

Articles by T. Ernest Wilson

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Addressing God in Prayers and Worship

One of the features of our modern permissive society, is the tendency to familiarity in addressing the aged or those in positions of authority. It is becoming quite common for children and young people to call old people by their first P name. It is one of the results of modern revolt and the break- down of law and order and authority, to drop the old terms of honor and respect in addressing their elders. Conditions in the world usually have a way of manifesting themselves in the church. It is becoming increasingly common to hear God addressed with the familiar “you” instead of the reverential “thou.” The argument is that the reverential form is archaic, it was used in Shakespeare’ s day, and was the common form of speech when the King James version of the Bible was translated in 1611. We no longer use it today in addressing each other, therefore let us drop it in addressing God! It is regarded as a mark of superior education and sophistication to avoid the old forms and use modern language in praying to the Deity. Those who do it, insist that it is not a lack of reverence, but using language that everyone understands. This is very plausible, but is it true?

THE QUESTION OF ENGLISH GRAMMAR

We are told that the old form of the second person “thou”, and its use in everyday speech has been dropped. Admittedly, when the King James Version was translated, “thou, thee” etc. were simply singular forms of the pronouns, while “you” was the plural form. The translators followed this rule whether God or man was

being addressed. But today the plural form “you” is commonly used as a singular. While this is true, yet the old form of the second person and its reverential use, is a part of our language. We learn it in school in our verb conjugations: I am, thou art, he is, etc. In most languages, reverential forms of speech are used in addressing the Deity. For example, in the Latin languages, such as Spanish and Portuguese, the second person “tu” (thou) is used in a three-fold way:

(1) Endearment and intimacy, between husband and wife, to a child or intimate friend. (2) It is used in disparagement to one regarded as an inferior. (3) Always in a reverential way in addressing the Deity.

In Bantu languages used in Africa, and among so-called primitive people generally, God is addressed in majestic terms and titles. No African child would think of addressing his parent or an elder by the familiar form, and to speak to Almighty God in this way would be unthinkable!

THE NEED FOR REVERENCE

In addressing a king or the president, or a cabinet minister or a judge on the bench when a law court is in session, it is customary to use respectful terms which we do not ordinarily use; your majesty, your honor, etc. The New Testament sanctions and gives examples of such usages. We read there of an honorable counsellor and of honorable women. Luke addresses his Gospel to the “Most Excellent Theophilus,” and Paul, addressing Festus the Governor, uses the term “Most Noble.” It is a part of the present day decline in respect, to despise dignities and authority. But if one were to use the language of the street or the market place in ad-

addressing a judge while he is presiding in a law court, he would be held in contempt of court, how much more the need for reverence and respect in addressing the Creator and Redeemer of the universe!

Another important point is consideration for the feelings of others. From time immemorial it has been the custom to follow the examples in Scripture in addressing Almighty God. But this is not just mere custom or tradition. God said to the wicked in Ps. 50:21, "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself." It is both the direct teaching and example of Holy Scripture. To hear anyone publicly address God in familiar language, calling Him "you," shocks the feelings of older and sensitive, spiritual people, who are characterized by the fear of God in their lives and speech. It is altogether wrong to hurt and shock the feelings of the saints in this way. One would make a distinction between a young person recently saved, who is not familiar with the teaching and language of Holy Scripture, and the mature person who uses this kind of language deliberately. There is a difference between ignorance and arrogance. The first needs teaching, the second, rebuke. much used and abused word today is "communication." Some have the idea that in speaking to the young and immature, we have to use the language and vocabulary of the street corner or the high school. The only way to raise the level of respect and the dignity of personality, is to use simple but dignified language in speaking to them.

MODERN BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

One very serious contributing factor, that has helped along this tendency of disrespect in addressing God, has

been some of the modern revisions and paraphrases of Scripture Two of the chief offenders in this respect are the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, authorized in 1951 by the National Council of Churches and the New English Bible, the New Testament of which was published in 1961. Some of the men on the committees for translation of both of these versions are notorious liberals who do not believe in the deity of Christ, His virgin birth and other fundamentals of the faith. This decided bias comes out in their translation of vital passages. Sometimes in the RSV, the formal address of "thee", "thou" and "thine" is used, while at other times the familiar "you" and "yours" is used. Dean Weigle, the chairman of the revision committee, on page 56 of "An Introduction to the RSV" explains their use in this way: "After two years of debate and experiment, it was decided to abandon these forms, and to follow the modern usage, except in language addressed to God." Note carefully the distinction; the formal address is used in addressing God, and the informal is used in speaking to man. Let us look at one or two examples which illustrate this rule of translation:

The AV of Matt. 16: 16 reads: Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God.

