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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

"Praise Ye The Lord"

Speaking of God to those of decidedly lower proportions of grace than those in whom dwells the Holy Spirit, it was said, "He is thy praise, and He is thy God" (Deut. 10:21). This was but another version of: "If any man glory, let him glory in the Lord" (I Cor. 1:3). There is hardly a more stimulating spiritual exercise than that of ascribing praise and glory to the God that "hued us from the rock." We are, in fact, a "chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; THAT YE SHOULD SHOW FORTH THE PRAISES OF HIM WHO HATH CALLED YOU out of darkness into His marvelous light" (I Pet. 2:9). Actually, this is the end to which the Lord has called us, that we might be trophies of His power and grace and that we might give praise and honor to Him who hath called us. It is not that this is a misdirected, forced, or tedious exercise, for the Lord "is worthy to be praised" (II Sam. 22:2). While this was a formality under Law, the design of it even then was to bring men to a state of mind where they were occupied with thoughts of the Lord. It is to be understood that within the confines of their own limited strength, the Israelites after the flesh could not perform this to any true edification of soul. However, even in that formality we are afforded a glimpse of the will of the Lord on this matter of praising Him; that He delights in such holy exercise. To these under the Law it was said; "And to stand every morning and to think and praise the Lord, and likewise at even" (I Chron. 23:30). You see, praise is very becoming to the child of God; ". . . praise is comely to the upright" (Psa. 33:1). There is hardly any more fitting admonition to the children of God than that found in Psalms 47:6; "Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto OUR King, sing praises."

Now, praises may only be properly sang or uttered by those with an understanding of the Person of God; ". . . God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises WITH UNDERSTANDING" (Psa. 47:7). This is a certain way to glorify the Lord; "He that offereth praise glorifieth me" (Psa. 50:23). Furthermore, this is the real secret of living a victorious life. If you desire with all of your heart to maintain the

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In This Issue . . .

**JESUS - THE NAIL
CONFUSION AND THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH**

The Word of Truth

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The Ministry of the Word—An Important Work

Having a respectable number of contacts with ministers, I feel compelled to voice something that I have felt for a long time, and it is a thing which needs greatly to be brought to the attention of religious people everywhere. Our theological seminaries and local church leadership have suggested that the ministry of the Word of God is of secondary importance. Ministers, by their very activities give alarming confirmation to this observation. The Scriptures speak highly of those who "labor in the Word and in the doctrine" (I Tim. 5:17), but such is not at all highly commended today! I personally know of an increasing trend among ministers to give second-hand, hastily-prepared spiritual meals on the Lord's days. Actually, they become so burdened down with the administrative duties (which they and the church presume are theirs) that they have very little time to study and pray fervently for great messages that will feed and succour the flock of God. Many sermons are "canned", and some are even given word for word from some sermonic book, without any discernment of the great truths the author may have had in mind. Saturday night finds many a minister grasping for a sermonic straw, and finally on the Lord's day throwing out some very weak food for the hungry sheep. It is alarming how that many of these same men wonder why their churches are not stronger in faith; how can they be with such weak messages presented from the pulpits? The people who truly love the Lord suffer from such ways. Those that are preachers realize that this is not fable, it is truth, and it is time that those guilty parties recognize it as sin and asked for spiritual strength to overcome it!

I well recall some rather unprofitable time that I spent in a religious institution, and the many times that I was reminded that "pulpit work" was not the most important phase of the minister's work, but rather his "personal work and counselling." Very subtly, Satan used these declarations to flood many minds with doubt as to the proper place of ministering the Word of God. The presentation of the God's Word is a sacred task, second to none, and ought never to be entered into without sufficient study and prayer! Every message should be fresh from the porch of heaven, and pulsating with divine life. Now, your activities in the Spirit determine your output of spiritual truth. A busy and successful minister

REAL 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" (I John 4:10). This is the most profound demonstration of the immensity of God's love, how extensive and past finding out it is. When in us there was no apparent reason for loving us, no response of love, only rebellion and wicked adherence to evil; when we were "sinners", and "without strength", Christ "died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5:1-11). This is the love that supercedes all love - yea, there is no other love. Love is not our affection for God, it is God's affection for us. True love, you see, did not demand an immediate response, and how I praise the Lord for that, for I was not at all inclined to love God when at first I knew of His reality. Let us learn from this great truth to have done with any blasphemous doctrine that teaches that man's response motivates God in the matters of salvation. We are categorically told in this text that love is not ours, but His! "The love of Christ constraineth us" (II Cor. 5:14), our love for Christ is not the constraining factor. God is said to work His works "according to the good pleasure of His will" (Eph. 1:5, 11), not according to the response of man. Actually, the love which we have for the Lord is nothing more than His own love returned to Him through the medium of our spirits, or our minds. It is this precise love that is "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us" (Rom. 5:5). God's objective within the hearts of men is to produce His own character - that "new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created Him" (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10). Any other love is really not another! The only affection God will receive from us is that which He has had for us in the first place, reproduced and wrought within our hearts under the power of the Holy Spirit. This is true love for God - not ours, but His! Praise God!

