such great consequence that even those in the world that reject Him must count their days by a calendar that celebrates His birth. "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). Acceptance of the story of the nativity of Christ implies that if the narrative occurred as depicted in the Scriptures, then such elements as the Magi and the Star of Bethlehem may have more profound implications than simply character and color for a quaint story. "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into Glory." (1Timothy 3:16). Who were the Magi? The name Magi comes from the

Greek word *magoi*. It is translated as *wise men* in the King James Version and is used four times in the New Testament Christmas story, e.g., "1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came Wise Men from the East to Jerusalem, 2 saying, Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the East, and are come to worship Him" (Matthew 2:1-2). However, the most common derivative from the name of the Magi is the word *magic*. When the Apostle Paul began his first missionary journey, he encountered a "certain sorcerer [Greek, *magos*], a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus" (Acts 13:6). *Sorcerer* comes from the same Greek word *magos* that identifies the name of the Magi; and, if that was all that we knew of the Magi, then Christians would have only a very negative and confused picture of the Wise Men of the Christmas story. "Then Herod, when he had privily called the Wise Men, enquired of them diligently what time the Star appeared" (Matthew 2:7).

Other than the obvious and positive use of the phrase "wise men" in the Old Testament Scriptures, i.e., "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed" (Proverbs 13:20), we find that both the dynasties of the Egyptian pharaohs, i.e., "Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments" (Exodus 7:11), and the kingdoms of the Babylonian and Medo-Persian monarchs surrounded themselves with "wise men." Originating from the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates, the Magi were religious priests, Chaldeans, physicians, philosophers, astronomers, astrologers, soothsayers, in short, the brain trust of their kingdom. In ancient Babylon, which is now modern Iraq, King Nebuchadnezzar dreamed of a great image, where he not only forgot his dream but called upon his "wise men" to interpret the vision on pain of death. "2 Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. 3 And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream. 4 Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack, O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation. 5 The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill" (Daniel 2:2-5).

Naturally, the wise men objected to the impossible demand of the king. "10 The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the Earth that can shew the king's matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean. 11 And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh" (Daniel 2:10-11). And, like an oriental despot, Nebuchadnezzar "was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon" (2:12). Now, notice who the Divine Scriptures identify with the "wise men" of Babylonia. "And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain" (2:13). Yes, not only were Daniel and his companions (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego) identified as "wise men," but, we are further informed that Daniel was promoted to be the chief [Aramaic, *rab*] among the "wise men" for successfully interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream, i.e., "Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon" (2:48). Later, Belshazzar was informed that Daniel, the Master Magi of Babylon, was the only man that could interpret the famed handwriting on the wall, "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN" (5:25). "There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master [Aramaic, *rab*] of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers" (5:11).

Certainly, the Almighty made a way for Daniel to avoid the obvious pitfalls of the occult practices of the "wise men of Babylon," and He used the lawful functions of Daniel's office to preserve the Seventy Weeks prophecy concerning the First and Second Advents of Messiah the Prince. "24 Seventy weeks [490 prophetic years] are determined upon thy people [Israel] and upon thy holy city [Jerusalem], to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in Everlasting Righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy [the Second Coming of Jesus Christ]. 25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem [decree of Artaxerxes on March 14th 445 BC] unto the Messiah the Prince [Triumphal Entry of Christ on April 6th 32 AD] shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks [7 + 60 + 2 = 69 (weeks) x 7 (of years) = 483 prophetic years]: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. 26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off [Crucifixion and Atonement of Jesus Christ only a handful of days after the Triumphal Entry], but not for Himself: and the people of the prince that shall come [Ancient Rome] shall destroy the city and the sanctuary [70 AD]; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 And he [Antichrist] shall confirm the covenant with many for one week [a shortly upcoming Tribulation Week of seven years that obviously occurs after a more than 2,000 year gap between the 69th and 70th Week of Daniel]: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease [the Abomination of Desolation in the Middle of the Week], and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate" (Daniel 9:24-27).

It is uncertain what the Magi of the Christmas story identified as a star to cause them to set out for Jerusalem to see who the Jewish Scriptures of Daniel would choose as the King of the Jews, but they knew that Messiah the Prince would sit upon the throne of David. "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with Judgment and with Justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of Hosts will perform this" (Isaiah 9:7). Since the Magi were able to calculate the time of the cutting off of Messiah the Prince in Israel from Daniel's Seventy Weeks prophecy, they needed a miraculous sign to indicate more precisely the time and place of the birth of the Messiah, which the Almighty

gladly provided by the Star of Bethlehem. "We have seen His star in the East, and are come to worship Him" (Matthew 2:2). Several things can be deduced from the Scriptural narrative of the second chapter of the Gospel of Matthew concerning the Magi and the Star of Bethlehem.

- *First*, the two year period given to King Herod represented the period during which the Wise Men first saw the Star of Bethlehem until their conversation with Herod, and not indicating their time in transit from the East nor necessarily the exact moment of the Saviour's birth; therefore, the birth of Christ could have been as late as the autumn of 4 BC, i.e., "7 Then Herod, when he had privily called the Wise Men, enquired of them diligently what time the Star appeared... 16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the Wise Men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the Wise Men" (Matthew 2:7, 16).
- *Second*, the astronomical phenomenon of the Star of Bethlehem appears to be explained more as a miracle than as a momentary conjunction of the planets of Jupiter and Saturn (6 BC) or the brilliant but violent display of stellar light for a few months from a supernova or the tail of Halley's Comet (11 BC); additionally, the star un-astronomically traveled before the Magi, then stood still, i.e., "When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the Star, which they saw in the East, went before them, till it came and stood over where the Young Child was" (Matthew 2:9).
- *Third*, Herod the Great did not have the Wise Men followed because both he and the Wise Men were initially in agreement that the exact whereabouts of the Young Child would be reported back to Herod; but, God warned them "in a dream that they should not return to Herod" (Matthew 2:12).
- *Fourth*, though tradition identifies the Wise Men as three-- Gaspar, Melchior and Belthazar-- because, most likely, they were numbered by the three gifts of "gold [for a king], and frankincense [a spice for priestly duties], and myrrh [an embalming ointment that anticipated the Saviour's future death]" (Matthew 2:11), they were more likely a larger entourage that could stir the interest of the city of Jerusalem, i.e., "When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him" (Matthew 2:3).
- *Fifth*, the Wise Men found the Young Child Jesus in a Bethlehem house and not in a stable, indicating a later time than the nativity seen by the shepherds in the second chapter of the Gospel of Luke, possibly only a month later, i.e., "And when they were come into the house, they saw the Young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down, and worshipped Him" (Matthew 2:11).
- *Sixth*, Joseph and Mary most probably had returned to Bethlehem from the dedication of Jesus in the Temple at Jerusalem to complete about a two month sojourn in Bethlehem before fleeing into Egypt and then returning to Nazareth, i.e., "14 When he arose, he took the Young Child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: 15 And was there until the death of Herod [late in 4 BC]: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the LORD by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called My Son" (Matthew 2:14-15).
- And *finally*, the Star of Bethlehem was not obvious to those who were not aware of it to be looking and noticing, or Herod would have already arrived at Bethlehem to kill his rival, i.e., "Herod will seek the Young Child to destroy Him" (Matthew 2:13).

