

# THE WORD OF TRUTH

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

## SET FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE GOSPEL

### MEDITATION

There are some distinct privileges experienced by the child of God. Among them is the honor granted us from above to "set our affections on things above, and not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:1-3). To contemplate of, and meditate upon, eternal things is the singular blessing of those who have been "made accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1:3-6). This is meditation, and herein lies the key to untold strength and vitality in the Lord. A life properly given to meditation of the things of the Lord will find itself "thoroughly equipped unto every good work", and ready to communicate in speech that is "seasoned with grace." Even under the old economy of Law, it was told the people of Israel that they ought to "meditate therein (in the Law) day and night." The purpose of this meditation was that they might "observe to do according to all that was written therein" (Josh. 1:8). Of the righteous and godly man, David freely declared: "But his delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in His Law doth He meditate day and night" (Psalms 1:2). A MIND THAT IS NOT PERPETUALLY GLEANING IN THE FIELDS OF GOD'S WORD AND WILL IS ONE THAT WILL EVENTUALLY GROPE IN DARKNESS AND BE GIVEN TO THOUGHTS OF THE MOST EVIL SORT. Meditation identifies one as a godly person, and a child of God, for to the natural man, the things of the Spirit are "foolish" (II Cor. 2:14); he is not "subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:7). A failure to meditate upon the things of the Lord is a most dangerous sign of perdition, and ought to be attended to in prayer and fasting diligently, lest one fail of the grace of God. It is while we are "musing" that "the fire burns" within us (Psa. 39:3). Often ought we to breathe the prayer; "Let the . . . meditations of my heart be acceptable unto Thee, O Lord, my Strength, and my Redeemer" (Psa. 19:14). What is the topic of your thoughts? Where does your mind run? What are the channels of thought in which you do most of your sailing? These are vital questions; vital to your own knowledge of personal identification with the Lord of Heaven. Meditate often of the Lord's work; be RESIGNED to do this to the glory of God; "I WILL meditate of Thy work . . ." (Psa. 77:12). Indeed, when contemplating the work of the Lord in the behalf of His people; how that He has wonderously protected them, succored them, and led them through the most trying

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## The Word of Truth

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### IS MAN GOD, OR IS GOD GOD?

Indeed, this may sound like a trite question, but it bears in it more seriousness than some may suppose. If man is God, then the Lord is subservient to him, and he motivates God. He is able, and does, place the Almighty in a position of debt, where full and complete remuneration is justly expected for the abundant good that he does. Too, man may then alter the purposes of God, restrain God, hinder God, and hold back the will of God. The Lord's course, in this case, would be determined by the response of man - thus making man God, and not God Himself.

On the other hand, if God is really God (and, Praise God, He is), then man is entirely subservient to Him. He motivates man and directs his pathway. God is never to be considered in a position where He is obligated to work for the benefit of man. It is only by His grace that He is moved to bestow upon man blessings abundant. He, then, is seen to "work all things after the counsel of His own will" (Eph. 1:11). Now, there is no middle ground in this matter. God is God alone; He will not share His glory with another. If man's actions interfere with God's plans and thwart His Divine purposes, then God is not God, but rather, man is God. If man's actions constrain God and place Him under a burden of obligation, then we are greatly erring in calling Him "God Almighty!" In the Scriptures, the Lord God of heaven is pictured as placing a halter upon man, and restraining his activity. Examine carefully, then, those matters of false theology which tend to exalt the creature, for just to the extent that the creature is exalted, the Creator is insulted and abased! God is truly "above all, and through all, and in all" (Eph. 4:6). "All things are of God, and through Him, and To Him" (Rom. 11:36). Man is the receiver; God the giver. God the Arbiter, man the tool. God the Potter, man the clay. Think it not of small importance that He is to be so held as Sovereign in your life!

### IMPOSSIBLE

It is impossible for a person outside of the Lord to either bring forth good fruit, or illuminate through his own efforts the minds of men to the truth of God. "An evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit", declared our Lord. No amount of graft-work will cancel what He has said! If you desire lasting fruit, and the blessing of seeing people come to the Lord under your ministry, then you must develop by grace an active association with the Father through the Son!

It is, of course, inevitable that those engaged in the disseminating of the Gospel be found the subject of railing, and of false allegations. It is not as though we feel embittered over such treatment, being as our Lord entreated us to be joyful under such conditions; and it is not out of a sense of maliciousness that we direct these few remarks to our readers. The offspring of Amelak have dealt hard blows against us, yet we are still standing, and shall remain to stand. We have "opened our mouth wide", and the Lord hath "filled it"; none can shut it, and "the Word of God is not bound." We have been, on sundry occasions, referred to as "separatists" by those who cannot feel themselves in sympathy with our emphasis. While it is not my purpose to vindicate myself nor those that stand with me, a word of explanation is here considered to be appropriate.

