

THE WORD OF TRUTH

Published Monthly

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"—Jno. 8:32.

Volume 15

MARCH, 1971

Number 3

"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

THE REAL RESTORATION MOVEMENT

There is, in the denominational world, an attempt being made to "restore" the church of the New Testament - a move to re-establish the Scriptures as the only rule of faith and practice . . . at least that is their claim. This crusade, for over one hundred years, has been referred to as "the restoration movement." To many, that term is as sacred as John 3:16, and is verily considered to be synonymous with the inspired Word. However, the whole movement is built upon the false supposition that the true problem has been found. To confess that the church is not what it ought to be, and that the Word of God is not currently received as authoritative, is but to confess that the professed church is dead and alienated from the life of God. The remedy for such a condition is not mere human effort and organizational endeavors. It is men that must be restored, not systems; souls, not organizations; the minds and hearts of men, not authority itself. Once a man is restored to God, the Bible does become food, the church is seen differently, participation in godly enterprises is energetically sought, the will of God is satisfying to the heart. This is, of course, the very approach that the Holy Spirit makes to restoration.

"Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation" (Psa.51:12). Wouldn't it be wonderful if that sort of restoration movement was established in the earth today, by the power and energy of the Spirit of God! O, does it not whet the praying appetite of every believer that reclines on Jesus' breast? Let each one fervently seek just such a restoration movement!

"I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him" (Isa.57:18). Dear saint, are you heavy hearted - "heaviness maketh the heart of man to stoop" (Prov. 12:25)? Would you not welcome the sort of restoration movement from on High that would see comforts (plural) flooding your soul! "Balm from Gilead", "honey out of the rock", "a shadow of a rock in a weary land." This is that heavenly relief and consolation which bolsters the heart, strengthens the hands, and puts muscles into the feet that bring the glad tidings of the Gospel of peace! Oh, for such a restoration movement!

"I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord" (Jer.30:17). The soul that is experiencing the chastening of the Lord finds this to be music to his ears! For those that have tasted of the dissolution of spirit that comes when the rod is laid upon the back, the comforting words of the Lord declaring that He will restore our health and heal our wounds is no small cordial! O, for a restoration movement like that!

"I will restore unto you the years that the locusts have eaten" (Joel 2:25). For many in the Kingdom, there are memories that are as knives in the heart; memories of wasted and squandered years; of times during which our powers

(Please turn to page 8)

Sufferings and Glory — Page 2

In This Issue . . . Are False Preachers Really Innocent? — Page 4

Commentary on Philippians — Page 6

The Word of Truth

Published monthly by The Church at 78th and Independence, Merrillville, Indiana.

Author and Editor: Given O. Blakely

Contributing Author: Richard Ebler

Circulation Managers: Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Powers

Publication Office: 78th and Independence St., Merrillville, Indiana. (Send no correspondence to this address.)

Business Office: 7903 Hendricks Place,
Merrillville, Ind. 46410

Address all correspondence to 7903 Hendricks Place,
Merrillville, Ind. 46410

Sent Free upon request to all interested parties.

SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT
CROWN POINT, INDIANA

Sufferings and Glory

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us"—Rom. 8:18

It is man's infirmity that he often compares unequal things; i.e., things that are not of the same gender, so to speak. To his own confusion, the sophist will make comparisons, and attempt harmonizations between such great truths as election and human responsibility, grace and works, predestination and obedience, God's Sovereignty and human initiatives, etc. The inevitable result is that man will gravitate to the particular doctrine that suits his fancy, while relegating the apparently contradictory one to the intellectual shelf. That this course is unbecoming of a child of the Lord is evident from our text. There are some things that are not worthy of comparison. For instance, no present human experience is worthy to be compared with that which shall eventually be experienced by the "sons of God" (I Jno. 3:1-3). Too, nothing that is limited in its expression to this life is meant to be compared with things transcendent to this life and its transient order. This in no way reflects upon the truth of each seemingly conflicting doctrine; it is only to say that there are two levels of reality; one that is more readily apparent than the other; one that is more adapted to this life than the next. Such truths are often more to be received than harmonized; more contemplated than compared.