Daniel's Seventy Weeks prophecy (Daniel 9:24-27) coupled with other Messianic prophecies, e.g., "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be" (Genesis 49:10), enabled these believing Magi to greet their Newborn King with royal gifts, but they needed a special sign from God in the form of the Star of Bethlehem, i.e., "there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel" (Numbers 24:17), to pinpoint the birth of the Messiah at His First Advent. As much as Christians are rightly warned about seeking after signs, i.e., a "wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it" (Matthew 16:4) and seeking to know the day and the hour of the coming of Jesus Christ, i.e., "ye know not when the time is" (Mark 13:33), both a sign and date *will* be given for the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. The miraculous sign for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ will be the Pre-Tribulational Rapture of the Watching and Waiting Saints, i.e., "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape **all** these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:36), while the timing for the LORD's Appearing will be the termination of the

Seventieth Week of Daniel, i.e., "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in Everlasting Righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy" (Daniel 9:24). [See our articles, "[Must There Be a Pre-Tribulational Rapture?](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Must.Pre.Trib.Rapture.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/Must.Pre.Trib.Rapture.html> -- and "[The Seventy Weeks of Daniel](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/Seventy.Weeks.of.Daniel.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/Seventy.Weeks.of.Daniel.html> --, for more background on each of these prophetic themes.]

Like the Magi who looked for the appearing of the King of the Jews, it is right that we look and wait expectantly for the soon return of the KING of Kings. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto Salvation" (Hebrews 9:28). The difference between those Magi of old who sought the Young Child of Bethlehem and the contemporary seeker of Christ is that their sign was the Star of Bethlehem, while our Pre-Tribulational Rapture will be a sign to those who are left behind, who should have known better. "1 Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: 4 but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. 5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. 6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. 7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. 9 But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. 10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. 11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, LORD, LORD, open to us. 12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. 13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh" (Matthew 25:1-13). [See our article, "[A Tale of Ten Virgins](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/A.Tale.of.Ten.Virgins.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophecy/A.Tale.of.Ten.Virgins.html> --, for greater understanding of Christ's parable and the Pre-Tribulational Rapture.]

May God grant to us the grace to shine as the Star of Bethlehem, and may the "LORD direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ" (2Thessalonians 3:5).

Maranatha!

[See our article, "[The Glory and Majesty of Christmas](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Jehovah/Glory_Majesty_Christmas.html)" -- http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Jehovah/Glory_Majesty_Christmas.html --, for more background on the Christmas story. And, Sir Robert Anderson's "[The Coming Prince](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/The.Coming.Prince.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/The.Coming.Prince.html> -- (1895) provides a scholarly and faith-filled defense of Daniel's Seventy Weeks prophecy (Daniel 9:24-27) of the First and Second Advent of Messiah the Prince, giving justification for many of the dates employed in this presentation. Also, "[Sir Robert Anderson and the Seventy Weeks of Daniel](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Edit_Sir.Robert.Anderson.html)" -- http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Edit_Sir.Robert.Anderson.html -- gives background on Sir Robert Anderson, a stalwart defender of the "faith which was once delivered unto the Saints" (Jude 3).]

I Shall Come Forth As Gold

December 17, 2002

"But He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold"
(Job 23:10).

Are you reluctant to pray for patience because the LORD will invariably give you trials? "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering" (James 1:6). The Sinless Son of Man was "in all points tempted like as we are" (Hebrews 4:15), and His flesh felt the pain as much as ours does, for "no man ever yet hated his own flesh" (Ephesians 5:29), but Jesus willingly allowed the suffering of His flesh to be the occasion for the maturing of His human character, while He walked among us. "For it became Him [the Father], for Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto Glory, to make the Captain [Christ Jesus] of their Salvation Perfect through sufferings" (Hebrews 2:10). Can we do no less but to receive our occasional trials from the Father as His means of perfecting our character? "3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. 4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1:3-4). God has not called us to a monkish masochism, *but only to allow the All Wise Father to choose for us the best means and circumstances for our sanctification*. "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the Will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well doing, as unto a Faithful Creator" (1Peter 4:19).

Suffering and joy seem so much to be opposites, yet Jesus "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured [took patiently] the Cross" (Hebrews 12:2). The Cross itself was the pain and suffering, but the resulting Atonement for our sins was the joy. "13 Greater Love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. 14 Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:13-14). It is evident from Scripture that our true necessity of patience must be matured through the Divinely directed trials of

our life. "Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience" (James 1:3). Rather than comparing our circumstances with others or feeling that we have seen an unusually hard turn of events, we are to rejoice as only the LORD's Saints can. "12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: 13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His Glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (1Peter 4:12-13). The resulting refinement of our character is worth more than gold. "6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: 7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1:6-7).

Any spiritual growth that ever takes place in our life will always be accompanied by the trials of life, for "He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10). Though it is natural for us to shield ourselves from the vicissitudes of life, it is an act of faith to entrust our circumstances to the LORD, placing greater emphasis upon the development of our spiritual character than the defense of our mortal flesh. "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations" (James 1:2). Patience is that misunderstood commodity that must be continually supplied to connect the certainty of our past faith with our hope of seeing the result of the thing promised. "For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the Will of God, ye might receive the Promise" (Hebrews 10:36). Our Faithful God (Deuteronomy 7:9) wisely supplies the opportunity for patience to be formed in us by the "trying of [our] faith [which] worketh patience" (James 1:3). Of course, patience will never be formed in us, if we do not cooperatively endure. "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Mark 13:13). Remember that Salvation has *always* been conditional, i.e., on condition of our faith and repentance-- "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the Gospel" (Mark 1:15).

Humanly speaking, we would rather forego our testings by the Almighty, for "no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it" (Ephesians 5:29). But, how can we call ourselves Christian, if we only trust God when things are seemingly going well, when our peers feel that we walk spiritually, and when the world thinks that we prosper? "17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. 18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:17-18). We are prone to think that Scripture describes only the suffering that comes at the hands of those that oppose Christianity; but, even more often, our suffering simply will come from our physical circumstances. "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered" (Hebrews 5:8). In fact, God must periodically hide His face from us to strengthen our faith-- just read about Job. "Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the Name of the LORD, and stay upon his God" (Isaiah 50:10). [If the thought intrigues you that God may actually withhold the Light of His face to accomplish the strengthening of the faith of the tested but upright Saint, then read a sermon by [Charles G. Finney](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html> -- based on Isaiah 50:10, "[Fearing the Lord and Walking in Darkness](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin_1844/OE1844.Fearing.the.Lord.html)" -- http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin_1844/OE1844.Fearing.the.Lord.html --.]

To be sure, Job is remembered for his trials, but God remembers him for his patience. "Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the LORD; that the LORD is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (James 5:11). Some may feel Job to be a weak specimen of faith, since the bulk of the Book of Job centers upon Job's bewilderment with why God would allow him, whom even God described as a "perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil" (Job 1:8), to be stripped of every outward vestige of the past signs of God's blessings, sparing only Job's life. But, God esteemed Job most highly-- "And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the Earth" (1:8)-- and He continues to esteem him among the very best. "Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD" (Ezekiel 14:14). For this reason, many of Job's pronouncements in the dialogues of the Book of Job reflect the elevated and pristine understanding of one of the finest Saints to have walked the Earth, though finally he had to admit to the Almighty that he had taken too much upon himself in questioning the wisdom and providence of God. "1 Then Job answered the LORD, and said, 2 I know that Thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from Thee. 3 Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. 4 Hear, I beseech Thee, and I will speak: I will demand of Thee, and declare Thou unto me. 5 I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee. 6 Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:1-6).