It is certainly not our desire to be separate from those "of like precious faith", nor, indeed, do we consider ourselves so to be. We are not at variance with those who "have obtained like precious faith", but rather stand with them in the "faith of the Gospel." We have been, however, separated from the "children of Belial", whose express intentions are to exalt and extol the virtues of men and their programs. We cannot and will not form an alliance with those that do despite to the Spirit of grace. Those that are our enemies are such because our aim is not the same, which thing is evident to the perceiving eye. We stand with our face set like a flint toward the "mark of the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus", and hold utter and absolute disdain for all that would detract us from that goal and heavenly "mark." While we may well be dubbed by some as "hard-headed", we have no especial affection for "soft-headedness" either. We have no boast but in the Lord; no glory save in Him. You will find nothing from our mouths that will bring reproach upon the Lord whom we so dearly love, and unto whom we have graciously been drawn. We speak with words of honey to those who know the Lord and seek a higher clime in grace; but we come with sword in hand to those who oppose Him and His word. We readily acknowledge separation from all those who know not the "grace of God in truth", and admit our refusal to boast or glory save in the Lord and His Christ. It is true that many have cast out our name as evil; but their own works have made them known, of what spirit they are. Our fruit also follows us, and we draw back in no wise from any of you examining it. We have no liking or affection for Law, for we have "become dead to the Law by the body of Christ." Most assuredly we are separatists; but we have been separated by the Lord God of heaven, unto Himself, and His Christ, and His people. From all others we remain separate, and shall continue to do so until they are brought into an "acknowledging of the truth."

Familiarity with God's Word is indispensable to proper growth, for it is "able to build you up" (Acts 20:32), and makes "wise unto salvation". A lack of hunger for it indicates a race for spiritual appetite!

# THE ELECTION OF GRACE

"Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace."

Romans 11:5

The subject of election is not a familiar one in many circles, and yet there is every reason to pursue it with vigor. The word "elect", together with its derivatives, appears over 25 times in Scripture. To one that has submitted himself to even a casual study and searching of the Scriptures, the word has more than once appeared. As is the case with many other kindred subjects, however, there is a great veil of denominational dogma spread over its truth, and a fear comes into the hearts of those who would otherwise lay hold of this message of God's grace. It is not the purpose here to deal so much with answering objections however, as to merely declare the mind of God on this great theme. I have come to dearly love this truth because it extolls the Lord and declares His Sovereign rights. We all ought to have a great interest in this subject, if for no other reason, than because it deals with our Father in heaven, and of His personal actions.

In the text quoted above, the Apostle is "justifying" God (Luke 7:29) for His action toward the children of Israel. Having before exhibited his heartfelt desire that they might be saved (9:1-3), he takes great precautions to remove all temptation to revile God, because of their obstinacy. It is the practice of the former Pharisee to take care that God be not impugned or reviled because of the circumstances that present themselves. To do so is to wedge our judgment into His will. I would take this opportunity to admonish all that are engaged in the presentation of the Gospel to likewise take great care that a reflection of dishonor is not brought upon the Lord that bought us. Follow, now, the reasoning of our beloved brother Paul as he brings us to the text under consideration. Having stated that he had great "heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart" (9:2) for his kinsmen "according to the flesh" (9:3), Paul is quick to remind us that this does not mean that the Word of God "hath taken none effect" (9:6); that is, we are not to suppose that what God had promised to our father Abraham concerning the prosperity of his seed had ceased to be effective. Every Word of God is powerful, and it does by no means "return unto Him void", but rather "accomplishes that whereunto it is sent" (Isaiah 55:9-11). Pointedly does he remind us that "they which are the children of the flesh; these are not the children of God; but the children of THE PROMISE are counted for the seed" (9:8): i.e. we are not to depend upon fleshly and sensual observations to prove God's choice. We are not to look to the physical offspring of Abraham for the fulfillment of the promise given him in Genesis 12:1-3. The general election of the people of Israel (whom God chose unto Himself - Duet. 7:7), does not prevent God from choosing for Himself, by His secret counsel, those whom He pleases. The mercy of God was demonstrated in the election of a nation Israel above all nations of the earth, but

His secret election of only a remnant within that nation does portray His mercy even more, as Paul is about to show us.