It is important to say at this point that **any approach to the Word of God that supposes that everything is discernible to men, is false and full of corruption.** God should in no wise be God if His thoughts were readily discernible and appropriated in their fulness by mortal man. Man is not God's equal, and it is ever true that "as high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are My thoughts above your thoughts, and My ways above your ways" (Isa. 55:8-9). **It is an exceedingly false postulation that God's mind can be thoroughly discerned.** There are revelations of Scripture that are simply beyond the scope of man's reason or the depth of his understanding.

A classic demonstration of this is Paul's outburst of holy consternation in Romans eleven. After expounding the cutting off of the Israelites, and the grafting in of the Gentiles, together with the coming re-grafting in of Israel; the "natural olive branches," he asserts in the energy of the Holy Spirit; "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgements, and His ways past finding out" (Rom. 11:33). This was nothing more than a confession that Paul himself did not grasp the fulness of the implications of what he taught. But this was of little concern to him. He had a God Whose thoughts could not be plumbed, and therefore he could worship Him in spirit and in truth. **Man cannot truthfully do obeisance to a god that is not beyond his feeble understanding.** Having made these preliminary observations, let us go to the text, and extract from it some meat for our needy souls.

Holy Reckoning

Spiritual reasoning is different than carnal reasoning—it is based upon the firm foundation of eternal verity. There may be little or nothing that evidently supports sound spiritual reasoning; but evident support and real support are not at all synonymous terms. "Reckoning" is the Scriptural word for spiritual reasoning; it is faith building upon the foundation of eternal fact or no acceptable rationalization within it—but the reality. There may be no human logic behind it; heart things, by faith, upon the basis of reality. **"I reckon" reflects a reconciliation with the mind of God; it is the result of a very real unity between the heart of man and the mind of God.** Another use of this wonderful term is found in Romans 6:11, where we are admonished to "reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Once again, there may be no logical and acceptable explanation or support for this truth. Your experience may appear to contradict it often; your apprehension of it may be very slight, and your struggles may seem to deny its validity. But if you walk by faith, you accept this truth, and build a life of yielding devotion unto God (Rom. 6:13). It is seen here, therefore, that **"reckoning" is a sort of active term for faith.**

Sufferings Not Worthy Of Comparison

Sometimes our sufferings seem gigantic; the cups which our Father gives us to drink seem overly bitter, and the dregs appear more than we are able to bear; and thus do we often speak of our sorrows. They appear as Goliath's in our lives, threatening to beat us into such a state of discouragement that we contemplate quitting, and giving up the fight of faith. But what does faith say to all of this? It reckons on this wise; "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." These sufferings are largely traceable to our two incompatible natures—flesh and spirit, carnal and spiritual, old man and new man, Adam and Christ (Rom. 7:15, 19, 21, 23, 24). **The reason for all suffering within the saint is**

this vexing incompatibility; "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17). **The only answer to suffering is for the believer to get beyond the flesh; out of the body, so to speak!** This he does now by faith, God shall ultimately completely liberate him from this "earthly house" (II Cor. 5:1-5).

Yet, we ought to consider that suffering is really a gift from God—a gift to be treasured and not discarded as a worthless rag; "For unto you it is GIVEN on the behalf of Christ not only to believe, but also to suffer for His sake" (Phil. 1:29). Because of this, these sufferings are worth the forfeiture of all earthly distinction and acclaim (Phil. 3:10), for they are actually an intimate "fellowship" with Christ. They are something that our Lord has "left behind" to be "filled up" by His people (Col. 1:24), as well as being tokens of our Father's "righteous judgement" (II Thess. 1:4-5). We have been given life from another world; and as such, it is set at variance with every principle of this "present evil world" (Gal. 1:4). The friction which causes the suffering of which our text speaks, is generated by these contrary natures of heaven and earth—whether inherently within us, or whether brought from the outside and directed against our persons.