Promises are essential to sanctify us and keep us from giving up during the trials of our life. "Whereby are given unto us Exceeding Great and Precious Promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2Peter 1:4). These promises are really only a revelation of the faithfulness of God. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is Faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1Corinthians 10:13). Cling to the promises of God, especially when everything seems dark, temptation is strong, and the light of the LORD's face seems as far away as when the LORD allowed Job to be spoiled. "1 I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of His wrath. 2 He hath led me, and brought me into darkness, but not into light... 19 Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. 20 My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me. 21 This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. 22 It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. 23 They are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness" (Lamentations 3:1-2, 19-23).

Believe that God will deliver, if you persevere. "26 And He said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me... 7 And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them?" (Genesis 32:26; Luke 18:7). Focus on trusting Him, though all *appearances* show you to be a fool for doing so. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" (Job 13:15). Trust that God is not through with you, because He is still taking you through the deep waters. "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6). Count upon your refinement, since the Master Himself is performing the process. "But He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10). Rely that God will succeed in getting from you whatever is needful, so long as you trust Him. "Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass" (Psalm 37:5). Remember that God always rewards the obedience of faith, especially when all outward signs are only darkness. "Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no Light? let him trust in the Name of the LORD, and stay upon his God" (Isaiah 50:10).

Let me conclude by quoting Charles G. Finney's admonition from "Fearing the Lord and Walking in Darkness":

"Do not confound apathy and backsliding with that state of mind that trusts God in darkness. They are as much opposites as two states can be. One is a state of obedience, the other of disobedience--one of strong faith, the other of no faith at all--one of great and active love, the other of perfect stupidity and stagnation of soul like a putrid lake. In one, the soul rises above all the gusts and storms of doubt and fear into the calm blue sky of unfaltering trust; in the other, it sinks below both blue sky and howling wind, as into the death damps of the grave. Do not, I beseech you, mistake apathy for trust in God. Beloved, will you trust in God?"

Remember, "without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

Maranatha!

[For additional help, see the [Promises](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/WStS.Promises.html) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/WStS.Promises.html> -- section of our website. Also, our articles, "[Exceeding Great and Precious Promises](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Promises/Exceeding.Promises.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Promises/Exceeding.Promises.html> -- and "[How to Trust God](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/How.To.Trust.God.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/How.To.Trust.God.html> --, may assist you in persevering until the LORD comes for you.]

The Failure of Bible Prophecy

May 1, 2003

"Charity [Greek, *agape*, love] never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail"

(1Corinthians 13:8).

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians of *our* sublime necessity of Love as the loftiest goal of the followers of the God Who Is Love (1John 4:8, 16). In no way did Paul intend to demean the value of prophecy, for he counseled the Romans, "Having then gifts differing according to the Grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of Faith" (Romans 12:6). Following his exposition "concerning Spiritual Gifts" (1Corinthians 12:1), Paul advertised the greater excellence of Love. "But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way" (12:31). After extolling Love-- the mainspring of motivation for the Saints-- he again reminded us that to prophesy, i.e., to forthtell or preach the Word of God and Its prophecies, *still subordinates to Love in importance*. "Now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity, these three; but the greatest of these is Charity" (13:13). The New Testament testifies that True Love is heartfelt obedience to God. "If ye Love Me, keep My Commandments" (John 14:15). And, equating True Love with obedience has *always* been the position of the Creator throughout the ages. "37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt Love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the First and Great Commandment. 39 And the Second is like unto it, Thou shalt Love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:37-39).

Why then would the Apostle Paul say, "Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail" (1Corinthians 13:8)? In context, Paul was emphasizing *the insufficiency of all things without the presence of Love*. "1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not Charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all Mysteries, and all Knowledge; and though I have all Faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not Charity, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing" (1Corinthians 13:1-3). Though it is monumentally important to "preach the Word" (2Timothy 4:2), our best effort at preaching the Word of God and Its prophecies pales in comparison to the sufficiency of the Love of God. "9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is Perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away" (1Corinthians 13:9-10). Surely, we are

waiting for the Perfection that comes from the soon appearing of the LORD Jesus Christ at His Second Coming; but, *even more immediate*, the Love that God has always demanded His people to exercise *is* the Perfection that "never faileth" (13:8) and *is* the maturity of the Saints who understand the "First Principles of the Oracles of God" (Hebrews 5:12) and have "put away childish things" (1Corinthians 13:11).

Does Paul's statement, "Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail" (1Corinthians 13:8), relieve a prophet or prophecy from the necessity of accuracy in fulfilment? "When a prophet speaketh in the Name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously" (Deuteronomy 18:22). A true prophet of God is always accurate as to the time and circumstances of the fulfilment of a prophecy, e.g., a prophesied judgment; *however*, a return to loving obedience seems to be the only exception that the Sovereign God has mercifully allowed in withholding the execution of a divinely prophesied judgment-- and, no recipient of that mercy would find reasonable objection to their unexpected stay of execution, as in the case of Nineveh. "4 And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. 5 So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. 6 For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. 7 And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: 8 but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. 9 Who can tell if God will turn and repent [change His mind], and turn away from His fierce anger, that we perish not? 10 And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that He had said that He would do unto them; and He did it not. 11 But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. 12 And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray Thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that Thou art a Gracious God, and Merciful, Slow To Anger, and of Great Kindness, and repentest Thee of the evil [the Judgement of Death]" (Jonah 3:4-10; 4:1-2).

If God is willing to set aside promised judgments when men repent of their sins, turn from their wicked ways, and return to the path of loving obedience, then all True Saints should pray for divinely sanctioned failures of prophesied judgments. "7 At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; 8 if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them" (Jeremiah 18:7-9). And, in the name of defending the credibility and integrity of the prophecies of God, we should never become so attached to our perception of their fulfilment that we would sulk like Jonah, should Nineveh repent. "14 Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; 15 if the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die. 16 None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live" (Ezekiel 33:14-16). In other words, a prophesied judgment *may* mercifully fail, if there is a return to love by the condemned prisoner. "As I live, saith the LORD GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (33:11). Therefore, if a prophesied judgment has been truly authorized by God and it has actually failed, then the Almighty has sovereignly and mercifully withheld or forestalled the prophesied judgment due to the repentance and change of heart of the condemned. "And all the inhabitants of the Earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to His Will in the Army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the Earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Daniel 4:35).

Remember, it is the Glory of God when He demonstrates mercy to His people. "18 Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy. 19 He will turn again, He will have Compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities; and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:18-19). If we would judge all prophecies in the Spirit of Love, we would rejoice in the failure of prophecy, if God would be glorified by the addition of souls to His Kingdom, the return of the wayward to loving obedience, and as long as it would accomplish the greatest good for the Kingdom of God. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the Water Of Life freely" (Revelation 22:17).

Throughout the years, this writer has seen the failure of prophecy more than once, and has come to the understanding of rejoicing in the prolonging of the days of Mercy that have been sovereignly allowed by a Gracious God for the Salvation and Reclamation of souls for His Kingdom. "4 What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? 5 And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. 6 And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost" (Luke 15:4-6). And, rather than sulking in a bitterness of not receiving the result of an expected event or blanching in a mortification of what others would think of the writer's lack of spiritual discernment, he has found it more appropriate to rejoice. "Rejoice in the LORD alway: and again I say, Rejoice" (Philippians 4:4). In the end, we must stand alone before God. "Holding forth the Word of Life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain" (2:16).