The KSV reads: "You are the Christ, the son of the living God. Does this mean that Christ is only a man and not God? According to Dean Weigle's explanation, this is the only conclusion we can reach.

The AV of Acts 9: 5 reads: Who art thou, Lord?

The RSV reads: Who are you, Lord?

Did Saul of Tarsus believe that the one who spoke to him from heaven was only a man?

The New English translation follows the same rule. In this version the reverential “thee” or “thou” is never used in the Gospels in addressing our Lord Jesus Christ. This distinction of pronouns has a subtle doctrinal implication, and gives the impression that the translators are trying to separate our Lord and Saviour from God and so undermine the doctrine of His deity. Unfortunately many of the teachers in academic theological circles have adopted the use of the familiar “you” in addressing both God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. This has helped to popularize the trend. Young people take their cue from their teachers. They can do no wrong and it sounds educated to imitate them. Leaders and teachers today have a tremendous responsibility to show an example of reverence and becoming humility in speaking to a Holy God.

We would lovingly appeal to all who know and love, Worship and serve our Lord Jesus Christ, and who confess Him, not only as the unique Son of God, but as God the Son manifest in flesh, to avoid any semblance of disrespectful or slang language, either in speaking to Him In prayer and praise, or speaking about Him in the preaching of the Gospel, or in the ministry of the Word. “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor and glory and blessing.” Amen. Rev. 5:12.

Assembly Finances

In the Acts of the Apostles, where we have the historical account of the foundation and development of the church from its early beginning in Jerusalem until there were many local assemblies planted in the main centres of the Roman Empire, it is remarkable how little is said about how the work was supported financially. There must have been considerable expense in the extensive journeys of the apostle Paul and his fellow-workers, yet the subject is scarcely mentioned. This is in startling contrast to present day high pressure advertising and the strident appeals for large sums of money to carry on certain phases of the work of God. Paul tells us that the church at Philippi sent once and again to supply his needs, Phil. 4. 15-16, but we do not read that the church at Antioch which commended him to the work ever sent him any financial help.

Our Lord, both in His teaching and in His parables in the Gospels, has a lot to say about money and the relationship of His disciples to it. They were to regard themselves as stewards and not as proprietors of the material things in their possession. When we come to the Epistles, we find the development of this basic teaching. The early believers, with some exceptions, were mostly poor in material things but rich in faith. Then, as now, it is often those who have the least of this world's goods that give the most. Of the Macedonian believers, we are told that "in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality", 2 Cor. 8. 2.

The two Corinthian letters are our chief source of information as to how the early churches financed the various activities in which they were engaged. We are told that on the first day of the week, which obviously was the day on which the whole church was accustomed to meet together, each one was to lay by him in store as God had prospered him, 1 Cor. 16. 1-2. There was no coercion or compulsion; the motive was love and the sense of responsibility in returning to God what He had bestowed. 1 Corinthians 9 lays down the principles concerning the support of labourers in the Gospel and 2 Corinthians 8-9 give teaching on specific needs such as helping suffering saints under famine conditions.

In these Pastoral Epistles we have a number of supplementary instructions concerning this important theme. At least four items are dealt with:

Teaching Concerning the Use and Abuse of Riches,

1 Tim. 6. 6-19. Many years ago., William Kelly, at a Bible reading in Dr. Cronin's house, suggested that this chapter about riches is addressed (i) At the beginning, to those who haven't them.

(ii) At the end, to those who have them.

(iii) In between, to the man of God in relation to both.

The former are warned against those who suppose that gain is godliness, but in contrast are told that godliness with contentment is great gain. The rich are exhorted to "do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come", vv. 18-19. Timothy is warned about men who "will be rich" and also against the love of money. He is told to

"flee these things; and to follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness",, v. 11.

The Relief of Needy and Destitute Widows,

1 Tim. 5. 3-16. In the Old Testament God is the Judge of the widow, Ps. 68. 5. Mosaic law pronounced a curse on those that afflicted the widow, Deut. 27. 19. Luke in his Gospel mentions a number of widows, always sympathetically. James 1. 27 says, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world".