But, praise God, these sufferings are only "for the present time." This reduces their largeness. However vexing and sorrowful sufferings may appear to be, they are still only applicable during "this present time". Now, that is a short period; it may be brought to consummation this very moment, and it may linger for a long while; but whatever the Father in heaven wills, it is still only for the "present time." This life, the vexations, the setbacks, the inabilities, the repercussions of living righteously and soberly—it is all only for "this present time." This is meant to keep us from magnifying suffering beyond measure. **There are many eternal things—but suffering is not one of them for believers.** The sufferings of which we speak must be viewed as things that "must needs be" (I Pet. 1:6) during our brief sojourn here; but our faith must go beyond the boundaries of time, we must rise above sense and feeling which are equally a part of the temporal order. As it is written; "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (II Cor. 4:17-18). **Persecutions and hardships of this life are better endured when we look not at the things that are seen!**

"The Glory That Shall Be Revealed"

By saying "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared . . .", the Holy Spirit does not really mean to make a comparison between the struggles of this life and the blessedness of the one to come. The point is simply that such a comparison is not proper. **Glory is of such an high order, that there is noth-**

ing in the temporal domain to which it can adequately be compared—even the "good fight of faith" (I Tim. 6:12)—which is what produces sufferings. "Glory" is what we are "seeking" for, as it is written; "To those who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory . . ., eternal life" (Rom. 2:7). It is so transcendent to the natural order, that even now we "rejoice in the hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:2). While our sufferings are but for the "present time", "glory" has to do with the "ages to come" (Eph. 2:7), as it is written; ". . . the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with ETERNAL glory" (II Tim. 2:10). It is such a firm reality, that it is spoken of as already completed—God "speaking of those things that are not as though they were"—"And whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Rom. 8:30). The wonderful superiority of this glory is seen in the fact that we are, in Christ Jesus and by the Gospel, called unto it; "Whereunto He called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thess. 2:14). Notice that—it is "the glory OF our Lord Jesus Christ." What a Savior have we, that He would, so to speak, share His own glory with His brethren. This is a treasure far too little appreciated by we whose faith is often less than it should be!

But what is glory? It is a state of spiritual liberty from all encumbrances; a condition where inhibition is not known. It is being like the Lord in the fullest sense. Now, in the life of faith, we receive our firstfruits of glory, being "changed into that same image, from glory to glory, even as by His Spirit" (II Cor. 3:18). That preliminary glory is evidenced by a rising above the flesh, being free from the dominion of our "members which are upon the earth" (Col. 3:3-5). **The "glory that shall be revealed in us" is the full expansion of this wondrous liberty.** It is that for which we seek; as it is written, "To those who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory . . ., eternal life" (Rom. 2:7). Because there is such a spiritual jubilation produced by the firstfruits of glory, we who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ truly "rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:2), being confident that the "salvation which is in Christ Jesus" comes "WITH eternal glory" (II Tim. 2:10). Resting in the "eternal purpose of God" (Eph. 3:11), we know that "Whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Rom. 8:30). Further, because He has "called us . . . to the obtaining of THE glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thess. 2:14), we are confident of the future, for the "gifts and callings of God are without repentance" (Rom. 11:29). In brief summary, **glory for the believer, speaks of that time when he shall be completely "conformed" to the "Image" of God's "SON"** (Rom. 8:29). This is the purpose of God for us, and because it is, it has become our fondest aspiration and anticipation.

In relation to our sufferings, rather than being set in contradiction to the "glory that shall be revealed", they are actually a pledge of the glory; yea, they are an evidence of the firstfruits of that glory which is already within us—praise the Lord; "If ye be reproached for the Name of

Christ, happy are ye; for **THE SPIRIT OF GLORY AND OF GOD RESTETH UPON YOU**" (I Pet. 4:14). O, that is a wonderful thing to know—that the reprisals of the world that are heaped upon believers—whether they come from heathen or religious circles (both be heathen in these cases), they become a manifestation to us of the glory of God which resides within us. **The world, when persecuting the people of God, are actually rebelling against the glory of the Lord that is in them.** When established denominations cast out the enlivened people of God as though they were "the offscouring of all things", they but acknowledge that the glory of God is repugnant to them. In such a case, all hope of heaven is removed, and only hell fire may be expected; for if the glory of the Lord is obnoxious to men now, it will be nothing less than thoroughly repugnant to them in heaven—yea, heaven would be hell to them. "Count it all joy", then, "when ye fall into divers temptations" Js. 1:2), for therein is the pledge of glory revealed to your hearts.