First, there was a distinction, or election, made in the immediate offspring of Abraham; "At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son" (9:9). Ishmael, Abraham's first "seed" through Hagar, together with his mother, were eventually cast out of the home, even though the lad was the offspring of Abraham. A definite election had taken place, as is seen in the choosing of Issac, and the rejection of Ishmael. Though Ishmael was blessed, he did not have such distinctions as Issac. But it continues further, in even more detail than in this first instance. Rebekah, the wife of Issac (the "promised seed") bore within her womb twin boys. Before they were ever born, the Lord announced that a further election had been made prior to their delivery, and irrespective of their works; "neither having done any good or evil" (9:11). This choice was made before their birth not as a mere matter of foresight, but "that the purpose of God ACCORDING TO ELECTION might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth" (9:11). The reason for the difference between the boys was to be found in the election (or choice) of God alone. He is illustrating for us that those that obtain the enjoyment of the benefit of the blessing are the children of promise; not because they have achieved it meritoriously, but because they have been chosen by God. God's choices dictate the scope of His blessing. Here, in the case of Jacob and Esau, Paul, without any equivocation whatever, refers the whole matter to the unmerited election of God. In the salvation of the godly, we are to look for no higher cause than the goodness of God. Paul shows that the difference in the twins could not have been due to any works that they had performed, for God made the choice of Jacob, whom he "loved", before either he or his brother, Esau was born or had performed any works. There was nothing there to induce the good favor of God. It was a matter of free election. I realize that there are many who will try to evade Paul's simple statement with high sounding reasoning, and comparisons. But the greatest argument against these pretenders is that Paul did not use their arguments; nor are they used anywhere in the Scriptures. What can we say, then, but that they are unworthy! That is sufficient proof to show that they had their origin with the promulgators of them, and therefore are to be counted as "dung", which they most certainly are!

By mentioning "election", Paul has made a comparison with works; "that the purpose of God according to election might stand, NOT OF WORKS. . . ." Now, the arguments that are presented against this great truth were not declared by God. Come now, you that dwell upon the plain of earth, and hear the Apostle voice your own

argument; "What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God?" (9:14). And so speak those that oppose the Sovereign God of heaven in our day! Supposing their stand to be omniscient and in accord with the edict of the Lord, they declare God to be unrighteous, if so be that the doctrine of election is true. But, by so doing, they have only announced their own enmity against the Lord, who shall render unto them their due reward, unless they repent and acknowledge the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. Fleshly reasonings do not render God unrighteous!

Paul is swift to answer his own question. Because God chose Jacob and rejected Esau was no indication that there was unrighteousness with Him! "God forbid." Long ago, when the Lord revealed Himself to Moses, He gave announcement of a very basis part of His character, namely this; "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion upon whom I will have compassion." (9:15). God is merciful unto whom He pleases, His own will being the determining factor. Now, because this teaching may appear to lack warmth and encouragement, he has given us the truth concerning God's will. God considers His own will and authority as entirely sufficient to determine the condition of an individual. The Lord is the Vindicator of His own right, and those that dispute this teaching must take it up with God Himself, as He is the One that has declared it. Paul considers that this declaration warrants a further conclusion; "So then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy" (9:16). The Determiner is God, and none else! Our will and determinate effort have no bearing on the choice! He has thusfar illustrated this in the case of Issac and of Jacob. Issac chosen over Ishmael, and Jacob over Esau. Both were choices according to God's own election and Sovereign will. But, now Paul brings up another phase of God's election which also shows His will to be the supreme factor in the condition of men: "For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I RAISED THEE UP. . . . Therefore He hath mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will be hardeneth" (9:17-18). God's election is, then, not only portrayed in saving, but in hardening! Knowing that numerous questions will be raised by those that oppose the Lord's will as portrayed in election, Paul wisely anticipates the chief argument that will be raised and literally devastates it; "Thou wilt say then, unto me, Why doth He yet find fault? For who hath resisted His will? Nay, but, O man (and not Creator), who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus" (9:19-20). We are in no position to question the mind of God, or to deny Him His Sovereign right to do what He pleases. Woe to him that assumes such a right! We are the creature, not the Creator. When the Lord does a thing, He need not confer with us. God may take of the same body of people some that He desires to make honorable, and some dishonorable (9:21-23). Who is he that will question Him. This is a matter of election, and we are called upon to receive it, lest we be found "replying against God!"