The Jews had an established fund in the temple for the relief of widows and orphans. When widows who had been receiving support from the temple were converted and became Christians, this support was naturally cut off and the early church became responsible for caring for them. Acts 6 describes the procedure and the murmuring that arose concerning alleged partiality in its administration. The story of Dorcas in Acts 9 illustrates that widows as a class were prominent in other Christian communities. In 1 Timothy 5 Paul gives directions as to the class of persons worthy of such relief. Out of the body of widows a certain number were listed, the qualifications being:

i. That they were not under sixty years of age. ii. That they had been the wife of one man, probably meaning that they had been but once married, iii. That they had lived useful and charitable lives, w. 9-10.

The main idea seems to be that they were really destitute and deserving and that there were no immediate relatives to care for them.

We can be thankful today, that in many parts of the world, there is a real exercise about the care of God's aged saints. This is seen in the number of eventide homes where dedicated men and women have given themselves to this very necessary work. They deserve the prayerful interest and financial support both of individuals and assemblies.

Those who Labour in the Word and Doctrine,

1 Tim. 5. 17-18. "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine", v. 17. While the word "elder" used in verse 17 usually means an elder in the local assembly, in this context it could denote a wider sphere, that of a leader who moved about in the ministry of the Word. Again, while the word "honour" has the meaning of respect, yet it also has the connotation of financial support. This is borne out by what immediately follows in verse 18 and also by the fact that, in the case of widows, the honour due to them was linked with material support, vv. 3-4. This is possibly the meaning of double honour, both the esteem in which they should be held and also that they are not allowed to suffer material need. A literal rendering of the text would be: Let the elders who are good leaders be counted worthy of twofold recognition, especially they who work hard at preaching and teaching. The word "labour" means to work hard, toil, grow weary, and is the same word used in Luke 5. 5, "Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing". This would naturally refer to the shepherd-teacher, who gives much or all of his time to this work. The passage does not give any encouragement to a one-man salaried pastorate, as some would interpret it. Such a functionary is foreign to

the spirit and teaching of the New Testament; see 1 Tim. 3. 3; 1 Pet. 5. 2.

Travelling Servants of God,

Titus 3. 13. "Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them."

It is possible that Zenas the lawyer was a business or professional brother, while Apollos was a full-time servant of God. But one of the good works of the Christians in Crete was to see that they lacked nothing in carrying on the work in which they were engaged. Zenas and Apollos are representative of many of God's honoured servants today, who, to serve the saints and minister to their spiritual needs, undertake expensive and tiring journeys. The true servant of God looks to God alone for the supply of his material needs and never mentions or hints at finances, but on the other hand, it is the responsibility of assemblies and the Lord's stewards to act intelligently about the distribution of funds and not be influenced unduly by every strident appeal that comes their way.

Collective and Individual Prayer

In our key verse Paul says, "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly", i Tim. 3.14.

"These things" would naturally refer to the four great subjects of the first three chapters, namely the Gospel, ch. 1, prayer and the woman's place in the church, ch. 2, and church government, ch. 3. These are great pillars of assembly testimony as well as of behaviour in the house of God.

Collective prayer is one of the most important activities of the assembly, 2. 1-8. In chapter four the reference is to prayer in the home at the partaking of food, 4. 4-5. In chapter five the destitute widow, entirely dependent on God, continues in prayers and supplications night and day, 5. 5, while in 2 Timothy Paul prays for Timothy night and day, 1.3. It is interesting to note that these four aspects of prayer correspond to the four words that Paul uses in 1 Timothy 2.1. There is the prayer for government leaders, the supplication of the widow, thanksgiving for food, and Paul's intercession for Timothy.

Four Kinds of Prayer. The four words used in 1 Timothy 2. 1, "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks" are suggested by the four ingredients in the holy incense, which are stacte, onycha, galbanum and frankincense, Exod. 30. 34-38. Stacte was an aromatic gum which came from the pierced bark of a shrub growing in the desert. Onycha was the perfumed shell of a crab taken from the depths of the sea. Galbanum was a plant which grew above the snowline in Lebanon. Frankincense was pure white, used in the meal offering

and put upon the shewbread. The ingredients were all of equal weight. The sweet incense was offered with the morning and evening sacrifice with fire from off the altar.