The day is coming when the glory within us, which is presently obscured by our appearance in the flesh, shall be manifest; "the glory that shall be revealed IN us" (Rom. 8:18). Is it not written that "when He shall appear, **then shall we also appear with Him in glory**" (Col. 3:4). And again, He is "coming to be glorified in His saints" (II Thess. 1-10). For this grand manifestation, the whole creation is waiting; "For the earnest expectation of the creature (creation) waiteth for **the manifestation of the sons of God**" (Rom. 8:19). The day is coming when all believers shall be justified and vindicated before an assembled universe. The world, which was not worthy of them (Heb. 11:38), shall even be judged by them (I Cor. 6:2), and, shining in all the splendor and glory of their Father and Savior, they shall reign forever and ever, world without end.

Conclusion

Brethren, if these things be true—and they are—then "Quit yourselves like men" (I Cor. 16:13), and "endure hardness as a good soldier" (II Tim. 2:3). Remembering that "all that shall live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Tim. 3:12), I exhort believers everywhere to be followers of their Lord in **their attitude**. It is written of Him who hath saved us; "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame" (Heb. 12:2). Remember that your labor is never "in vain in the Lord" (I Cor. 15:58). Those sufferings from within and without that you are called upon to endure are completely unworthy of comparison with the glory that shall be revealed. Let not your mind get caught up in them—think of the glory, brother, think of the glory! **There is no inconvenience, no sacrifice, no persecution, no suffering, that is worthy to be compared with it.** Endure all things for it, labor diligently and fervently for it. It will be worth it all to hear; "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.**" Amen.

Are False Preachers Really Innocent?

"And he made . . . priests of the lowest people"—I Kings 12:31

Jeroboam was a wicked king. He sought to appease the people with miserable substitutes, and he did so because he craved the heart of the people. Afraid that the Israelites would "turn again unto" Rehoboam, "King of Judah", Jeroboam conceived of a scheme to keep them from going up "to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem". He "took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them; It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (I Kgs. 12:27-28). So successful was his diabolical plan, that it is written; "He set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan" (I Kgs. 12:29-30). It was in the midst of this great evil that the king began to make priests of the "lowest people", as it is written. These contrived priests, it is declared, "were not of the sons of Levi" (verse 31b). What a tragic picture is this, and yet it is being duplicated all about us. **Men are deceiving the church of the Living God for personal gain.** Peter made mention of it in these words; "And through covetousness shall they with feigned words **make merchandise of you**; whose judgement now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not" (II Pet. 2:3). **The "lowest people" are those that have no living and vital relationship to the Lord; those who sustain not communion with the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.** Admittedly, there are preachers being molded from such people today. Myriads—literally myriads, stand behind the pulpits of the land that have never encountered a living Christ. They placidly mouth their church dogmas and creed, unaware of the great God of heaven and earth, and of the salvation which He has accomplished in Christ Jesus.

Many of those that sit under these feeble and lesser voices tend to justify these false preachers, stating that they simply don't understand, or that they lack courage, or some other such argument. It is quite true that the tendency of the flesh is to view these men in a tolerant way; and, there be those that condemn all who do not so view them. The important thing for the believer, however, is to assume the mind of the Lord on the subject, and remain unaffected by the pseudo-wisdom of his fellows. **Those that continually submit themselves to false instruction cannot avoid affectation.** The word of the Lord declares: "Cease, my son, to hear instruction which causeth thee to err from the words of knowledge" (Prov. 19:27); "O my people, they which lead thee **cause thee to err**, and destroy the way of thy paths" (Isa. 3:12); "My people are **destroyed** for lack of knowledge" (Hos. 4:6); ". . . the prophet (false) is a **snare of a fowler in all his ways**, and hated in the house of his God" (Hos. 9:8); "**In vain do they worship me**, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:9). "Evil communications **corrupt** good manners" (I Cor. 15:33)

and as surely as we submit our minds and hearts to perverted teaching, we ourselves shall soon become perverted. Israel of old, Papal Rome and denominationalism as a whole are demonstrations of this truth beyond all controversy.

What Makes False Preachers False

Primarily, two things contribute to their appellation—"false prophets". 1. They have not received a message from the Lord; there is no burning in their heart constraining them to preach the Word. 2. Their message does not comport with reality; it is basically and fundamentally out of harmony with the nature of God, His Son, His Spirit, and His Gospel. In the words of Scripture; he has "presumed to speak a word in My Name, which I have not commanded him to speak" Deut. 18:20). Man cannot simply take upon himself the responsibility of feeding the church of God; it is far too serious for fleshly decisions. Even though "the priests be too few" (II Chron. 29:34), yet must the church of the Living God rely upon their heavenly Father for the supply of heavenly spokesmen.