by modern standards is one who has made a favorable impression upon society: he mingles well, smiles nice, and is known for his association with high gatherings and tribunals. He has generally "conferred with flesh and blood", and how strikingly this is evidenced in his handling of the Word of God. He has chosen and loved the praises of men more than the praises of God, and he shall not be held guiltless.

The sheep of God are led upon rough paths and are in need of good and plenteous nourishment. The flippant, attention-getting sermons mouthed from the pulpits of the land are hardly fitted to succour and strengthen the hungry and thirsty. James declares: "Be not many of you masters (teachers), knowing we shall receive the greater condemnation (judgement)" - Js. 3:1. Let's be honest, the ministry has degenerated into a career and a profession instead of the beneficial gift from God that it is declared to be in the Scriptures (Eph. 4:10-11). We have colleges that can manufacture preachers to meet the need of any denomination. Each sect can make a servant who will be sure to emphasize their exclusive doc-

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“JESUS - THE NAIL”

It is true that everywhere in Scripture, we see Jesus Christ, who Himself is the very spirit of prophecy (Rev. 19:10). Repeatedly I have made reference to this fact, and that for a reason. The vast majority of religious people fail to see Christ in the Scriptures. Most people mistakingly limit the revelation of His person to what is called “The Gospels” (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John). Actually, however, these are a nutshell view of all that Jesus “began to do and teach.” If you have been given of the Lord to discern the Scriptures properly, you will find that from Genesis to Malachi you have a detailed study of all things that God has for man. They are obscure in their essence, and hence the Jewish nation failed to grasp their fundamental message.

If you desire to have a detailed view of how God deals with men, and what He has for men, then you need to have the writings of Moses and the prophets opened up to you by the Holy Spirit. Again, in the Gospels we have Jesus Christ compressing all of these various truths into kernel form, and giving them in His various discourses and demonstrating them in His mighty works and miracles. The Acts of the Apostles is but a living demonstration of the principles veiled by the prophets and declared in abridgement by Jesus Christ. The Epistles are but an amplification of the fundamental points of Christ’s teaching - they are an expounding of those things which are in their essence the most essential of all truths. Hence, they deal with the person of Jesus, the nature of faith, love, longsuffering, patience, etc. Once this Divine arrangement is seen, there shall be unveiled, as by the Holy Spirit of God, before your eyes an entirely new scope of vision, whereby you shall be enabled to see the real message of the “Scriptures of truth.” Now, I have taken the time to give you this brief analysis in order that you might be profited by the remainder of this article. This is not conjecture or a philosophical “stabbing in the dark” - it is “the truth as it is in Christ Jesus.” Many mistakingly believe that unless there is a categorical reference made to the person of Jesus Christ in portions of Scripture that no lesson may be drawn in reference to Him in that particular passage. These do greatly error, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. The converse is actually true; if Jesus cannot be seen wonderfully in every passage of Scripture, then nothing can be seen at all - for He Himself is the body of Scripture, the Personality that gives life and meaning to it all. He is referred to as “THE WORD” (John 1:1-14), thus indicating that the Scriptures are but a detailed analysis of His own character and Person. May God grant that this may be put into your heart, that new and fresh realizations of truth may be your portion. Amen.

“And now for a little space grace hath been showed from the Lord our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to GIVE US A NAIL IN HIS HOLY PLACE, that our God may enlighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage.”—Ezra 9:8.

The book of Ezra, from which our text is taken is one that begins with the release of the