Supplication is a man upon his face, like our Lord in Gethsemane. Prayer is a man upon his knees like Daniel, Dan. 6. 10. Intercession is a man with his hands uplifted for others like Abraham outside the cities of the plain, or Aaron and Hur staying up Moses' hands on the mount. Gen. 18. 23-33; Exod. 17. 12. Thanksgiving is a man seated before the Lord with an overflowing cup like David., 2 Sam. 7. 18-29; Ps. 23. 5.

Collective Prayer, 2. 1-8. We shall notice here

The Four Requests, 2. 1-2. For all men. The phrase "all men" is linked with their salvation and the work of the gospel in verses 4-7. For kings. This is more specifically for heads of states with their heavy burden of responsibility. It should be remembered that Nero was emperor of the Roman empire at this time. We do not pray for them because they merit such interest! For all in authority. This embraces those responsible for the administration of law and justice, cf. Rom. 13. 1-7. That we might lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty. This four-fold prayer has in view the establishing of those outward circumstances which will enable the consistent quiet testimony of godly living to further the purpose of God in the gospel. In view of the anarchy, the breakdown of law and order and the increase of serious crime in these days, how necessary it is to seek grace to obey these exhortations.

The Four Conditions, 2. 8. / will therefore that the men pray everywhere, r.v. The word "men" is not the generic

word embracing both sexes; rather it relates exclusively to the male as distinct from the female sex. In church meetings the women are to be silent, v. 12, but the men can pray everywhere. Lifting up holy hands. This indicates the necessity for a holy life in those who take part in public prayer. The lifting up of the hands was, of course, not a ritual but symbolic not only of the direction of the prayer but also of confidence in the answer to be received as a gift in the outstretched hand. Without wrath. Not like Jonah's angry prayer, or the oblique prayer, ostensibly addressed to God, but aimed at someone present. Doubting. We might compare Elijah who "prayed earnestly (i.e. "prayed in his prayer") that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit", James 5. 17-18.

The freedom of access that we enjoy in our prayers is ours because of the great Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, i Tim. 2. 5. We need neither angel nor virgin nor human priest, but we come directly to God through Him as our Great High Priest. We pray in His name.

Thanksgiving for Food, 4. 4-5. The Old Testament lays down a strict code of rules about foods which might be eaten and others which were prohibited. These had both a ceremonial and hygienic significance. But today the believer is not under law but under grace. 4. 3. What he eats or doesn't eat depends on personal preference and what he feels is good or isn't good for his body. The passage probably has reference to the seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, 4. 1, and the erroneous injunction that those who wish to have contact with the

spirit world must abstain from eating flesh. It is a well-known fact that most spiritists are vegetarians. But Paul says, "every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer". How thankful we should be in acknowledging the daily benefits with which He loads us.

The reading of the Word of God at the table and the giving of thanks for food, not only privately in the home, but also publicly and quietly in a restaurant or hotel is a simple testimony which God has often used to open a conversation on spiritual things. How often too this has been the means of identifying a true believer and establishing contacts of fellowship with those that love His name.

The Widow's Prayer, 5. 5. "Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day." How graphic these words are and how they have been exemplified in every age! God calls himself the God of the fatherless and the widow, Ps. 68. 5. Paul's travelling companion, Luke, mentions widows nine times in his Gospel and in this passage Paul uses the word seven times. Evidently he had a deep concern for those who were in real need in those days when there was no welfare state or social security benefits. We should be sensitive to the needs of others.

Paul's Prayers for Timothy, 2 Tim. 1. 3-4. In requesting Timothy to undertake this difficult task at Ephesus he says, "that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day... being mindful of thy tears". How this shows the bonds of affection and

concern that the apostle had for his dear fellow-worker and son in the faith. Most preachers and missionaries would agree that the great need of the servant of God is the intercessory prayer support of God's people. How we should pray for one another!

These many references to prayer in its various forms in Paul's writings emphasise what was one of the basic exercises of the early apostolic church, for "they continued stedfastly... in prayers", Acts 2. 42. May we ever be before our God, taking the dependent place, always thankful and exercised to intelligent prayer.