The direction and identification of false preachers is abundant in Scripture. It would do us all well to become familiar with these Divine assertions. "They have defiled the priesthood" (Neh. 13:29), declared the flaming prophet Nehemiah, while Isaiah thundered that they "call evil good, and good evil: that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; and put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter." (Isa. 5:20). These are such as "cause the people to err: and they that are led of them are destroyed" (Isa. 9:14). Verily, "they err in vision, and they stumble in judgement" (Isa. 28:7). They are "blind; they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs (D.D. degree) they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs that never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter." (Isa. 56:10-11). Truly it is said of them, "they that handle the law **"knew me not:** the pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets by Baal, and walked after things that **do not profit**" (Jer. 2:8). Further, it is said of them that they "bear rule by their means. . ." Jer. 5:30), thus uncovering their rejection of the leading of the Lord. "They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when **there is no peace**" (Jer. 6:13). Such men "see vain and foolish things for thee: and they have not discovered thine iniquity, to turn away thy captivity" (Lam. 2:14). Truly it is witnessed of the Spirit that these false preachers shall "arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29). They "cause divisions, and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned" (Rom. 16:17), and they "corrupt the word of God" (II Cor. 2:17), "wresting" the Scriptures "to their own destruction" II Pet. 3:16).

These are the things that make them false. O, they may be very likeable men, very accommodating, polite, and congenial. But if their ministry leads men to hell and into the ditch, what matters their personality. Besides this, "we know no man after the flesh" (II Cor. 5:16). A min-

ister's worth is to be found in his drawing of the saints about the bosom of the Lord; in his message proving a balm for a weary heart, conviction for a dead heart, and exhortation for a fainting heart. Away with personality, with techniques and methods, and all of the rest of the mental garbage that the church has borrowed from the world. Throw the text books into the waste-can, and take up the Word of God. You shall soon find what He thinks of false teachers!

What God Thinks Of False Preachers

Unlike man, the Lord does not overlook a man's sins because of his position before men. Consequently **He speaks more harshly against men that presume to stand in His Name, than against any others.** Such false ministers are worse than traffickers in dope; they are worse than saloon keepers, and the operators of houses of prostitution. **Of all men, these are the worst,** because they come purporting to have a word from God, when they really have none at all. They gender in the hearts of men a false respect for themselves and hide the face of God and the sin of man. If it be countered that they are ignorant of these things, it will not matter. If God did not call them into the ministry, counting them faithful (I Tim. 1:12), they have assumed the office themselves. They have not considered the awesome responsibility of standing before the sheep of the Lord. Therefore does the Lord speak hardly against them!

"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil. . ." (Isa. 5:20); "Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the Lord. Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel **against** the pastors that feed my people: ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings" (Jer. 23:1-2); "**Cursed be he that doeth the work of God deceitfully**" (Jer. 48:10); "**Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?**" (Ezek. 34:2); "**Behold, I am against the shepherds,** and I will require my flock at their hand" (Ezek. 34:10); "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; **he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness; FROM SUCH WITHDRAW THYSELF**" (I Tim. 6:3-5).

Let us have done with thinking that those that perpetrate false doctrine are innocent—they are not. They are not so viewed by the Lord, and they cannot be so viewed by His children. **Messages to the sheep must come from the Lord, not from the empty well of man's mind.** Do not excuse such men—pray for them, exhort them unto repentance. God is angry with them every day because they have subverted His people (Psa. 7:11; II Tim. 2:14).

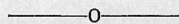
A Word To Preachers Who Sense Their Own Aloofness From The Lord.

If you stand as a representative of the King, and yet sense in your spirit that you are far from

Him, having no confidence of your standing with Him, and no message for His people; then come down out of the pulpit. Quit receiving remuneration for your dead words. Get a job and work like other men until you have learned what it means to rejoice in God your Savior. We that know the Lord do not recognize you as a minister of Jesus Christ, God does not recognize you as such, nor does Christ, the Holy Spirit, or the angels. So there is really no need to continue in the role of a preacher—it is a false role for you. You need to be saved and converted. And, "when thou art converted, strengthen the brethren" (Luke 22:32).