Having given this brief background of the people, concerning whom his heart's desire and

prayer is that they "might be saved" (10:1), Paul anticipates that some unlearned sophist might conclude that Israel, because of their apparent obstinacy (10:21), had actually been cut off from the Lord, thus nullifying the power of election. But, their theology is not correct, as Paul will demonstrate in the Spirit. "I say then, Hath God cast away His people? God forbid!" (11:1). The eye and mind of the flesh will always try and introduce arguments against the arbitrary choice of God. To destroy this erroneous contention, Paul brings forth two infallible proofs that sufficiently demonstrate that God had not cast away His people whom He fore knew. First, Paul himself was an Israelite according to the flesh (11:1). Thus he shows that the election within the election, so to speak, did take effect in himself. It may not be countered that Paul was seeking after the Lord Jesus Christ, and that the Lord, therefore, rewarded his search by bringing him into the fold. Nor may it be argued that Paul's works were foreseen by God and that, prompted by an advance view of Paul's works, God was moved to issue a call to him. Paul was actually en route to Damascus to harm the brethren of the Lord, and to assault the church of the living God. He was not in search of Christ, nor of salvation through faith. Yet, the Lord smote him down in the middle of the road, and thus wakened him from the religious lethargy toward Christ that had characterized his life. (Acts 9.) His religious fever in the persecuting the church of the living God (Gal. 1:13) was to be gloriously subdued, and now he would "suffer great things" for the sake of Jesus Christ (Acts 9:16). There is only one answer for this dramatic event, and that is the secret election of God; "The Lord knoweth them that are His", and that is why "the foundation of God standeth sure" (II Tim. 2:19). "God hath not cast away His people WHOM HE FOREKNEW" (Rom. 11:2); i.e., those within the eternal purpose of God, whom He has "chosen before the foundation of the world" (II Thess. 2:13-14) have not been abandoned by God; for "whom He did foreknow, He did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Romans 8:29-30). Now, it may not be countered that the foreknowledge of God is a mere foresight of the future, in the which God sees ahead of time the actions of man, No, indeed, the foreknowledge of God is a working power, and a determining factor. Our Lord Jesus Christ was delivered up to death according to "the determinate counsel AND FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD" (Acts 2:23). In this instance, the Lord foresaw His own work, not that of man; and so it is with our election. That God, then, has not mercilessly cut off all of the fleshly offspring of Abraham is evident; first of all, because Paul himself is in the "household of faith" (Gal. 6:10). But, lest it be argued that this was dealing with conditions after the time of pre-eminence given to the Jewish people, the Apostle recalls to our mind a most eminent instance that serves to convey to us in startling reality the truth of election. "Wot ye not what the Scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed Thy prophets, and digged down Thine altars; and I alone am left, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God to him? I have RESERVED TO MYSELF SEVEN THOU-

SAND MEN, WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL" (11:3-4). This is the answer of God, not of man! And what will you say, Oh opponent of the election of grace? Will you revile the answer of God? God said that He RESERVED seven thousand to Himself! What do you say? Oh, I trust that you will not war with God lest He lay you low for your rebellion. Paul has already shown that it is within the prerogatives of God to have mercy upon whom He will (wills to) have mercy, and to harden whom He will (wills to) harden. Yea, this is the declaration of the Lord God Himself concerning His own will and purpose. It is, then, incontrovertible that there is such a thing as election; that it is the result of God's choice, and not of man's effort. "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but OF GOD!" Issac, Jacob, Paul and the seven thousand have been cited as being illustrative of this truth. Paul is preaching so as to bring hope, not despair; and I tell you that the election of grace is all that brings hope to the man of God that views this benighted world in which we live. We take heart, therefore, in our text; "EVEN SO (as with the seven thousand in Elijah's day; as with Paul; as with Jacob; as with Issac) THEN AT THIS PRESENT TIME ALSO THERE IS A REMNANT ACCORDING TO THE ELECTION OF GRACE" (11:5). Praise God for this election of grace; it shall stand when nothing else shall!

The word election comes from the Greek word "ekloga" and means: "The act of picking out, choosing; used of that act of God's free will by which before the foundation of the world He decreed His blessings to certain people." If you doubt that, then look at Issac, Jacob, Paul, the seven thousand, and tell me, if you will, why they were blessed! Issac lied about his wife; Jacob deceived his father; Paul persecuted the church of God; the seven thousand were unknown and not open witnesses. Are these meritorious qualifications for the mercy of God? Come forth with the answer, thou sophist! Is God justified or not in choosing whom He will? Why will you war against the counsel of God? Why do you fight with His mind, and with His purpose and will. Hath not the God of heaven said that He will have mercy upon whom He will have mercy? And has He not led His servant, and our brother, Paul to say that a remnant does still remain due to the election of grace? This is the Word of the Lord, and "let it sink down into your ears" (Luke 9:44). This is not merely an election, but THE ELECTION OF GRACE; i.e., the choice of God as governed by His mercy, which He gives unto whom He will. Therefore, the elect are called "the elect whom HE HATH CHOSEN" (Mk. 13:20); "His elect" (Matt. 24:31; Mk. 13:27; "His own elect" (Lk. 18:7); "God's elect" (Titus 1:1; Rom. 8:33); the "Elect of God" (Col. 3:12). Paul goes so far as to speak of them as elect even before they obtain salvation; "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, THAT THEY MAY ALSO OBTAIN THE SALVATION which is in Christ Jesus WITH eternal glory" (II Tim. 2:10). Remember that the Lord God has "done whatsoever He hath pleased in the heavens and upon the earth" (Psa. 115:3; 135:6).