Discipline

Having reviewed the teaching of these Epistles regarding the church, its constitution and the various forms of its testimony, we now come to look at certain perils which threaten its doctrine and its purity. These three letters are full of warnings against false teachers. One of Paul's chief objects in writing was to instruct Timothy and Titus how to deal with them. The emphasis in 1 and 2 Timothy is on doctrine, the healthy teaching, while that in Titus is on the necessity for good works. The two must always be kept in balance, the one flowing from the other. Paul had warned the elders at Ephesus that after his departure grievous wolves would come in, not sparing the flock, and that from within, men would arise teaching perverse things to draw away the disciples after them, Acts 20. 29-30. The attack would come both from the outside and the inside. Apparently that time had already come when Paul wrote. It was expressly to combat these influences that Timothy was left at Ephesus by the apostle, 1 Tim. 1.3.

An examination of the three Epistles will show what the false teachings were. It is clear that they were chiefly Jewish in origin, see 1 Tim. 1,7; Titus 1. 10,14. From the beginning of the church's testimony, Judaizers sought to turn Christian Gentiles into Jewish proselytes. It was for this reason that Paul wrote Galatians. In 1 Timothy 6. 20 he speaks of oppositions of knowledge falsely so called. Apparently this refers to Gnostic teaching which he deals with in Colossians. Then in 1 Timothy 4. 1-3 he refers to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons. Evidently these false teachings were Satanically

inspired. In Titus 1. 15 he says, "unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure". As is usually the case, evil teaching coincided with loose morals.

In these letters, Paul uses a series of vivid word pictures to describe the various forms of departure from God where discipline has to be exercised.

Shipwreck, 1 Tim. 1. 19. Faith wrecked on the rocks of blasphemy. This evidently was the result of erroneous teaching concerning the resurrection.

The cauterized conscience, branded like a slave with a hot iron. This was a result of apostasy from the faith, 1 Tim. 4. 1-2.

Denial of the faith, 1 Tim. 5. 8. In the domestic sphere, the believer who neglects to provide for his own is worse than the unbeliever.

Cast off first faith, 1 Tim. 5, 12. This operates in the social sphere leading to the danger of gossip and the idle tongue.

Wandered from the faith, 1 Tim. 6. 10 j.n.d. The context is a warning against the misuse of riches and could be applied to the business sphere.

Missing the mark, 1 Tim. 6. 21; 2 Tim. 2.18 R.v. marg. The archer whose aim is not true. This is the intellectual realm. The effect of this is like a gangrene, eating at the very vitals of Christian testimony.

Surely if these things were true in Paul's day, how applicable they are in our day! As well as describing the conditions, Paul instructs Timothy and Titus as to the methods of dealing with these heterodox teachers and their doctrines. There are at least four passages that speak of discipline in its various forms:

Excommunication, 1

Tim. 1. 19-20. First he mentions one case where he had acted himself. He singles out Hymenaeus and Alexander whom, he says, "I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme", what does this mean? We must refer to 1 Corinthians 5. 5 where Paul uses the same expression. Both passages indicate excommunication from church fellowship. If Hymenaeus is the same person as is mentioned in 2 Timothy 2. 17, the blasphemy had to do with the vital doctrine of resurrection. Not only did it affect himself, but others were associated with him in it, and it had the effect of overthrowing the faith of some. Paul calls this "shipwreck". While all discipline has as its object the ultimate restoration of the offender, in this case apparently it did not have this effect.

Open Rebuke, 1 Tim. 5.20. "Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father", 5. 1, is followed by "Against an elder, receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses", 5. 19. Evidently these admonitions preceding the instructions about administering an open rebuke are to give Timothy, the young servant of God, opportunity to pause and think before this serious step is taken. As in all discipline, it is not to be carried out in a hurry. It is only administered after godly exercise and consideration. "Them that sin (literally 'are sinning'; it is the present participle, i.e. those going on in a sinful course) rebuke before all, that others also may fear". The word "rebuke" means to convict, put to shame. The sinning here must be of such a nature that it affects the public testimony. It is possible that what is contemplated is one who will not submit to private admonition and is carrying on a course of action that is affecting the whole

assembly. It has not gone as far as to merit excommunication, but yet is serious enough to warrant being publicly rebuked before the whole company.

Silencing the Unruly and Vain Talker, Titus 1. 10-11.

"Unruly" means that he refuses to be placed under any authority. The same word is used in verse 6 of unruly children. Vain talkers are those whose talk does not accomplish anything; it is useless and futile. "To stop the mouth is epistomizo, to put something in the mouth, as a bit in a horse's mouth. The noun form is used of the stop of a waterpipe", Wuest. The word could also mean a muzzle or a gag in the mouth.