children of Israel from bondage in Babylon, and thus is immediately seen to be pregnant with truth applicable to our own situation: “Now these are the children of the province that went up out of the captivity, of those which had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away into Babylon, and came again to Jerusalem and Judah, everyone unto his city.” (Ezra 2:1). Out of that great land of captivity marched close to 50,000 adults (42,360 men, 7,337 servants and maids, 200 singing men and women.) Together with them they also took a tremendous gathering of beasts (736 horses, 245 mules, 435 camels, 6,720 asses). This is recorded in the second chapter of Ezra. From these facts we see that they were not going back to the homeland for a visit, but rather to take up residence. They were preparing for a permanent dwelling in the holy land. God has given them a glorious liberty, and a means of obtaining residence in their land again - in spite of their gross sins which they had committed, which led them into the Babylonian captivity. Under the leadership of Ezra, an “able scribe”, the temple of the Lord was repaired and dedicated again. What a glorious day it was - the restoration of true worship unto the Lord God of heaven. However, upon completion of the temple construction, Ezra was informed that the people were not “separated unto the Lord” (Ezra 9:1-2); as a matter of fact, they had entered into sin, thus profaning the work that had been done for God. Ezra, upon hearing word of this spiritual calamity rent his garments, pulled the hair out of his head and beard, and sat appalled at the very thought of such a thing taking place (Ezra 9:3). Until the evening sacrifice, Ezra remained in that position, dismayed and broken of heart (Ezra 9:4). It was then, at the time of the evening sacrifice that Ezra arose and began his prayer, confessing the terrible transgression of Israel and giving glory to God for what He had done for them. Our text is couched in this prayer, and is very meaningful.

This is one of the very few places in the writings of Moses and the Prophets where the term “grace” is mentioned . . . as a matter of fact, it is the first. Ezra acknowledges that grace has been shown them for a little space - apparently referring to the time from the edict of Cyrus, king of Persia, until that present time (about 80 years). He then states that they had received a “NAIL” in the holy place, i. e., a means of abiding in their land; a surety of habitation; something upon which they might hang their weary souls in hope. A sure nail fastened into the wall. Isaiah takes up this principle in Isaiah 33:20: “Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities; thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; NOT ONE OF THE STAKES THEREOF SHALL EVER BE REMOVED, NEITHER SHALL ANY OF THE CORDS THEREOF BE BROKEN.” The “nail in the holy place” simply was a confirmation to them that they would abide, and that none could move them out of the presence of the Lord. What a blessing it must have been, and how the heart of Ezra is torn when he sees the despicable actions of the people of Israel - even after they had seen the erection of the temple, wherein dwelt the glory of the Lord. The Lord had given them “a

little reviving in bondage"; the people had been eager to go back to the promised land, to establish the true worship of the Lord; to let be heard within her walls once again the voice of praise and supplication during the keeping of the feasts and holy days. But what - had it ended so quickly? Ezra is here pleading for a continuance of "grace"; for a prolonging of the "nail in the holy place"; for more "reviving" from going into the bondage of sin and degradation.

Now - the "NAIL"; what a blessed and comforting truth is seen here. This word - "NAIL" - means, "a sure hold". This, brethren is what I seek to declare unto you; that Jesus is our "NAIL" - our "sure hold" in the holy place! Upon Him we may be hung, and there we shall never fail. The "Author and Finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:1-2) will not only begin this work, but will "bring us to God" as the "Captain of our salvation" (Heb. 2:10). Jesus is, holy brethren, fastened in the "holy place". He is there ascended in the power of God to sit at the right hand of God and mediate in our behalf. He is appearing in the "presence of God for us" (Heb. 9:24). On Him, therefore, we may refresh ourselves in calm repose and find rest for our weary souls. He has invited us to "come" unto Him, and to "learn" of HIM, and He will give us "rest" (Matt. 11:28). Our learning must, then, be in that direction. Our efforts must be expended in that area; to be placed by grace upon the NAIL IN THE HOLY PLACE; to know of a surety that with Him we are secure. Praise the Lord! Isaiah uses this same sort of terminology as he paints a more vivid picture of Christ as the "NAIL": "AND I WILL FASTEN HIM AS A NAIL IN A SURE PLACE; AND HE SHALL BE FOR A GLORIOUS THRONE TO HIS FATHER'S HOUSE. AND THEY SHALL HANG UPON HIM ALL THE GLORY OF HIS FATHER'S HOUSE, THE OFFSPRING AND THE ISSUE, ALL VESSELS OF SMALL QUANTITY, FROM THE VESSELS OF CUPS, EVEN UNTO THE VESSELS OF FLAGONS" (Isa. 22:23-24). Herein is a prophetic picture of our Lord under the figure of "Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah; who would be placed as a "NAIL" in the holy place. I would pause here to mention a portion of that text which might well cause some confusion for many. In the 25th verse of that same chapter, it goes on to say: "IN that day, saith the Lord of hosts, shall the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall; and the burden that was upon it shall be cut off: for the Lord hath spoken it." Herein is seen the death of Jesus Christ, when He was "cut off out of the land of the living" (Isa. 53:8), in order that there might be an "end made of the transgressions." But, that NAIL was placed into the favor and the house of God again, together with all that the Father had chosen in Him; for we were "raised up" with Him to "sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 1:5-7; 2:6).