"10 And He saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this Book: for the time is at hand. 11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is Righteous, let him be Righteous still: and he that is Holy, let

him be Holy still. 12 And, behold, **I come quickly**; and My Reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Revelation 22:10-12).

Maranatha!

[Please see our article, "[How to Identify a False Prophet](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophets/How.To.ID.False.Prophet.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Prophets/How.To.ID.False.Prophet.html> -- for additional background on evaluating prophets and prophecy. "[For the Elect's Sake](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/For.the.Elects.Sake.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/For.the.Elects.Sake.html> -- analyzes how time can be held still, turned back, or sped up with Joshua's Long Day, Hezekiah's Sundial, and the 4th Trumpet Judgment. (Think how that can affect the fulfillment of prophecy.) And, a Prophecy-Time Continuum is evaluated in our article, "[In the Third Day: The Fulfillment of Bible Prophecy](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/Fulfillment.Prophecy.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Timeline/Fulfillment.Prophecy.html> -- to see how "The Shoe Can Drop At Any Time," concerning the events surrounding the soon return of the LORD Jesus Christ. "If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8).]

We Must See Jesus

July 17, 2003

All men at all times have but one True Necessity-- we must see Jesus! "Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of Our Faith" (Hebrews 12:2). The world mistakes Jesus as simply the Choice or Preference of Christians, but the Truth is that Jesus is the Only Way to God. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (John 14:6). Without the intervention of the Spirit of God, the world cannot see the need of looking to Jesus to remove the fatal obstacle of sin, because they are unwilling to see themselves as deserving a Sinner's Hell. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4). "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2). *And yet*, "God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life" (John 3:16). Man is so much a creature of his physical senses that in front of his worldly peers he feels foolish to admit the existence of the Invisible Creator, though his innate spiritual sense testifies fully that only a Supreme Being could be responsible for such a magnificent display of wonder. "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His Eternal Power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20).

If man were willing to give God the opportunity to explain the *mystery* of His Personage, he would find from the Infallible Word of God that the manifestation of the Father to the world is Jesus the Son, Who likewise reserves *all* the attributes of God Only. "13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son: 14 In Whom we have Redemption through His Blood, even the forgiveness of sins: 15 Who is the Image of the Invisible God, the Firstborn of every creature: 16 for by Him were all things created, that are in Heaven, and that are in Earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: 17 and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist" (Colossians 1:13-17). Sad to say, mankind has voted with its feet to walk down most every other path than the only Narrow Way that leads assuredly to God, and consequently they have entirely missed Jesus or found a deceptive substitute in place of Christ the Saviour. "13 Enter ye in at the Strait Gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14 because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto Life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13-14).

Christians most certainly will acknowledge that the world has an ongoing need to see Jesus, and they will also recognize that Jesus should be First of all in their own lives; but, they become *inexcusably* confused and lose their way, when they do not *continually* seek to see Jesus as the Solution to their every problem, the Understanding to their every question, the Consolation for their every pain, the Victory for their every obstacle, the Stability for their every task, the Patience for their every breath, and the Goal for their every attempt-- after all, "we love Him, because He first loved us" (1John 4:19). "30 But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption: 31 that, according as it is Written, He that glorieth, let him Glory in the LORD" (1Corinthians 1:30-31). In principle, Christians readily assent to the need of Holiness and Godly Living to be practiced in their own lives-- in short, a Practical Sanctification-- but, in practice, a thoroughly demonstrated application of Holy Living requires:

- (1) an entirely submitted will, i.e., "19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: 20 but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it" (Isaiah 1:19-20),
- (2) the unopposed superintendence of the Holy Spirit, i.e., "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh... For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Galatians 5:16; Romans 8:14), and

- (3) an unobstructed view of Jesus, i.e., "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto Salvation" (Hebrews 9:28).

Philosophers of this world have vainly attempted to explain the way things are, and theologians have rightly labored to systematize our understanding of the things of God; but, the everyday Christian needs the handhold of simplicity to allow him to reach out in the midst of trials, difficulties, confusion, labors, and triumphs to lay hold of God. "Keep yourselves in the Love of God, looking for the Mercy of our LORD Jesus Christ unto Eternal Life" (Jude 21). **If we will look for Jesus, we will always find Him.** "And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with **all** your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13). Notice that the LORD is working to continually secure our *whole* heart when we attempt to find Him, just as His Infinite Person offers His *whole* heart to each of us individually. "38 And they shall be My people, and I will be their God: 39 And I will give them One Heart, and One Way, that they may fear Me for ever, for the Good of them, and of their children after them: 40 and I will make an Everlasting Covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them Good; but I will put My Fear in their hearts, that they **shall not depart** from Me. 41 Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them Good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with My whole heart and with My whole soul" (Jeremiah 32:38-41). It should not surprise us that God has been continually working to make known to us His Method of securing our hearts in loving obedience. "And I will put **My Spirit** within you, and **cause** you to **walk** in My Statutes, and ye shall **keep** My Judgments, and **do** them" (Ezekiel 36:27). Since the Atoning Work of Jesus Christ on the Cross of Calvary has been completed, the Resurrected and Ascended Saviour has given to us His Spirit to fulfil the intentions of the Father in establishing for Himself "children that will not lie: so He was their Saviour" (Isaiah 63:8). God has not been obscure, though we have been slow in perceiving His Point, and too easy in forgetting what we have been painstakingly told. "Thou, O LORD, art a God full of Compassion, and Gracious, Longsuffering, and plenteous in Mercy and Truth" (Psalm 86:15).

What is a simple Plan of action that aids us in our quest of seeing Jesus? First, seek continual communion with God through prayer that Jesus would be revealed to you-- and that, would consequently meet all your needs. "6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the Peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus... 19 But my God shall supply all your need according to His Riches in Glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7, 19). Second, seek to actually find your vision of the LORD Jesus Christ through His Living Word. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). "I am the Bread of Life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst" (John 6:35). Finally, seek the perfection of faithfully walking in loving obedience to the One Who is continually gazing upon you. "Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with Me: he that walketh in a Perfect Way, he shall serve Me" (Psalm 101:6).

May the prayer of the ancient Irish hymn, "Be Thou My Vision," encourage us also to see Jesus.

Maranatha!

"Be Thou My Vision"

Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art
Thou my best Thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Be Thou my Wisdom, and Thou my true Word;
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;
Thou my great Father, I Thy true son;
Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.

Be Thou my battle Shield, Sword for the fight;
Be Thou my Dignity, Thou my Delight;
Thou my soul's Shelter, Thou my high Tower:
Raise Thou me heavenward, O Power of my power.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise,
Thou mine Inheritance, now and always:
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
High King of heaven, my Treasure Thou art.

High King of heaven, my victory won,
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!

Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my Vision, O Ruler of all.

[[Charles G. Finney's](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html> -- "[Relations of Christ to the Believer](#)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Relations.Christ.Believer.html> -- and [A. T. Pierson's](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/A.T.Pierson.html) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/A.T.Pierson.html> -- "[In Christ Jesus](#)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/In.Christ.Jesus.html> -- are invaluable to all those who must see Jesus.]