How expressive all this is, describing the man who afflicts the assembly with unprofitable ministry, who is on his feet at every opportunity, stifling the true ministry of the Holy Spirit and driving people away. The remedy is very graphic, put a muzzle on him! Better to do that than to let the whole assembly suffer.

The Faction Maker, Titus 3. 10-11. The heretic here is not so much the purveyor of erroneous teaching, as the man who divides the saints with some one-sided interpretation of Scripture, often with a pretence of superior faithfulness to the "Word. Paul warns the saints at Rome, "mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple", Rom. 16. 17-18. The faction maker is to be warned at least twice. If these admonitions are not heeded, he is to be rejected. Some would take this to mean, shunned or to have done with such. But the fact that Paul adds

"knowing that such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself" might indicate that one who is continually dividing the saints should be rejected completely. Much would depend on the nature of his teaching whether it would demand excommunication. But certainly after the second admonition, if he persists in his activities, serious action must be taken so that the whole assembly may not suffer.

Moses in God's School

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Moses in God's School

T. Ernest Wilson

Many lessons may be learned from the biographies of Scripture. That of Moses is one of the fullest. By any standard, he was one of the greatest men of human history in his influence upon both his contemporaries and succeeding generations.

In the Bible he is called, "The Man of God" (Psa. 90, title), "Servant of God" (1 Chron. 6:49), "Prophet" (Deut. 34:10), "Priest" (Psa. 99:6). It would be interesting to ask, wherein lay his greatness and how was he fitted for his position and work?

Stephen summarizes three sides of his character in Acts 7:22: first, he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, he had the formal education of the schools in Egypt. Second, he was mighty in word; that is, he could express himself well. Third, he was also mighty in deed, he was not just a scholar and a speaker, he was a practical man. This is a rare combination in any age. At the same time, he was impetuous, quick tempered, hasty, as may be seen in his killing of the Egyptian and in his interference with the Israelite. At forty years of age he probably knew a lot about mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, and politics. Like other men whom God chose to do a specific task, he had to attend another school at the backside of the desert. This was also the experience of Elijah, John the Baptist, and the Apostle Paul. At the end of forty years of shepherd work

in the Wilderness, God dealt with five parts of his anatomy; thereby, teaching him five simple lessons which completely revolutionized his life and left a stamp upon his subsequent service. They were: first, his feet (Ex. 3:1-5); second, his hands (Ex. 4:1-2); third, his bosom (Ex. 4:6-7); fourth, his mouth (Ex. 4:10-12); and fifth, his face (Ex. 34:28-35).

His Feet

At Mount Horeb, the mountain of God, he sees the bush burning with fire, yet, not consumed. From the burning bush, God speaks, saying, that he is to take the shoes from off his feet for the place whereon he stands is holy ground. God reveals Himself, and Moses hides his face. He is brought into the presence of God and learns there the lesson of reverence. There are seven cases of calls to special services detailed in the Bible. All are different, yet there is one feature common to all, each is brought into God's presence, and the effect is the unshod feet. Abraham, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Paul, as well as Moses experienced it, and this produced a sense of the holiness of God. Notice the reaction of Job, Isaiah, Peter, and John to this experience. It should be a rebuke to modern familiarity in addressing the Deity and also a lesson in how to behave ourselves in the House of God.

His Hands

God spoke again to Moses, saying, "What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. And He said, cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. And the Lord said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand." The

lesson of the shepherd's rod that became a serpent is most important. It is the sceptre of delegated authority which has fallen from the hand of the first Adam, and become a serpent. But the Seed of the Woman has dealt with the serpent's head. The Risen Lord has said that all authority in Heaven and on earth had been committed to Him, and by that authority He commissioned them and sent them forth with His Gospel. At Christ's command the Christian goes forth with the rod of delegated authority in his hand to do the Lord's work. It is interesting to notice the various occasions on which Moses subsequently used the rod: first, in Pharaoh's court (Ex. 7:10-12), at the Red Sea (Ex. 14:16), at the Rock in Horeb (Ex. 17:6), and likewise in the fight with Amalek (Ex. 17:9); of course, there are also other occasions.