Observe, that this nail is fastened in a "sure place". Indeed, our Lord is, for He hath "ascended on high and led captivity captive"; He is in the "Father's throne", and "all things have been put under His feet". He has verily been made "Head over all things to the church" (Eph. 1:20-23). Though the heavens and the earth shall pass

away, yet shall not His habitation be removed. If it is a surety - a guarantee - that you are seeking, then you must have Jesus, for He is "fastened in a sure place". Praise the Lord! But, observe this great truth, that all of the glory of the father's house was to be hung upon Him; the vessels of small quantity, even from "cups to flagons."

And, is it not so with our Lord? Does not the "fulness of the Godhead" dwell in Him bodily? (Col. 1:19; 2:9); and are we not "complete in Him" (Col. 2:10). If any man is secure, he is so in Jesus Christ, who is the "Surety of a better testament" (Heb. 7:22). If you would make sure of heaven, sure of glory, sure of eternal fellowship with God; then you must be placed upon Jesus the NAIL. There you must hang your weary soul; there must all of your hopes reside; there must your confidence be! Dispense with that NAIL and you shall have forfeited every means of access to God. There is no other way. Jesus is the WAY (John 14:6), and no one may have the faintest glimmer of life within his breast, or even the dimmest glow of hope unless he is firmly hanging upon the NAIL! Praise God for the NAIL in the holy place! We have, by faith, formed union with Jesus. We have been "baptized into Christ" and have "put Him on" (Gal. 3:27-28). This is not theological jargon, or something to be used in substantiating forms and rites. This is fact! We are in Christ, and have put Him on. He is in us, and we are a part of Him. Our natures have been, as it were, fused together; so much so, that we are now "one spirit"; for "he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit" (I Cor. 6:17). In that holy marriage which has transpired according to the grace of God, we have become "bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh" (Eph. 5:30). We have been placed upon the "Nail!" There, beloved, "there is no condemnation" (Rom. 8:1), and we "have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). "Nothing shall be able to separate me from the love of God which is IN CHRIST JESUS THE LORD" (Romans 8:38-39). Who is it that shall lay anything to the charge of "God's elect" when it is God that justifies? (Rom. 8:33); and "who is he that condemneth" when "it is Christ that died" (Rom. 8:34). I am hanging upon the NAIL, trusting in His merit, in His work, in His accomplishments. Praise God! He paid my penalty, He is my righteousness; He is my sanctification, wisdom, and redemption (I Cor. 1:30).

I have nothing of my own - lay no claim to a righteousness of my own - but rather, have that "righteousness which is of God by the faith of Christ" (Phil. 3:9). It is the NAIL that holds me in the holy place; not my merit, not my achievement; not my personal nobility, for I have none. My righteousnesses are all as filthy rags, and they do all fade as a leaf (like Adam's fig leaf) - Isa. 64:6. Jesus Himself is the one that wrought the obedience that is to be accounted for my righteousness (Rom. 5:19). Oh, for my acquaintances to be hung upon the nail - to there find security and confidence in the "full assurance of understanding." What kind of a vessel are you? Small? Large? Listen to me, all vessels are hung upon this nail! There are "measures" and

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Confusion and the Search for Truth

Confusion concerning the things of God is not an uncommon thing among those who are in pursuit of the truth. We would offer a word of admonition to such people in prayerful hope that their hearts may be encouraged. There are two extremes to which religious confusion may lead. First, it may sufficiently discourage the heart so that truth is no longer sought - the quest for the truth of God thus ending. Second, it may impell one to make a hasty choice of teaching and thereby satisfied the mind with delusion - thus truth is not found, yet the heart is cunningly pacified. It calls for the utmost diligence in prayer and pursuit of God to avoid these Satanic snares. Beware of any inclination toward these, lest the devil catch you unawares and rob you of true joy and satisfaction in the Lord.