Only God Is Good

August 3, 2003

Jesus said, "There is none Good but One, that is, God" (Mark 10:18). Did He mean that both angels in Heaven and Saints living and departed could not also be Good? Apparently not, for Jesus also spoke of a "Good man out of the Good treasure of the heart [bringing] forth Good things" (Matthew 12:35). Further, the Son of Man will commend the appropriate people, "Well done, thou Good and Faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy LORD" (25:21, 23). You may ask, "But, did not Jesus plainly label us as evil?" "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" (Luke 11:13). True. We have all undoubtedly been and too often are evil, so the shoe fits. But, as a rule, we should also be able to say as the Apostle Paul said, "By the Grace of God I am what I am: and His Grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain" (1Corinthians 15:10).

This leads us back to Christ's assertion, "There is none Good but One, that is, God" (Mark 10:18). Who but the Eternal God has *always* been Good? "Oh that men would praise the LORD for His Goodness, and for His Wonderful Works to the children of men!" (Psalm 107:15). Neither created angels nor justified men can lay claim to but a moment of time or the remainder of Eternity to be Good. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Proverbs 4:18). We can certainly believe that God is Good. "Thou art Good, and doest Good; teach me Thy Statutes" (Psalm 119:68). Only those who do not trust Him would question His Goodness, e.g., "LORD, I knew Thee that Thou art an hard man, reaping where Thou hast not sown, and gathering where Thou hast not strawed" (Matthew 25:24). And, who but God has always been? "From Everlasting to Everlasting, Thou art God" (Psalm 90:2). Therefore, it is fair to say, "There is none Good but One, that is, God" (Mark 10:18).

What can be said of any goodness in man? "Man's goings are of the LORD; how can a man then understand his own way?" (Proverbs 20:24). Man is Good, IF he chooses to be Good, but alas, the Scriptural record infallibly reports that all that can sin have sinned. "All have sinned, and come short of the Glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Our human senses are confronted by the Spirit of God with the knowledge that man cannot be safely trusted. "10 As it is written, There is none Righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth Good, no, not one" (Romans 3:10-12). This is not surprising, unless perhaps, you feel compelled to defend the position of man's inherent Goodness, but again, "every man at his best state is altogether vanity" (Psalm 39:5). This leaves us all in a dismal state, if we are forever separated from God's Goodness; but praise be to God, "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Such an Atoning Sacrifice could alone bring penitent men together with God. "The Good LORD pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God" (2Chronicles 30:18-19). An infusion of God's Goodness is received at what point we turn in faith to Him away from sin; but, the same act of faith that allows God to regenerate us as a "new creature" (2Corinthians 5:17) in Christ must be continuously repeated throughout our lives, if we are to continue to experience His Goodness. "28 Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

We do not give God enough credit for His Wisdom that He is able to give us of His Goodness, unless we only trust Him. "O taste and see that the LORD is Good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him" (Psalm 34:8). May we praise Him now for His Goodness, for which we will worship Him for Eternity. "8 Oh that men would praise the LORD for His Goodness, and for His Wonderful Works to the children of men! 9 For He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with Goodness" (Psalm 107:8-9). Not only is God Good, but He "is Able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His Glory with Exceeding Joy" (Jude 24). Such "Exceeding Great and Precious Promises" (2Peter 1:4) will deliver us before His Good Throne in His Good Time. "The LORD is Good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him" (Lamentations 3:25). May all His Saints rejoice in Him Who Alone Is Good! "It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of musick, and praised the LORD, saying, For He is Good; for His Mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the

LORD" (2Chronicles 5:13).

Maranatha!

Love Makes the World Go Round

August 22, 2003

Popular music and the Bible do not often agree, but both seem to consent that love makes the world go round. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life" (John 3:16). "God is Love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1John 4:16). It is amazing that the Truth that love makes the world go round should find such a common expression in the popular songs of the world without a measurable increase in goodwill towards humankind and without a perceptible decrease in hatred and war. "5 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. 6 And it repented the LORD that He had made man on the Earth, and it grieved Him at His heart" (Genesis 6:5-6). The simple solution to the seeming agreement between popular music and the Bible is that each means something different when they say that love makes the world go round. "Woe unto them that call evil Good, and Good evil; that put darkness for Light, and Light for darkness; that put bitter for Sweet, and Sweet for bitter!" (Isaiah 5:20).

An honest analysis of popular music would conclude that though its lyrics generally advocate love and not hatred, they most often have conspicuously omitted reference to the Author of Love, which is God alone. "10 Herein is Love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the Propitiation for our sins... 19 We love Him, because He first loved us" (1John 4:10,19). The failure of popular music to bring about the love that makes the world go round means that its love does not affect beyond the level of physical attraction or ordinary self-interest. "No man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it" (Ephesians 5:29). We know that Love is God sending His Son to die for us, and we also know that Repentance (turning away from sin) and Faith (confiding in God) yields the Gift of Eternal Life. But, what is our way of saying to God that we love Him? "15 If ye love Me, keep My Commandments... 21 He that hath My Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him" (John 14:15, 21). Obedience to God is not a drudge, but our happy duty! "26 A New Heart also will I give you, and a New Spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My Statutes, and ye shall keep My Judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

More often than admitted, the Professed Church has practically omitted obedience to God from its working definition of the love that makes the world go round and has justifiably brought upon itself the condemnation, "Thou hast left thy First Love" (Revelation 2:4). Rather than fretting over the ignorance of the world to the Crucified Saviour, the Professed Church must "repent, and do the first works" (2:5). Only then will we "see clearly to cast out the mote out of [our] brother's eye" (Matthew 7:5). True, the world may never admit the Truth of the priority of God in the Love that makes the world go round, but Jesus already advised us of the fact that most would never listen. "13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14 because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13-14). We must instead be resolute like Jacob, i.e., "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me" (Genesis 32:26), to be blessed with a life of the Love that makes the world go round. Seeking after Jesus, Who is the Expression of God's Love, we must steadfastly ignore anything and everything that draws us away from our necessity of personally following in "His steps" (1Peter 2:21). Laying hold of the empowering "Exceeding Great and Precious Promises" (2Peter 1:4), we will live by the Grace of God a life that communicates the Love that makes the world go round, 'til He calls us Home to Heaven.

"35 Who shall separate us from the Love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our LORD" (Romans 8:35-39).

Maranatha!

An Historical Perspective of *Precious Bible Promises*

March 31, 2009

Samuel Clarke (1684-1759) was an English Nonconformist clergyman. His name has often been confused with the prominent Anglican clergyman and philosopher of the same name. (The writer of this *WStS Introduction* made that very mistake in the previous online edition of this volume.) Nonetheless, God would judge thus of Samuel Clarke: "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:23). Dr. Clarke ministered faithfully for 38 years to a congregation at St. Albans, a city in southern Hertfordshire, England. This *Book of Promises* (-- http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Promises/Clarke's_Bible_Promises.html) is in large part the reason we are familiar with his name. "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches" (Proverbs 22:1). It became popularly known as *The Scripture Promises* after its initial release (1720). A later edition (1895) introduced this volume as *A Collection of the Promises of Scripture: Under Their Proper Heads*. Its title page further advertised that the Book was divided *In Two Parts: Representing I. The Blessings promised. II. The Duties to which Promises are made*. Additionally, it prefaced *With a Recommendation by Dr. Watts*. This was Isaac Watts, the popular English hymnwriter, whose preface was added in the second edition of the volume (1738). Modern readers will gather their primary understanding of the spirituality of Samuel Clarke, not only from his collection of Promises, but also from his *Introduction, containing Observations upon the Excellency and Use of the Promises, and Directions for the right Application of them*. In his *Introduction* to the Promises, Clarke asserted, "CONSTANTLY plead the Promises with God in Prayer. He has thereby bound himself to his People, as with a Note under his Hand. Go with it therefore to God, firmly depending upon his Faithfulness; He will acknowledge his own Handwriting, and answer your Demands accordingly."