In election God graciously retains unto Himself a people whom He will yet fashion into the

image of His son (Rom. 8:29). After that He has chosen them. He shall draw them unto Himself; "Blessed is the man whom the Lord chooseth, and CAUSETH TO APPROACH UNTO HIM" (Psalms 65:4). Those that are identified with Christ have been so identified purely through the mercy and grace of God, and in accordance with His own good pleasure. It is not a matter of achieving some sort of qualification for this honor; the Lord's will is the qualification. He works all things "after the counsel of His own will" (Eph. 1:11); He is not constrained to bring men unto salvation because of their doing, for "there is none that seeketh after God, no not one" (Romans 3:8-11). Works are absolutely excluded as a basis for election. Grace is the means, God's will is the reason. "If by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it is by works, then it is no more of grace; otherwise work is no more work" (Rom. 11:6). Those that declare we are elected when we have "obeyed the Gospel" have nullified grace! The two are contrary, the one to the other and a unity between them may not be achieved! Man's works and God's grace cannot mix! If works enter in, then grace must be taken out, otherwise it cannot be called grace.

There are those whom the Lord hath "not appointed to wrath, but to obtain salvation (I Thess. 5:9) by our Lord Jesus Christ." Do not ask for a fleshly reason for the appointment, or impugn the judgment of God because it does not come up to your expectations. Why impute your ignorance to God? Take it upon yourself. We are the ignorant ones; not God. Because His choice and election does not meet with the theological requirements of our highly trained religious enthusiasts certainly does not mean that they are wiser than God! Those that oppose the election of grace are not wiser theologians than Paul! Let it stand, for when you are gone, yet shall it be working, bringing the elect into the fold of Christ, and drawing them unto Jesus that the manifold grace of God might be exhibited before the higher creation. We must learn to regard with reverence the secret counsel of God, by the which His purposes are wrought out upon the earth. I bid you to receive the truth of free election (for so does the idiom "the election of grace" indicate) of God, and thank Him that the matter of salvation is left in His hands; that His purposes cannot be thwarted nor overturned. If you are drawn toward the Lord and have tasted of the good word of God in power, and have heard the Gospel not in word only but in the Holy Ghost and much assurance, then this may be taken as an indication of your election (I Thess. 1:4-5). Those that so favorably respond to the Gospel of Jesus Christ have evidenced their choice by God; "And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (Acts 13:48). May I urge you to "give diligence to make your calling and election sure" (II Pet. 1:10), adding to your faith the various graces mentioned in that passage. We are assured that if we do these things we "shall never fall", for truly this is the evidence of the election of God. Remember that "the gifts and callings of God are without repentance" (Rom. 11:29), and that He does not forsake His own. The election

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# Erroneous Conceptions Of Sickness

Flesh always attempts to assert itself into the program of God. As you grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (II Pet. 3:18), you will find an increasing distrust of the flesh, its conceptions and its motivations. Truly, "we are of the circumcision that worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and HAVE NO CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH" (Phil. 3:3). Any doctrine or trend that compels us to look upon the flesh, and to consider it above the basic needs and requirements of the soul is a most dangerous one, and must be shunned with spiritual vigor. There is an alarming amount of stir presently among many newly enlightened peoples concerning sickness, and the provision by God for the strengthening of and care for the body. Found within many camp is in unbecoming emphasis upon the overt workings of God in the body. While I by no means desire to deny or even to question the ability of, and promise of, the Lord to minister to the needs of the sick, I feel compelled to draw attention to some very dangerous trends in current thought, which, if followed persistently, will ultimately bring about a warped concept of the work of God toward man.