A Word To Those Presently Sitting Under Such False Preachers

If you have been sitting under the preaching of a lifeless man, then there is a word from God for you—"withdraw thyself"! (I Tim. 6:5). You cannot exempt yourself from that exhortation! It is addressed to you, and you must obey it or be humbled under the mighty hand of God. What mean you to contribute your tithes and your offerings, your time, your energy of mind and body, to the support of that which does not edify, but only ministers questions and strifes? How will you answer to your Lord for such actions, when He has earnestly besought you to sever such associations? False preachers are not innocent! You cannot live in the bosom of the Lord and continually be fleshly—persistently give forth teachings that minister to the flesh instead of to the spirit. The very fact that your gift is agitated within when you are in the presence of these men indicates of what spirit they are. I summon you to obedience and the crucifixion of your own views of this matter. God has spoken plainly—do you believe?



Commentary on Philippians

By Richard Ebier

Chapter Three (cont.)

(vs. 4-7) "Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ."

In the previous verses of this chapter, Paul warns the Philippians against the Judaizers. These were those who tried to mingle the legalist observance of Moses with faith in the gospel of Christ as a condition of justification. Paul therefore calls them "dogs" since they were outside the pale of the true church, "evil workers" since their religious activity did not spring from true faith, and "concision" because they were mutilating the body of Christ with their false doctrine. He then says that those who worship God "by the Spirit" (ASV), glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh are the true circumcision.

With this background we can better understand the verses which follow. Paul says that if

it were proper to trust in carnal religion for salvation, then he could boast of more than his opponents possessed. Before his conversion on the Damascus road, Paul was an eminently zealous Pharisee who excelled at natural religion, void of the Spirit. But God delivered Paul and thus made him an expert at refuting that error by which he had once been enslaved.

Paul sets himself forth as an example of trusting Christ alone. Yet he makes it so that his enemies could not accuse him of extolling Christ to excuse his own religious deficiencies, for his fleshly religious pedigree excelled them all. He does not despise external privileges in their proper sphere of usefulness as a means of grace and faith, but he does not want men to boast in religion per se nor rest in such things for salvation. He counts them dung in comparison with the supernal excellence of Christ's righteousness for justification which is apprehended by faith.

Since the Judaizers put such great stock in the ceremony of circumcision, Paul says that he himself was circumcised the eighth day after his birth according to the law of Moses (Gen. 17:12). This proved that he was not merely a proselyte who had been circumcised late in life, but rather was "born within the pale of the church and dedicated to God under the zeal of the covenant at the day of God's appointing."

Paul could also refer back to his remotest ancestry as a descendent of the stock of Israel (Jacob). This proved that he was not an Ishmaelitic son of Abraham nor an Edomite (a son of Isaac through Esau).

The tribe of Benjamin was an honorable ancestry inasmuch as the temple was located on the border of Benjamin (Joshua 18:28); it had adhered to Judah when all the other tribes revolted; it was forward in the Reformation (Ezra 1:5); Benjamin was his father's dearest son (Gen. 44:20); and the tribe was under God's special protection (Deut. 33:12).

Paul refers to himself as a Hebrew of the Hebrews. This name was a most ancient and honorable name. Moses calls Abram himself an "Hebrew" after "Eber" one of the godly seed of Shem whom Noah blessed above all his brethren. Paul was a full-blooded pure Hebrew on both his mother's and father's side.

Having been a Pharisee, Paul was brought up in the law. He sat at the feet of Gamaliel, an eminent doctor of the law (Acts 22:3). He said that he lived "after the most straitest sect of our religion" (Acts 26:5); in fact, his father was a Pharisee (Acts 23:6). This sect was noted for its zeal in proselyting, for its fairly orthodox doctrine, and for its strict outward observance of ceremonies.

Paul was so zealous in his Phariseism that he hated the church and persecuted it to the death. This which he later thought to be the greatest sin of his life (I Cor. 15:8, 9), he now reckons by a sort of irony in this controversy with the Judaizers as a glory to himself. At least it did demonstrate his zeal in fighting for what he thought was right and opposing what he thought was wrong. Besides this, it takes zeal to persecute the church because the real sheep of Christ will not

fight back. Paul declared that he was exceedingly zealous of the traditions of the fathers and served God with pure conscience. He thought he was doing God service in his persecutions. He had zeal without knowledge.