It is important to observe at this point the basic error that leads people into these snares of the Devil. All of these benighted persons make a claim to be seeking the truth, and thereby confess a misdirected desire. By "truth" men generally mean a set of beliefs that stand the test of Scripture and satisfy the deep longing of the heart. "Truth" is too often considered as abstract from God, as a non-personal declaration of things as they are. Satan has very subtly used this sort of a desire to actually draw people away from the knowledge of God. It is made plain in Scripture that the "bounds of our habitation" (i.e., the area which we are to occupy and in which we are to expend our energies) is that of "seeking the Lord, if haply we might feel after Him and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us" (Acts 17:26-27). We are to seek the imbibement of the person of Deity, not of mere abstract knowledge. To give real meaning to truth, Jesus declared, "I am . . . the TRUTH. . ." (John 14:6), thus signifying the proper direction of our seeking to be Himself. Oh that men might find it in their hearts to seek the Lord - to find the consuming desire of their life to assimilate and partake of the "Divine nature" (II Pet. 1:4), thus being made "partakers of Christ" (Heb. 3:14). You may not seek knowledge, even proper knowledge, without becoming grossly confused. The Lord Himself must be the object of our search! It is Him to whom we are to come, not impersonalized doctrines (Heb. 11:6). Of itself, knowledge "puffeth up" (I Cor. 8:1). I well remember in my own life how that for years I was in earnest quest for Scriptural truth. My energies were expended unceasingly in that direction. However, I was without a conscious fellowship with God, and continually confusion impregnated my mind concerning matters frequently dealt with by the sophists. But, when God put it in my heart to actually "seek the Lord" (Zeph. 2:3), I found the end of such searching able to diminish the confusion, bringing peace and joy with confidence through faith. Our Lord said, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think we have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39). To the Pharisees (those to whom Jesus spōke these words), the Scriptures formed a textbook whereby their beliefs could be substantiated. They were viewed as completely abstract from a person. Thus, they missed the real testimony of

prophecy, which is Jesus (Rev. 19:10). They were seeking in the wrong direction! We would, therefore, admonish our seeking friends and brothers to examine themselves to see whether their seeking is properly directed. Let it be to "find the Lord", who Himself will instruct you in the details of truth (Eph. 4:20, 21; I John 2:20, 27). This is not to say men ought not search the Scriptures, for this is nothing less than a sign of nobility (Acts 17:11). Rather, we urge all to devote themselves to this holy exercise with an earnest intent to there find the testimony of Jesus, that Christ might "dwell in your hearts by faith" (Eph. 3:17) as the only "hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). Any other aim is not only misdirected, but actually a tool of Satan to detract our minds from Him who is the Truth personified.

There are three methods that may be employed to find the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. Two of them are ineffective, one is effectual. I have seen all three used, and "wisdom being justified of her children" (Matt. 11:19), there is no doubt as to the proper course which men should pursue.

First, upon hearing the many conflicting opinions and emphases of religious men, the individual may decide to withdraw from all religious affiliation unto himself and trust to his own fleshly wisdom to find the truth. However, "God cannot be found by searching" (Job 11:7), and "The world by wisdom knew not God" (I Cor. 1:21). You cannot trust to self for revelation of truth, it is beyond human searching and ingenuity. You cannot simply pick up the Scriptures and read your way into the Truth. I have found that those adopting such a course are finally enamored with two books of Scripture - Revelation and Daniel. Both speak of holy and divine things in highly symbolical language. The mind of the flesh seems to fasten itself to these parabolic figures and seek to adjust and adopt them to its own concepts and thoughts. The results are that deep resentment is harbored against all who do not conform to that conclusion; the real message of the books is overlooked; no joy is ushered in because of "spiritual understanding" (Col. 1:9); a high note of suspicion is prevalent concerning anyone who fails to make the particular emphasis that has captured his mind. He actually "sours" on all religious activity but his own, and assumes that only he has found the truth, save for those few whom he chooses to believe (though widely scattered) have been given to see the same "truths" as himself. These persons lead a cloistered and secluded religious life; they are always characterized by their failure to meet with the brethren. They always entertain a high concept of themselves and their beliefs. These results clearly show of what spirit this recourse is. It is to be avoided with the utmost diligence, for it will alienate you from God, His Truth, and His children.

Second, in desperation, one may finally decide to trust to a specific man or group of men to reveal the truth. He, so to speak, places his soul in their hands. He reads what they say to read, emphasizes what they say to emphasize, and does what they say to do. He takes unto himself a