There must be the utmost care taken not to continually attribute spiritual weakness and small faith to those that are plagued with continual illnesses. While this may seem to be a very elementary conclusion, its truth has not been perceived by many. Claiming to have abundant illumination from the Lord on the subject of illness and health, some have stated that it is not God's will that we ever be sick, and that when we are, God has promised to take our illness away, having laid all of our sicknesses upon Jesus Christ. Now, that this is a basically faulty conception is seen when the Scriptures are viewed with a mind to see the "truth as it is in Christ Jesus." Matthew 8:17 reads; "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet Esaias saying, Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses." Prior to this, the Apostle had recorded the miraculous cures of Christ, wrought after Peter's wife's mother was restored to health; "When the even was come, they brought unto Him many that were possessed with devils: and He cast out the spirits with His word, and healed all that were sick" (Matt. 8:16). The fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy is referred to this work of Christ, and not to His death. While it is quite evident in Scripture that the Lord still works mercifully toward those possessing infirmities of body, it is not taught in this passage that the basis of their healing is Christ's death, and that once being united with Jesus in His death, we become strangely immune to disease. This passage teaches a far more profound truth than that, and we ought never be guilty of trying to fit the Scriptures into the doctrine which we desire to promulgate, however true it may be in its essence. Matthew is, under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, revealing to us the manner in which Jesus healed sickness. He did not perform miracles by magic, nor by the power of God exerted, as it were, externally on His behalf, nor by His own

inherent Divine nature. Rather He Himself bore the sickness that it might be removed from the sufferer. He wrought His miracles at His own expense, suffering the limitations of flesh that we might be adorned with the "righteousness of God" (II Cor. 5:21). It is true that sickness is the offspring of sin; but every sickness may not be traced to specific sins (John 9:1-3). Those illnesses that Jesus removed when upon earth He removed by taking them upon Himself, so to speak, thus alleviating the afflicted. The prophecy of Isaiah was designed (in part) to teach us that Jesus would heal, and it is declared pointedly by the Apostle to have fulfilled before Jesus died. It will do no good to try and fit this into a doctrinal mould of your own choosing, and use it to substantiate a teaching that it will not substantiate! This particular passage teaches that Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah when He personally wrought miracles, while in the flesh, delivering men from sickness and physical malady. However many passages there may be in Scripture that instruct us pointedly concerning the healing of the body, none of them are based upon the death of Jesus Christ. Such a doctrine is absurd at its very foundation, teaching men that unity with Christ's death brings an exemption from sickness. So, we shall have to denounce such great men as Paul, Timothy, and others, who suffered frequent illnesses, and, so far as the record indicates, were never delivered from harassing physical ailments. Begone, thou wrester of the Scriptures of truth, who would make the death of Jesus Christ a foundation for perfect health. I find such a teaching to be most contemptible, for it has cut across what Matthew has written as he was "moved by the Holy Ghost", and places me in the precarious position of doubting the apostleship of my beloved brother Paul.

There are several observations which I seek to make in the Scripture, with a single eye to declaring that Christ's death did not obliterate illness, nor that illness brings an unbecoming testimony before the Lord and His people. Too, there is not one whit of Scripture that leaves us to suppose that an ill person has not availed himself of every opportunity to become well, thus remaining infirm according to the good pleasure of the Lord. I would take extreme caution at this point lest some be brought to believe that we should be lethargic in pleading the Lord to minister graciously in healing the sick and raising the fallen. It is not my intent to cause men to settle down in illness, but rather to settle down in the Lord, being fully ready to receive the edict of God in their case, whether for healing or for infirmity.

Paul, while being imprisoned, was visited by Epaphroditus, a messenger and "fellow soldier" from Philippi. During the stay of this good brother he fell sick, and was verily "sick nigh unto death" (Phil. 2:25-27). God had mercy upon him, and he was restored unto health - but not until he was "nigh unto death". There, in the presence of Paul, who had healed many through the power invested in him, laid one infirm unto the point of death.

Here is a case that abundantly demonstrates that the Lord never did put into man's hands the "gift of healing" to be solely exercised under human judgment. Paul expresses his sorrow that engulfed his soul during that illness, and declares that at the revelation of God's mercy, he too tasted of its goodness, "lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow." (Phil. 2:27). There is no need to fear the consequences of this truth, nor to suppose that this will mean an abandonment of the conviction that the Lord can still "raise the sick." But there is the greatest necessity that men cease to intrude their will and their notions into the stream of Scripture. This instance flies directly in the face of that doctrine which declares that if we believe the promises of God and obey them that we shall surely be healed. But, this is not the only instance which contradicts the decrees of overly-eager men. Permit me to go on.