Paul says that he was religiously faithful and morally blameless in the eyes of men. He does not speak here of absolute moral perfection before God, but of "what would satisfy the common opinion of mankind." Christians do not despise outward morality but they do insist that it is insufficient grounds to trust in for salvation. There are millions of people whose circumstances and background promote moral living, who go to some church once a week, and suppose that they are real Christians. But conviction of sin must precede faith in the Savior. Publicans and harlots enter the kingdom before moral and carnally religious people, because they are quicker to see themselves as sinners in need of a Savior from the power of sin and unbelief.

Paul's fleshly Babylonish-type religion was gain to him before he knew Christ. But now he counted those things loss which hindered him from coming to Christ, for certainly nothing could be more hurtful than what shuts us out of heaven. He says in effect, "I should have reckoned myself an unspeakable loser if, to adhere to my religion, I had lost my interest in Jesus Christ."

Let each reader examine his heart. Is Christ precious to you? I speak of the Christ in the Bible! Does your church environment tend to make him **more** precious? If not, then perhaps you have made an idol out of your church, making it a substitute for Christ as the object of your devotion. To such I say, "Count all things but dung that you might win Christ."

Grounds for Assurance in Ephesians One

The faith of the child of God must be built upon the firm foundations of God's work, and God's committal. **At no point are we to rest in ourselves, or lean to our own understanding.** Salvation is of the Lord" (Jonah 2:9), and for this reason it is referred to us as "His salvation" (I Chron. 16:23), and God is appropriately called "the God of our salvation" (Psa. 68:19). It is true that "salvation belongeth unto the Lord" (Psa. 3:8), and that He is "The Author of eternal salvation" (Heb. 5:9). Concerning the completion of our salvation, He is referred to as "the Captain of our salvation" (Heb. 2:10), because it is His self-imposed responsibility to "bring us to glory" (Heb. 2:10). **Salvation must never be viewed as an accomplishment of man, either in part or in whole.** It is entirely of the Lord from beginning to end, and man is, at best, but an "heir of salvation" (Heb. 1:14). The first chapter of Ephesians hammers this wonderfully comforting truth into our hearts, and well may we thank God that He has so laboriously entered into the work of persuading us of the origin of our salvation. While our hearts grasp this truth by faith, it seems that our minds run a poor second, and are often very slow in apprehending it. Therefore, the Holy Spirit uses strong judgments to persuade us, so that we may truly love God with "all the mind, with all

the soul, with all the heart, and with all the strength" (Mark 12:30). See how firmly this is established, for instance, in the first chapter of the book of Ephesians. Without elaborating on each point, let our hearts reach out and grasp these by faith—assurance shall be the pleasant outcome.

1. God has **already** blessed us in Christ Jesus in the heavenly places (verse 3).

2. God has chosen us in Christ unto Himself **before the world** was ever conceived or founded (verse 4).

3. He chose us unto Himself in order that we might be holy and without blame **before Him** (verse 4).

4. Our holiness and blamelessness is attributable to **God's love** for us, not our own wretched achievement (verse 4).

5. God Himself **predestinated** us to be adopted to Himself by Christ Jesus (verse 5).

6. Our predestination unto adoption was **according to His will**, not according to our achievements (verse 5).

7. We have been made sons in order that His **grace** might be glorified (verse 6).

8. It was within His own grace, or unearned and unmerited favor, that we were **made accepted in His beloved Son, Christ Jesus** (verse 6); and **He MADE** us accepted—it was HIS work.

9. It is **in Christ Jesus** that we presently HAVE redemption through His blood (verse 7).

10. Our redemption consists in the forgiveness of our sins—**all of our sins** (verse 7).

11. Our sins have been forgiven, not because of the meeting of requirements by ourselves, but according to the absolute **riches of His grace** (verse 7).

12. He has literally **abounded** toward us in His grace, being wise and prudent in **all** of His dealings with us (verse 8).

13. He has actually made known to us the **mystery** of His will (verse 9).

14. His will was purposed **within Himself**, with no consultation outside of Himself (verse 9).

15. He has determined in Himself gather together **everything** into one grand gathering in Christ Jesus in the fulness of time; not only things in earth, but also things in heaven (verse 10).