Clarke's early 18th century *Introduction* was matched by the convention of capitalizing the first letter of most prominent nouns, lengthy sentences separated by semicolons, Roman numerals in the Scriptural references, and no longer used spellings of common words. (The valuable *Introduction* is now included in this online version of *Clarke's Bible Promises*.) But, much like the reading of the ancient texts of Holy Scripture, the purpose of Samuel Clarke shines through in his *Collection of the Promises of Scripture*, that is, "to excite to, and give the greatest Encouragement in, a Course of Piety and universal Holiness." If we properly understand that the purpose of the Promises of God is to make us more like Christ, while preserving us from the sin in the world, then we will be appropriately prepared to use this Book of Promises. "Whereby are given unto us Exceeding Great and Precious Promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2Peter 1:4). Dr. Clarke recounts that he initially assembled his Collection of Promises "to assist some Young Persons, who very commendably and to their great Advantage, are employ'd in improving themselves, and one another, in the Knowledge of the Scriptures." Though he felt a small number of Promises was appropriate, he recalled, "At first I intended to put together a small Number, upon some principal Subjects; but, upon searching the Scriptures more and more Texts still offering themselves, which I thought equally to my purpose, this Collection at length grew so large, that the taking so many Copies as were wanted, would have been a tedious Work; For which Reason, and in hopes it might serve the same useful End to others, I at last gave way to its being made publick." Thank God for allowing such a large collection and allowing for it to be published! "The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it" (Psalm 68:11).

This book of *Precious Bible Promises* was also known by its 19th century readers as *Clarke's Scripture Promises*. In a time that already had seen the Authorized Version of the Scriptures from the Church of England-- the King James Version of 1611-- and had produced *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1675) from the Church of England's famous dissenter, John Bunyan (1628-1688)-- who was acquainted for twelve years with the hospitality of Bedford jail for preaching without a license-- a book of *Precious Bible Promises* was (and, still is needed) to encourage every True Believer in their pursuit of holy living. "Having therefore these Promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2Corinthians 7:1). The "Notice by Dr. Watts" affixed to the front of the *Precious Bible Promises*, identifies Samuel Clarke as the "worthy author of this collection, which I ["I. Watts"] have known with esteem and honor." "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts" (Psalm 119:63). Of interest, Isaac Watts, the author of over 600 hymns, was himself the son of another dissenter from the Church of England. You will probably notice that a good number of Clarke's compiled Promises were gleaned from the Book of Psalms of the Old Testament, and Watts could especially identify with their Promises, since he had himself published the *Psalms of David* (1719) in which are found poetic paraphrases of Psalm 90 ("O God, Our Help in Ages Past") and Psalm 98 ("Joy to the World"). "10 The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. 17 And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us: and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it" (90:10, 17).

A notable 19th century advocate of *Clarke's Scripture Promises* was found in the person of the enigmatic, English General Charles G. Gordon (1833-1885)-- "Chinese Gordon," the "Hero of Khartoum," "Gordon Pasha." In January 1884, he had advised Lord Wolseley to distribute a copy of *Clarke's Scripture Promises* to every member of the Cabinet of Prime Minister William Gladstone upon Gordon's departure to handle the volatile situation of the revolting Mahdi in the Sudan. "Who through faith subdued kingdoms,

wrought righteousness, obtained Promises, stopped the mouths of lions" (Hebrews 11:33). Charles Gordon had early made his peace with Jesus Christ as a young officer in the Royal Engineers at Pembroke (U.K.) after being pursued for Christ by his sister Augusta and by a "very religious captain of the name of Drew." "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (8:12). Gordon had distinguished himself with conspicuous gallantry during the Crimean War (1853-1856), had successfully quelled the Taiping Rebellion in China (1863-1864), and had been instrumental in the suppression of the slave trade (1877-1880) in the Sudan (south of Egypt), during which he had been a solitary man of One Book-- his pocket Bible. "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having Promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1Timothy 4:8). Though the career of General Gordon was peppered with the intensity of great overcoming in times of conflict, he knew times of obscurity and grievous backsliding; but, as he once wrote to his sister Augusta, "I am glad to say that this disease [a smallpox experienced in China] has brought me back to my Saviour, and I trust in future to be a better Christian than I have been hitherto." "Whom the LORD loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth" (Hebrews 12:6). In the timing of God's Providence, Gordon Pasha met his end on the morning of January 26th 1885, two days before the British relief column reached the newly subjugated city of Khartoum, where the unbowing Gordon had held out to the end. "Ye shall be hated of all men for My Name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 10:22).

Rosalind Goforth, a Canadian Christian missionary, was another who lived in 19th century China that gave a glowing recommendation of the value of *Clarke's Scripture Promises*. She wrote of the faithfulness of God in her testimonial book, *How I Know God Answers Prayer*. "They shall abundantly utter the memory of Thy great goodness" (Psalm 145:7). As she, her husband Jonathan, and her four children faced the bloody onslaught of the anti-foreigner, anti-Christian Boxer Revolt of the secret society "Harmonious Fists" of China (1900), they were advised by the American Consul in Chefoo to flee from the city of Changte in North Honan to the coastal seaport of Shanghai. "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper" (Isaiah 54:17). On the morning of July 8th 1900, their small party of missionaries was resting at an inn in the small town of Hsintien, while a boisterous mob awaited them outside casting stones and demanding their money. Rosalind wrote,

"Hints had been given us of coming danger, but that was all; none spoke of what all felt -- that we were probably going to our death. Suddenly, without the slightest warning, I was seized with an overwhelming fear of what might be awaiting us. It was not the fear of *after* death, but of probable torture, that took such awful hold of me. I thought, 'Can this be the Christian courage I have looked for?' I went by myself and prayed for victory, but no help came. Just then someone called us to a room for prayer before getting into our carts. Scarcely able to walk for trembling, and utterly ashamed that others should see my state of panic -- for such it undoubtedly was -- I managed to reach a bench beside which my husband stood. He drew from his pocket a little book, *Clarke's Scripture Promises*, and read the verses his eyes first fell upon. They were the following:

The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them.
The God of Jacob is our refuge.
Thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.
I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness... The Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.
If God be for us, who can be against us?
We may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

The effect of these words at such a time was remarkable. All realized that God was speaking to us. Never was there a message more directly given to mortal man from his God than that message to us. From almost the first verse my whole soul seemed flooded with a great peace; all trace of panic vanished; and I felt God's presence was with us. Indeed, His presence was so real it could scarcely have been more so had we seen a visible form."
Needless to say, they all escaped with their lives with each able to give amazing stories of physical deliverance from innumerable attempts to kill, injure, or maim them. "Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in Whom we trust that He will yet deliver us" (2Corinthians 1:10).