On one occasion Paul, (again, he was used on sundry occasions to bring healing of the body to man) actually left a man sick in one location as he traveled to another; ". . .but Trophimus have I left at Miletum SICK" (II Tim. 4:20). Now, sir, would you impugn the faith of Paul, or that of Trophimus? To do either one, you must affirm more wisdom and knowledge than did the Holy Spirit in passing on this information to us! Paul healed people according to the will of God (Acts 19:12), and not in accordance with his own will. The very fact that he left Trophimus sick in Miletum indicates that it was not the Lord's will at that point to restore the brother to health. Furthermore, Paul himself suffered from physical infirmities. As he preached to the Galatians, Paul actually states that he did so because of "the infirmity of the flesh" (Gal. 4:13) indicating that illness had detained him among them. Yet, the Galatians did not revile him or turn upon him for this reason, but rather received him as a messenger from God (Gal. 4:13). Paul had, prior to this, declared that he possessed a most grievous "thorn in the flesh". Three times had he earnestly besought the Lord to remove this, but the Lord had refused (II Cor. 12:7-9), declaring that "His grace was sufficient." Now, who will assert that Paul did not believe the promises of God or obey His will? Paul declared that he would rather "glory in his infirmities" (II Cor. 12:10). Would to God that some of my brethren could be granted that grace; it should be to their everlasting benefit! Who is it that will quarrel with God if He refuses, for reasons known only to Him, to hear our petitions for healing? And, praise God, who is it that will revile Him when He hears our pleas and grants health and strength of body! It is His will that determines the condition of our body.

Timothy, the young evangelist, was apparently often sick. Paul wrote unto him instructing him concerning his "often infirmities (sicknesses)". His instruction directly opposes that of some today, and so let them receive it as a rebuke; "Drink no longer water, but take a little wine for thy stomach's sake AND THINE OFTEN INFIRMITIES" (I Tim. 5:13). It will do no good to evade this text; the Apostle Paul gives advice that is shunned by many today. The Holy Spirit has left for us a statement which is as surely to be believed as those declaring that we are to pray for the sick

"annointing them with oil in the name of the Lord" (James 5:14-15). Jesus plainly declared that the sick "had need of a physician" (Matt. 9:12; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:31). Paul had traveling with him none other than the "beloved physician" Luke (Col. 4:14). Why ought anyone hold these truths in contempt. Why do you not rather accept the truth of the Word of the Lord?

To deny the healing of the body is, too, a most grievous sin, which we recognize. We are not opposing that, for to do so would be to oppose the Lord God Himself (Matt. 4:24; 8:16; 14:14; Acts 5:15; 9:38; 19:12 28:8 James 5:14-15). We are not at all ashamed to admit to our acceptance of the healing of the body as available to those who are the Lord's, having tasted of the same, and knowing it to be a reality. But to presume that God had promised to heal every sickness, and that sickness evidences unbelief, is an unwarranted assumption. Some of our beloved brethren in the Lord have carried this teaching far beyond that which is written, and have cast as subtle just as reflection upon the Lord (in insisting that it is His will to heal all His children) as they assume others to have done who insist that He heals no longer. Paul knew nothing of the current emphasis on healing by many of our brothers, and yet I am persuaded that he did not come behind them in the actual knowledge of its workings. On one occasion, Jesus healed only a "few sick folk" (Mark 6:5), while on another occasion He healed "all that were sick" (Matt. 8:16). This serves to emphasize that healing is performed according to God's will and authority. It may not be countered that Jesus was confronted with unbelief, and that this alone altered His work, for He had often worked in the very midst of unbelief, and had even granted faith to those whom He desired. The teaching of Scripture is that people are "willing in the day of His power" (Psa. 110:3). Obstinacy of will can certainly be overcome by the Lord, and the confrontation of it may not of itself be considered the sole cause of Christ's failure to work. The Lord doth impute blindness and hardness of heart unto people (John 12:38-40). Jesus expressly attributes their failure to believe to the very work of God; "Therefore, they COULD NOT BELIEVE, because . . . HE HATH BLINDED THEIR MINDS AND HARDENED THEIR HEARTS; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them." This, is the announcement of Jesus Christ Himself, and is the inspired interpretation of Isaiah 53:1; and Isaiah 6:9-10: Doubt it not! A simple statement that men have not believed is not sufficient for the answer of the presence of illness, or other maladies! Many times it is rather a portrayal of the very counsel and will of God. Now, this does not nullify praying for the sick, as some suppose. It is true that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much", and that "the prayer of faith shall save the sick" (James 5:15) - but this is exactly the point where the carnal mind becomes lost. It is the "PRAYER OF FAITH" - not simply a prayer, or a plea, or a supplication, but "THE PRAYER OF FAITH." Faith is not mustered up within us by self effort. It just doesn't happen. It is not making up your mind to believe that the promise of God is true, as some

ridiculous sophists have asserted! Faith is a dis-  
 patchment from the Throne of God, and it is given  
 by "measure" to every man (Romans 12:3); i.e.,  
 "every man in Christ". Faith places us in the will  
 of God, and moves upon us to make proper use of  
 His power. We do, by faith, make bold inquiries for  
 "great grace". But faith is not to be confused with  
 intellectual ascent! It is not a mental persuasion  
 whereby you talk yourself into believing what God  
 has said is true. It is a grant from God. It is "sub-  
 stance" and "evidence" (Heb. 11:1), which is "ob-  
 tained" by the "elect" (II Pet. 1:1-3). It was, and  
 remains, "delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). It is  
 an "imputed" faith (Romans 4:1-25), and prayer  
 within its confines is effectual, thus honoring the  
 Lord that gave it. We may not dictate to the Lord  
 what kind of faith we desire; that is up to Him.  
 He may well give us a faith to see the sick re-  
 stored to health, and He may reserve the right to  
 withhold such faith from us. We do not find fault  
 with Him, whatever He does. We readily resign  
 ourselves to the will of God in sickness as well as  
 in health.