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JESUS THE NAIL

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“gifts” (Rom. 12:3; Eph. 4:7) which cause us each to differ from one another in our capacity to receive the truth, to be conformed to Christ’s image, etc. But this has nothing at all to do with our being upon the NAIL. Whatever your capacity, be upon the NAIL! There find your fellowship with God. God is “gathering together in one all things IN CHRIST, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even IN HIM” (Eph. 1:10). Whoever is received of God must be first hanged upon the NAIL, and there seasoned by grace and brought to a place of fruition in the Holy Spirit. Jesus is “in you” your only “hope of glory” (Col. 1:27). Nothing that has to do with the HOLY PLACE may be sought outside of an intimate relationship to the NAIL: i. e., you may have nothing from God unless you receive it through an intimate and real relationship and fellowship with Jesus. If you desire to be in the fellowship of God, it must be upon the merit, acceptance, and work of Jesus Christ, that eternal NAIL! It is knowledge or wisdom that you seek? Then know that “in HIM are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col. 2:3). Do not seek it apart from Christ! Only a personal relationship (by that I mean a conscious one) may give you sure knowledge and wisdom. Rest, confidence, strength, forgiveness, comfort, assurance, hope, peace, joy, righteousness, discernment, grace, glory - they all are to be found in Christ and Him alone, for He is the only NAIL in the holy place! Most religious peoples disassociate these things from Christ - but I plead with you not to be guilty of this thing! Your part is not the thing in question, for you have no part in reality. It is the “obedience of Christ” that makes us “righteous”! We have none of our own. All obedience in our lives, all knowledge, all wisdom, all insight, all conformity to the will of God is nothing more than “Christ living in us” (Gal. 2:20). It is actually the incarnation of Deity within the temple of your person! This being true, evidence is given you that you are upon the NAIL, which is fastened in a SURE PLACE in the HOLY PLACE. This nail is not accessible to the carnal, the wicked, or the children of Belial - hence they cannot harm us! You see, we have, in Christ, been gloriously lifted out of the realm of danger. We are safe in Christ, and in Christ God causes us “ALWAYS to triumph” (II Cor. 2:14). What, then, do you fear? Find the nail! Plead for grace to be placed upon the NAIL! Your plea will be heard by God; He heard mine! Don’t be discouraged; be rather of good courage! Let the Lord fight for you. Cease to war in your own strength, and “wait upon the Lord.” The battle is the Lord’s, and He shall deliver the enemy into our hands. ON the NAIL, we are safe, Praise God! Nothing can harm us there, and we are in the good favor of Almighty God, our Father who is in Heaven!

Oh Lord God of Heaven, who hath purchased us through the blood of Thine only Son; Keep us upon the Nail, safe from the tumultuous breezes of sin and decay. Cause us to be victorious in Him, and never to lose sight of the redemption that we have in Him. Hang all of my brothers up-

Confusion and the Search for Truth

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rather religious nature and becomes a good churchman. He speaks well on Bible things, and in some cases even becomes enthusiastic for what he believes to be the truth. But he is primarily a religious “parrot” speaking the message of his particular group. He read the Scriptures with an intent to better substantiate his own religious beliefs. He has no real awareness of the Lord’s presence, and is doubtful concerning the surety of his own salvation. These fruits speak loud of the insufficiency of man to supply the deep needs of the spirit, or “inner man.” Yet, many have adopted this course of following after truth. They faithfully adhere to the Sunday School quarterly, they read all of the “brotherhood” papers and attend the conferences of their particular denomination. But all of this activity will never bring a living relationship to God - it will never satisfy the deep needs of a man. It is a thin covering, but not of God’s Spirit (Isa. 30:1).

Third, a person may seek the Lord with all of his heart in earnest expectation of seeing the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus (II Cor. 4:6), and of having the truths of Scripture opened up by the Person of God Himself. He subscribes to the instruction of that “selfsame anointing” (I Jno. 2:27), and pleads for the “knowledge of the Lord” (Isa. 11:9). He seeks that distinctive quality of the New Testament, in which we are told: “They shall all know me from the least to the greatest” (Heb. 8:19-12). He trusts not to himself, but to God. What a glorious and fresh relationship this is when HE “leads me beside the still waters” and “restoreth my soul” while making me to “lie down in green pastures” (Psa. 23). Now, you may study by yourself in the power of the Holy Spirit, and have the “eyes of your understanding” enlightened by the Lord Himself (Eph. 1:18-20). It is then that you receive a spiritual blessing, and spirits are lifted to a high state of exaltation as you are given the “spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of HIM” (Eph. 1:17). Equally true, you may mingle with other brethren and receive bread from their mouths that is to edification and strength. Whether you go “in” or “out”, you find pasture (John 10:9). Praise the Lord! The results are gloriously rich: now you possess confidence, for your trust is in the Lord, and He never will lead you astray. Rather, that they wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.” (Isa. 40:31). You are assured under His tutelage that you are a child of God (Rom. 8:16). The personal studies and prayers in which you engage become gratifying, and the specific needs of your soul are met. Hallelujah! Now your trips through the Scriptures are under the guidance of the Holy Spirit of God who “reveals to you all truth.” (John 16:13), and your prayers are also under His direction, for “the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities” (Rom.

on that NAIL firmly, and let them see how firm it is that they may war as those that are “more than conquerors.” Oh Father, let it be!