The testimony from the past serves to remind us that the same God Who Promised Abraham that He would make him a father of a great multitude-- which He did-- has Promised us, "Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not" (Jeremiah 33:3). May we be like Abraham in rising to the challenge. "20 He staggered not at the Promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in Faith, giving Glory to God; 21 And being fully persuaded that, what He had Promised, He was able also to perform" (Romans 4:20-21).

May God bless you as you lay hold of His Promises!

Tom Stewart

"Thy Counsels of old are Faithfulness and Truth" (Isaiah 25:1).

Revenge of the Worms

December 9, 2003

"Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel"
(Isaiah 41:14).

Perhaps you have sung Isaac Watts' classic hymn "Alas! and Did My Savior Bleed?" or Ralph Hudson's Gospel song "At the Cross"-- which is Watts' hymn with the addition of a refrain-- and were struck with the words of the second line of the first stanza:

"Would He devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I?"

Both Watts and Hudson agreed with Isaiah's assertion that though we are human, we are but worms in the eyes of Jehovah-- worms wonderfully endowed with the Grace of the Living God! "How much less man, that is a worm? and the son of man, which is a worm?" (Job 25:6). Humility does not demand us to make ourselves smaller than we understand to be the Truth, but it requires us to faithfully admit the veracity of what we understand to be so. "I am a worm" (Psalm 22:6). Can we say it and mean it? Remember that the LORD Jesus called out, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (22:1), at the pregnant moment of His bearing our sins upon the Cross. When Christ offered Himself, He became as an insignificant worm that would give its life on a tree. "6 But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. 7 All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, 8 He trusted on the LORD that He would deliver him: let Him deliver him, seeing He delighted in him" (22:6-8). And, a worm, as used by the Psalmist, is the *coccus ilicis*-- the female scarlet worm. This unusual worm was designed by the Creator to securely and permanently attach her body to the trunk of a tree when she was ready to give birth to her young. Her deposited eggs would remain under her body until they hatched, then to continue their independent life cycles. However, the mother would die, staining both her body and the surrounding wood scarlet. Commercial scarlet dyes were derived from the dead bodies of the female scarlet worms. Likewise, Christ the Son of Man shed His "Precious Blood" (1Peter 1:19) and sacrificed His Life for us. "Who His Own Self bare our sins in His Own Body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto Righteousness: by Whose stripes ye were healed" (2:24).

If we accept our place as Jehovah's Worms, we may lay claim to the Grace or Help that has been promised. "Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel" (Isaiah 41:14). Such strengthening enables us to do that which we could otherwise never imagine. "Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff" (41:15). What a revelation! A worm shall thresh a mountain! "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My Righteousness" (41:10). "Great and mighty things, which thou knowest not" (Jeremiah 33:3) have been promised, because we are not the One Whose Might is responsible for the outcome. "29 He giveth Power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. 30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: 31 but they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isaiah 40:29-31). God makes a special point of finding those who admit that they are powerless weaklings, whose purpose is only to please Him, and He strengthens them. "The eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole Earth, to shew Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him" (2Chronicles 16:9). Strange to say it, but it is only Jehovah's Worms that have the *certainty* of dominating the Planet. "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the Earth" (Matthew 5:5).

So, we are Wonderfully Endowed Worms with the Grace of Jehovah, but what about this idea of revenge? Is it not written, "Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the LORD" (Romans 12:19)? Yes, this is the verity of the Word of God. He has said it, and that should settle it. We ought to believe it, and whatever He has said, we should conform to it. "I cannot go beyond the Word of the LORD my God, to do less or more" (Numbers 22:18). For this reason, Jehovah's Worms must cautiously use the word "revenge" only when and how Scripture does. "And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled" (2Corinthians 10:6). The Apostle Paul had dealt in his former epistle to the Corinthians with a matter of incest taking place in their midst, where he had instructed the gathered Christians to "deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the LORD Jesus" (1Corinthians 5:5). These stern words of "revenge" were meant to restore and not destroy the Apostate Christian, i.e., the Backslider, where God and *not* man would physically deal with the individual. "Who is able to stand before this

Holy LORD God?" (1Samuel 6:20). Paul in his subsequent Epistle to the Corinthian Believers directed them to tenderly reinstate the formerly erring Backslider, the now Penitent Brother. "8 For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same Epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. 9 Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to Repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. 10 For godly sorrow worketh Repentance to Salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. 11 For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter. 12 Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you" (2Corinthians 7:8-12).

Notice that the word "revenge" (v. 11) is used by Paul to describe the act of Repentance by the formerly incestuous Backslider, as well as the collective repentances of the fellow Corinthians for their formerly nonchalant acceptance of his incest in their fellowship, i.e., "ye sorrowed to repentance... yea, what clearing of yourselves... yea, what revenge!" (2Corinthians 7:9, 11). Whenever God succeeds in bringing any of us to repentance from our backsliding ways, it is the same as if we were cooperating with Him in His vengeance against sin-- "yea, what revenge!" (7:11). In fact, it is *Perfect Vengeance*-- *we get our revenge upon sin, when we repent!* "Yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge!" (2Corinthians 7:11). *Perfect Vengeance* is the strength of our outrage against our backsliding and sin, which is the measurement of how weak or strong the walls will be that prevent us from slipping back into a recurrence of the same sin, for "he that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls" (Proverbs 25:28). The traditional or worldly view of revenge is exacting a price from an enemy for a wrong against ourselves, while the Revenge of the Worms is a clearing of ourselves of the "sin which doth so easily beset us" (Hebrews 12:1). Rather than an infliction of physical, mental, or emotional vengeance against another being, we direct the Heavenly Fire down upon our own position to spiritually annihilate (as best as we know how) the enemy of sin which rises in our own breast. "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). We can no longer tolerate the launching of rebellious sin against our Rightful Sovereign King Jesus from our own heart and hands, who profess our love and allegiance to Him. "10 That at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in Earth, and things under the Earth; 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the Glory of God the Father. 12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own Salvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God which worketh in you both to Will and to Do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:10-13).

May the Revenge of the Worms be thorough!

Maranatha!

When Everything Seems to Fail

February 12, 2004

When everything *seems* to fail, our innermost being knows... *God never fails!* "Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the LORD God, even my God, will be with thee; He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (1Chronicles 28:20). Our unity with God means that His success is our success, and His lack of failure means that our *seeming* failures are truly and ultimately successes. "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us" (John 17:21). If we would just pause and consider what we already know, the "God [Who] is Love" (1John 4:16) has promised, "As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Joshua 1:5). "Charity never faileth" (1Corinthians 13:8). It is good that we are periodically reminded through our apparent failures that *God never fails those who put their trust in Him*. "It is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the LORD GOD" (Psalm 73:28). Rarely, if ever, do we read of God's Faithfulness and implicit Trustworthiness, *when* we are in the moment of crisis, because at that moment we are being tested about the knowledge that we are *already* supposed to possess. "8 O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of His praise to be heard: 9 Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved. 10 For Thou, O God, hast proved us: Thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. 11 Thou broughtest us into the net; Thou laidst affliction upon our loins. 12 Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place" (Psalm 66:8-12).