The truth is that neither Christ nor the Apos-  
 tles were as alarmed over bodily ailments as many  
 are today. It was never a point of emphasis with  
 them. Indeed, those who grumble today of ill-  
 nesses rather than glorying in them (as we are  
 admonished in Scripture, for "when I am weak,  
 then am I strong"), are not wiser theologians than  
 Paul! I hardly see how their revelation of heal-  
 ing can be too valid if they have not themselves  
 learned to be content in whatsoever state they are  
 in! To some have been granted gifts of healing"  
 (I Cor. 12:9, 28, 30); but they have been granted  
 "according to His will" (Heb. 2:4). These gifts are  
 not to be used in accordance with fleshly dis-  
 cernment. Faith never makes the wrong maneu-  
 vers! Many have placed God in a restricted area,  
 declaring that He no longer exercises His autho-  
 rity in the healing of the body. The Scriptures  
 have equally restricted the Lord by saying that  
 He always heals. Both are approaches made  
 through the avenue of Law and are to be avoided.  
 The fleshly mind will always seek a fleshly em-  
 phasis (Romans 8:2-5), as is portrayed in an un-  
 seemly exuberance over the healing of the body.  
 Such an emphasis is not found in Scripture, and  
 no amount of vain assertion will place it there. We  
 would remind you that "the testimony of Jesus is  
 the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10). We desire  
 the Lord to "do as seemeth Him good." If Jesus  
 Christ Himself forwent His personal will and re-  
 signed Himself to the will of God (Matt. 26:39),  
 who will revile us if we say the same?

Believe what God has said concerning grace  
 for bodily needs, and trust to that, giving those

truths the emphasis that God gave them, not the  
 emphasis you feel ought to be given them. Jesus  
 still remains the great Physician, and we praise  
 Him for that. Trust to His wisdom and to His So-  
 vereignty also, and make His Person, and who He  
 is, your point of emphasis; not what He does. He  
 does not ask you to do that, He will demonstrate  
 for Himself what He does to those who know who  
 He is!

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## The Election of Grace

(From page 5)

"hath obtained" the promise (Rom. 11:7-8), and  
 everyone else has been blinded, even as unto this  
 day. Praise God for Himself, for His choice, and for  
 the manifestation of that choice to those chosen!

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## MEDITATION

(From page 1)

and difficult circumstances, I find that "my meditation  
 of Him is sweet" (Psa. 104:34). Too, to permit my thoughts  
 to dwell upon the precepts of the Lord is most upbuilding  
 (Psa. 119:15). The Law of God being "written upon the  
 heart" (Heb. 8:8-11), I may now continually contemplate  
 it, and rejoice in it. "How precious are Thy thoughts unto  
 me, O God! how great is the sum of them" (Psa. 139:17).  
 Even as Paul admonished Timothy to "meditate upon these  
 things" (I Tim. 4:13), so ought we often to admonish one  
 another! The things that God hath wrought are to be  
 remembered, and "EVERY THOUGHT is to be brought  
 into subjection to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:3-5).  
 Here is the real battleground of the Christian life—the  
 mind! How often do vile thoughts enter the mind and  
 receive a welcome, until suddenly we come to realize  
 that we are "doing that which we would not." Subtle,  
 indeed, is "our Adversary the Devil, who walks about as  
 a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (I Pet. 5:8).  
 He will place "imagination" (human thought-inventions)  
 within the mind, and urge you to consider them, until  
 you have become filled with thoughts contrary to the  
 will of God. Beware of this subtle attack of Satan, and  
 prepare your heart to meditate upon the Lord and His  
 "works" (Psa. 143:5). "Muse" on what He has said; what  
 He has done, and what He has made. You are urged  
 to think upon things that are high and holy, pure, good  
 and lovely (Phil. 4:8). Is your meditation of Him sweet,  
 or do you fear to think of the Lord? I urge you to earnest-  
 ly seek grace for this most holy exercise. God stands  
 ready to aid you, and to place within you a heart that  
 is made to meditate upon Him, His ways, and His words.  
 Call upon Him for THIS grace to help in time of need!

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