8:26). What an uplifting truth that we are not left to ourselves, or to the fickle leading of mere men. The Lord personally undertakes our case, and defends our cause. Praise His name! Now, you may meet with brethren of like precious faith, and it becomes a "pleasant" thing "for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Psa. 133:1). You receive in gladness that which "every joint supplieth according to the effectual working of every part" (Col. 2:19; Eph. 4:16), knowing that it is the Lord that is ministering to you through the "body", for the various spiritual gifts are given to "profit withal", i. e., that everyone might be strengthened and edified (I Cor. 12:7). You find that in the Spirit you are "growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 3:18). No longer is there spiritual stagnation, long periods of despondency, and utter discouragement. You are made, by God, to "triumph always in Christ Jesus" (II Cor. 2:14). You have found the Lord Himself, with whom "there is no variableness nor shadow of turning" (James 1:17). Truth coming directly from Him is always fresh, never stale. You gather your spiritual manna every morning, and your soul is richly fed. The Scriptures live to you because you have an intimate association with their Author, who expounds them to you in such a way that your needs are met, and your person is strengthened in the Lord. You are taught from the Throne of God. Your praise life is magnified, for any message of truth that you receive (whether in personal devotion or through the earthen vessels of brethren and sisters) is received as from the Lord. Those who have tasted of the Lord know that He is gracious, and to them He is truly precious, for they "believe" (I Pet. 2:7).

If such has not yet been your experience, we pray that you will be encouraged to "suffer the word of exhortation", and to "seek the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near" (Isa. 55:6). Seek Him with the promise in mind that Jesus gave: "Seek and ye shall find" (Matt. 7:7). I can personally testify that He will hear your cry and marvelously reveal Himself to you. Do not be deluded by the various dogmas that are presented in the name of God - seek the Lord! Feel after Him. He is not far from you, and He is waiting to "show Himself strong" personally to you. God desires that men might know Him, and His Son, whom to know is life eternal (John 17:3). I bid you, in Jesus' name, to not fail nor be discouraged until you have found the Lord and rested upon His bosom. Amen.

The Ministry of the Word

(From page 2)

trine and educate people in their particular beliefs. We who are of the Lord, however, are crying for Spirit-filled men who know whereof they speak. We desire that the Lord Himself, who is the "Lord of the harvest", will "send forth laborers into the harvest" (Matt. 9:38; Luke 10:2). We desire the kind of preachers that are "sent" (Rom. 10:14-17), that is, sent by God—not man!

Enough guesswork, presumption, theorizing, and parroting when it comes to preaching! Let the Word of God flow like a mighty river from the pulpits, and may the ministers of this land

spend endless hours, expending their total energies in "eating the book" (Rev. 10:2-10; Jer. 15:16; Ezek. 3:1), and sustaining their souls and the souls of the brethren upon the Word of life. If the Apostles themselves found it not within the realm of reasonableness to "leave the Word of God to serve tables" (Acts 6:2), then it is certainly utter insanity for those handling the Word of God to do so today. Away with table-serving, administrative duties, etc.!

You that hear the Word of God; insist that your preachers spend the majority of their time in these tasks of prayer and study. He who refuses to indulge in such activities and duties is unfit to plow with the Gospel in the hearts of men!

PUNGENT POINTS

If the Lord did not go, He would not come. If He did not come, we would not go!

I have observed over the years that the individual which is a real student of the Scriptures, and who walks close to the Lord proves to be more of an aggravation to most assemblies than a real welcome help!

The Scriptures explicitly state that "God puts no trust in His saints" (Job 15:15). In view of this, it appears exceedingly difficult to conceive of the work of bringing men to Christ being placed into the hands of men entirely. Let us never forget that this work is under the express supervision and guidance of our Father who is in heaven! Jesus "ascended on high" (Eph. 4:9-11), He didn't climb up high, thus indicating God's personal work in "receiving Him into the heavens". Our ascent to God spiritually is on the same wise. We do not climb to God, we are lifted up, or raised up through His great power (Eph. 1:4; 2:6). In view of this, any fellowship that is to be achieved with the Lord must be accomplished through the work of the Lord Himself, and may not be attained through our own mere efforts, however arduous and sincere they may be. Trust in the Lord, brethren, and He shall direct your paths!

We are too often prone to evaluate truth only in view of our personal physical observation. Thomas was not the last to refuse to believe unless it was attested through the means of sensual perception. Faith calls upon us to believe before we see that sight might become a source of joy as it confirms our faith. I fear that many religious circles are rather renown, however, for their insistence upon intangible, sensual proof before they believe. Jesus said, "Blessed (happy) are they that see not, yet believe," and, indeed, happy they are. Sight, then, becomes a glorious attestation (when we are favored through the grace of God with it) to what we have already embraced through faith. The supreme example of this is, of course, when we shall see our Lord "face to face", and "and He is", in whom we now believe, "though we have not seen Him."