16. It is in Christ Jesus that we have already **obtained** the inheritance (verse 11).

17. We have obtained the inheritance because we were **predestinated** (verse 11).

18. We were predestinated to this inheritance according to **God's own purpose** (verse 11).

19. God's own purpose is in comportment with His own nature, Who works **all things** after the counsel of His own will (verse 11).

20. God works salvation, and has predestinated us unto an inheritance in order that we should be to the **praise of the glory of His grace** (verse 12).

21. That purpose of God was manifested when we first **trusted** in Christ (verse 12).

22. We trusted in Christ when we heard the gospel of **our personal salvation**—when the message of the Gospel was seen as personally applicable to us (verse 13).

23. After we believed in Christ, God Himself

with Him. Restoring the Bible, restoring the church, restoring church autonomy, etc.; these are but surface issues. They all spring from man's alienation from an enmity with God. True restoration brings the spirit of man and the Spirit of God together, and until that has been effectually accomplished, there has been no restoration at all!

Withdrawal

I find as I grow in the Lord
I seek an oft withdrawal
I find there blessed communion
with Him Who's over all.

Comes times my soul alone must be
with my God and Savior Dear
People gathered round about
restrain the Lord so near.

Withdrawal from the course of men
withdrawal e'en from kindred ones
My heart unto the Lord doth cleave
all else righteously it shuns.

There's times when strength is needed sore
when nothing 'round doth pacify
When all that's seen and heard about
doth only cause the heart to sigh.

'Tis then that I do make retreat
unto the Lord in closet closed
There to plead before the Throne
for grace on me to be imposed.

Encroach upon my time with God?
I cannot have this thing to be
And when I insist on private times
oft I make an enemy.

Far better to stand alone with God
Him succouring my feeble soul
Than have all the hosts of men by me
in their ceaseless babblings roll.

Withdrawal from the things that place
a drag upon my righteous soul
I find it is imperative
else on me they take their toll.

It is in the presence of
the enemies I have
That God prepares a table
blessings told, not half.

The hum of evil activity
the things of earth perused
Yet in the midst of all of this
upon God I have mused.

Withdrawal that's unseen this is—
it seems to them I'm there
Yet all the while I absent
become a holy seer.

Withdrawal is the transport of
the spirit of man beyond
The course of this fleeting world
to things of which I'm fond.

The heart unlimited may rise
above to things on high
And leave behind the thoughts of things
that cause the heart to sigh.

sealed us with the presence of the Holy Spirit (verse 13).

24. This Holy Spirit was the Spirit that was **promised** to His children by the prophets (verse 13).

25. The Holy Spirit is the **earnest** of our inheritance which yet awaits us (verse 14).

26. The Holy Spirit is the earnest until our bodies have been redeemed from the power of the grave, and we are **wholly** in the image of our Lord (verse 14).

27. This whole enterprize of salvation will accrue to God's glory—especially to the magnification of His **grace** (verse 14).

Now whether or not you understand these things, it is evident that God's work is pre-eminent in every one of them. Cast out of your mind anything and everything that complicates these verses for you. Simply accept them as they are—assurance will be your portion!

The Real Restoration Movement

(From page 1)

were given whole-heartedly to sin and wickedness. We are remorseful over these times, and wish that our lives were not scarred with their uncomely appearance. Sin has left its mark upon many of us. Some believers are so discouraged over wasted and barren lives that they believe they are destined to uselessness and fruitlessness. But to all such, the word of the Lord comes; "I will restore the years that the locusts have eaten". New hope; new usefulness; newly energized powers of mind, spirit, and heart. O, a restoration movement like that would fan many a weak and flickering flame. Let us pray for such a movement from on High!

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, **restore such an one in the spirit of meekness.**" (Gal. 6:1). There is, at this present time, a large number of people that have confessed Christ before men, that have fallen into grievous and heavy faults. They have been, as it were, "overtaken." Their cases sometimes look virtually hopeless. But wait! The word of the Lord is that those that are "spiritual" (i.e., that live in that vital communion of the Holy Ghost) are to **restore** such ones in the spirit of meekness. Now, there is a restoration movement that is greatly needed! Ought we not beseech the Lord for just such a thing.

The purpose of this short treatise is to show that true restoration does not consist in the attempts of men to reorder the direction of religion. It rather comes as a result of men's earnest quest for the Lord and an experientially right standing