As we grow older in the LORD, we find that both the failures and successes of life will either harden or humble us. "Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness" (Psalm 95:8). Good King Josiah was numbered among those that were humbled and helped by the LORD because he responded with a tender heart to the events of his life, even when he found that the Almighty was planning to punish his kingdom of Judah for its idolatry. "19 Because thine heart was tender, and thou

hast humbled thyself before the LORD, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before Me; I also have heard thee, saith the LORD. 20 Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in Peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place" (2Kings 22:19-20). If we would respond to the difficulties, successes, and apparent failures of our lives by humbling ourselves before the LORD, He has promised us the certainty of His Help. "Humble yourselves in the sight of the LORD, and He shall lift you up" (James 4:10). After all, it is for *our benefit* that this exercise requiring the necessity of responding in Faith was designed-- to strengthen our Faith in the LORD and motivate us to investigate His Word for greater discoveries of His Unsearchable Riches (Ephesians 3:8). "11 And Asa cried unto the LORD his God, and said, LORD, it is nothing with Thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O LORD our God; for we rest on Thee, and in Thy Name we go against this multitude. O LORD, Thou art our God; let not man prevail against Thee. 12 So the LORD smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah; and the Ethiopians fled" (2Chronicles 14:11-12). And, when the victory finally comes-- which it will-- we are reminded that God's Blessing requires our *continual* seeking of Him with *all* our heart. "1 And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded: 2 and he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The LORD is with you, while ye be with Him; and if ye seek Him, He will be found of you; but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you" (2Chronicles 15:1-2).

Our necessity in the time of seeming abandonment by God is that we reset the innermost purpose and resolve of our heart to Trust the All Wise God to dispose of us and our circumstances as He deems best, for our "times are in [His] hand" (Psalm 31:15). If we cannot or do not respond to our time of seeming unbearable difficulty by implicitly trusting God, then we are accusing the Faithful God of being a liar, for He has promised us no more than *He* would help us to bear. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is Faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1Corinthians 10:13). And, if we would insist on maintaining God's unfaithfulness to us, then we are announcing that we have no part in Him and have cast Him away from us. "If we believe not, yet He abideth Faithful: He cannot deny Himself" (2Timothy 2:13). God has always empowered us to determine just how close He should be to us. "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you" (James 4:8). It is only the lie of the Wicked One that God forsakes those who Trust in the Almighty, e.g., Satan undermined Eve's Confidence in the Goodness and Love of God by questioning the Creator's Commandment not to partake of the fruit of the Tree of Life. "1 Now the Serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the Garden?... 4 And the Serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: 5 for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing Good and evil" (Genesis 3:1, 4-5).

This is the time to find a strong board of the Promises of God to strap to your Back of Faith to give you a stiffening of Confidence. "12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; 13 and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. 14 Follow Peace with all men, and Holiness, without which no man shall see the LORD: 15 looking diligently lest any man fail of the Grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled" (Hebrews 12:12-15). The Key of Promise was discovered by Bunyan's Pilgrim to deliver himself and Hopeful out of prison in Doubting Castle, and the like Key will help us the same. "3 According as His Divine Power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto Life and Godliness, through the Knowledge of Him that hath called us to Glory and Virtue: 4 Whereby are given unto us Exceeding Great and Precious Promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2Peter 1:3-4). Lay hold and hang on to whatever Piece of the Word that the Holy Spirit brings to your mind, and say with Jacob, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me" (Genesis 32:26). Still need something more substantial to fit your circumstances? Study the "[Table of Contents](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Promises/Clarke's_Bible_Promises.html#Table%20of%20Contents)" -- [http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Promises/Clarke's Bible Promises.html#Table of Contents](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Promises/Clarke's_Bible_Promises.html#Table%20of%20Contents) -- Of Samuel Clarke's venerable catalog of "Precious Bible Promises" and find a Promise that meets your case-- or, a "General Promise" (the first Promises listed), if nothing else fits. "Faithful is He that calleth you, Who also will do it" (1Thessalonians 5:24).

Whatever you do, hang on in Faith to the LORD! "35 Cast not away therefore your Confidence, which hath great recompence of Reward. 36 For ye have need of Patience, that, after ye have done the Will of God, ye might receive the [end result of the] Promise. 37 For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. 38 Now the Just shall live by Faith: but if any man draw back, My Soul shall have no pleasure in him. 39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Hebrews 10:35-39). This is not a simulation. We are living the REAL thing. Come what may, we must Trust the Living God for now and for Eternity. "5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet Praise Him for the Help of His Countenance. 6 O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember Thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar. 7 Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy waterspouts: all Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me. 8 Yet the LORD will command His Lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night His Song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life" (Psalm 42:5-8).

Maranatha!

The Crucifixion of Christ: Jews or Gentiles-- Who Stinketh the Most?

April 21, 2004

The Christian Gospels plainly depict the Roman Pontius Pilate as the author of the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ, i.e., "when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified" (Matthew 27:26); *but*, only with the incitement of the Jewish Sanhedrin. "12 And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do unto Him Whom ye call the King of the Jews? 13 And they cried out again, Crucify Him. 14 Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath He done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify Him" (Mark 15:12-14). Whether to lay the blame solely at the feet of the Gentile Pontius Pilate or to place the guilt completely upon the Jewish mob, i.e., "Then answered all the people, and said, His Blood be on us, and on our children" (Matthew 27:25), it would only be a Hypocritical Comfort that any living man should wash his hands of his own personal responsibility in the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ. "But God commendeth His Love toward **us**, in that, while **we** were yet sinners, Christ died for **us**" (Romans 5:8). It completely misses the whole point of the Suffering and Death of Jesus Christ on the Cross as an Atonement for the sins of the whole world, if the blame for His Death is pointed at someone other than yourself! "And He is the Propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1John 2:2). The whole necessity of an Atonement for our sins was to find a way to bring Sinful Man to a Holy God! "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (1Peter 3:18). Only when we repent and believe the Truth of the Gospel that our sins have separated us from God, i.e., "your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2), but Jesus "made Peace through the Blood of His Cross, by Him to Reconcile all things unto Himself" (Colossians 1:20), when we trust Christ to save us. "Believe on the LORD Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be Saved" (Acts 16:31).

The Unconverted Gentile World blames the Unconverted Jewish World for the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ, while the Unconverted Jewish World blames the Unconverted Gentile World, absolving itself of culpability in the Death of Jesus of Nazareth-- instead choosing to remember the hand of the cruel and weak Gentile Pontius Pilate. "And so Pilate, *willing to content the people*, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged Him, to be Crucified" (Mark 15:15). Both ignore the glaring fact that they are *equally* culpable in Christ's Death. "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things" (Romans 2:1). Gentiles, which have not the Law of Moses, "do by nature the things contained in the Law, these, having not the Law, are a law unto themselves" (Romans 2:14). These same Gentiles that "have sinned without Law shall also perish without Law" (Romans 2:12). But, O Jew, you who "have sinned in the Law shall be judged by the Law" (Romans 2:12). For it is a certainty attested to by God that "ALL have sinned" (Romans 3:23; 5:12). All would do well to turn in Faith to the Saviour and obey His Gospel. "Repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance" (Acts 26:20). If you cannot and do not admit your personal guilt in the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ, then you cannot and do not have any part in the Salvation Christ "purchased with His own Blood" (Acts 20:28) by His Cross. "In Whom we have Redemption through His Blood, the Forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His Grace" (Ephesians 1:7). Otherwise, we are no different than Pontius Pilate when he vainly attempted to cleanse himself of all responsibility in the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ. "When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the Blood of this Just Person: see ye to it" (Matthew 27:24).

END OF THE COLLECTION