Righteousness is not descriptive of a moral state, but of a spiritual one. It is a word describing the attitude God entertains toward those whose lives are, by faith, hidden "with Christ in God" (Rom. 4; Col. 3:3). Their personal achievements may be a little more than other men, but their lives have been purged from their dross and

imperfections by the blood of Jesus Christ. We shall personally always be dissatisfied with our own righteousnesses and achievements which are as filthy rags before God. But never are we dissatisfied with our Lord Jesus Christ and His righteousness which is imputed to us through faith (Rom. 4:1-12). And, for a note of joy, neither is God Himself dissatisfied with that righteousness!

"PRAISE YE THE LORD"

(From page 1)

vows that you have made before the Lord, then praise is indispensable; "So I will sing praise unto Thy name forever, that I may DAILY perform my vows" (Psa. 61:8). This Zion to which we have come, by the grace of God (Heb. 12:22-24) is the place where praise waits for God; "Praise waiteth on Thee, O God, in Zion" (Psa. 65:1). This is why we sing, for with the song, we do praise the Lord (Psa. 69:30). We praise the Lord "for His goodness" (Psa. 107:8), for He has truly been gracious and good to us that have been rebellious toward Him, and have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). He did not take into account our merit, but our need; not our state, but His desire; not our achievement, but His will. Glorious truth, and wonderful the praise that ascribes to Him the goodness that has been showered upon the sons of God. Hallelujah! Have you tasted of the Lord, that He is "good"? Is your spirit heavy, unable to lift from the plain of earth, from the sphere of the carnal; from the realm of the seen? Then, the Lord has appointed Jesus Christ to minister to you "the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness" (Isa. 61:3). This is an acceptable sacrifice unto the Lord, and is more than whole burnt offering; "By Him (Jesus Christ) therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, **GIVING THANKS TO HIS NAME**" (Heb. 13:15).

What does it mean to praise the Lord? It simply means to ascribe unto Him with thanksgiving the credit for His own works. Salvation, protection, guidance, feeding - all of these are properly originated with and maintained by our Father who is in heaven. Praise is rendered unto Him when we glorify Him for His wondrous works. Praise the Lord! Let us make known His marvelous doings among the people. Declare His name in the midst of the congregation. Tell what great things the Lord hath done for thee. This is praise; it is comely to the praiser and acceptable to the Lord. "For of Him to Him and through Him are all things" (Rom. 11:36); "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 1:3); "Unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever" (1 Tim. 1:17); "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Pet. 1:3); ". . . and

hath made us king and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion forever" (Rev. 1:6). Praise ought to characterize our services wherein many subscribe to a mere form of worship. Among the redeemed the air ought to resound with the voice of praise and thanksgiving for what the Lord is to His people, and for His mercy toward them. Remember that "The Lord inhabiteth the praises of Israel." When the voice of praise is sounded, the Lord draws nigh to give ear, so to speak, to the extolling of His own name. Blessed be the name of the Lord. May the Lord give you the voice of praise; a voice which will lift your spirit to the highest state of spiritual joy, and remove, as by the grace of God, that spirit of heaviness which may not prevail. Praise ye the Lord!

GROWTH

Growth in Christ, and in the grace and knowledge of Him, is absolutely imperative to true joy and spiritual vitality. When soul-stagnation sets in and the new-born individual ceases to abound and increase in the "fruits of righteousness" (Phil. 1:11), there comes an ebbing of joy and a presence of sluggishness of spirit that is hardly fitting of a child of God through grace. You may mark it well, that those who are lifeless and without vitality in the assembly of the righteous are always those that have ceased to grow, if they ever had any growth in the first place. There is no substitute for spiritual growth, or "moving on to perfection" (Heb. 6:1-6).

Every day must find us possessing fresh and larger realizations of the glory of God and the greatness of His Person and work. Familiarity with the Deity is something that is to increase more and more unto the perfect day. Spiritual retardation is a just cause for alarm - to the Throne with such cases, and immediately. Those who "draw back" do so "unto perdition" (Hebrews 10:38-39). The Lord had "no pleasure in him" that follows such a course. 'Tis of the Devil that people "draw back" and "backslide".

This evil tendency toward perdition must be checked by a real surge of growth in the Lord. Minds must become saturated with the "sincere milk of the Word" (1 Pet. 2:2), that they "may grow thereby"; i. e., we are to subscribe ourselves to a continual intaking of the Scriptures of Truth, that the Lord may refine it within our soul and produce those things which make for perfection. Suffer, now, the word of exhortation: ". . . grow up into Him in all things" (Eph. 4:15); "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 3:18). May the lives of all of my brethren be characterized by a constant and incessant growth and conformity to the image of Jesus Christ, to whom be glory both now and forever.—Amen.

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