His Bosom

"And the Lord said furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold his hand was leprous as snow. And He said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again; and plucked it out of his bosom, and, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh." The lesson here is right on the surface, it is that of indwelling sin in the heart of the servant. The Lord taught this lesson to the apostles in the Upper Room (John 13). There it is typified by the defiled feet. The basin and the water correspond to the washing by the Word of God, sanctification. Paul deals with it doctrinally in Romans 6 and 7. No man or woman should ever go to the mission field without having

learned this lesson. Isolation and pagan environment will test the most spiritual.

His Mouth

In Egypt, at the end of his secular education, Moses was too quick, he acted in haste, now he is too slow, and makes a series of excuses. First, he says, "O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since Thou hast spoken unto Thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." Nevertheless, the Lord tells him to go, saying, "I will be with thy mouth." To this Moses replies, "O my Lord, send, I pray Thee, by the hand of whom Thou wilt send." In effect, he says, Lord send whomsoever Thou wilt, so long as it is not I. The Lord becomes angry at this act of false modesty. Very few men start out as public speakers; to learn to speak effectively is a long, slow, painful process. There is a great difference between the glib tongue with its facile verbosity and the anointed lip and speech. The discerning hearer can detect it immediately. The five great discourses of the Book of Deuteronomy show that Moses overcame his difficulty, and God fulfilled His promise in being with his mouth. But to the end of his career, impetuosity was his besetting sin. He died for speaking unadvisedly with his lips (Psa. 106:33).

His Face

The final part of the anatomy of Moses with which God dealt was his face. Twice he spent forty days on the mountain top with God, and when he descended, the glory of God's presence was reflected on his countenance. The practice of the presence of God has a transforming effect even on the physical appearance of

the one who enjoys it. Paul applies the passage in 2 Corinthians 3 to the contrast between the transient, fading glory of the old covenant and the permanent, increasing glory of the new: “But we all, with open (unveiled) face beholding (reflecting) as in a glass (mirror) the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor. 3:18).

The Church in the Pastoral Epistles - An Introduction

Among the mysteries committed to the apostle Paul was that of the Church, Col. 1. 25-27. In the Epistle to the Ephesians he expounds more the great truth of the Church as the body of Christ, but in the Pastoral Epistles he places the emphasis on the local church. Seeing that these three letters are the last of Paul's writings, the instructions found in them are important. Many of the truths found in them are expounded in his earlier Epistles, particularly in 1 Corinthians. But in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus there is a good deal of supplementary material, especially in relation to church government and various important matters connected with discipline, women's ministry and the responsibility of the church to care for needy saints such as elderly widows. In Titus he stresses the necessity to maintain the balance of good works along with sound doctrine.

Timothy and Titus were among Paul's most beloved and trusted fellow-workers; both in; the Gospel and in serving the saints. Both of them apparently were his sons in the faith, 1 Tim. 1.2; Titus 1. 4. They seem to have been very different in their disposition and character. Timothy was sensitive, diffident, weakly in body and in need of encouragement and support. Titus was a man of conviction, one who could face up to a difficult situation and be faithful and successful in it. Both men had had considerable experience in the work of the Lord previously. Timothy had been specially used at Philippi, Thessalonica and Corinth. Titus was the man who had been used as the test case in the controversy

over circumcision which was resolved at Jerusalem and had been outstandingly used of God at Corinth, 2 Cor. 7. 13-15; 8. 6, 16, 17, 23. Obviously, neither of them was a novice.

It is interesting to notice the work in which these two servants of God were engaged at Ephesus and Crete respectively. They had been sent there by Paul as apostolic delegates with a specific function to perform. Timothy had to abide still at Ephesus while Paul went into Macedonia. His responsibility was to charge some that they teach no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, 1 Tim. 1. 3-4. The first letter addressed to him contains instructions as to how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, 3. 14-15. The work of Titus at Crete was quite different. Paul left him there that he might set in order the things that were wanting and ordain elders in every city, Titus 1. 5. In Ephesus a recognised group of elders was already functioning. This was not so at Crete and the task given to Titus was to rectify this. The word "set in order" means to straighten out. Having thus improved things he was to safeguard the future of the work by pointing out those who should be esteemed as elders among them.

There is not the slightest foundation in these Epistles for the idea that the work of Timothy at Ephesus or Titus in Crete was a permanent or long term arrangement. They did not become resident pastors of local churches. There was already a plurality of elders at Ephesus functioning in the normal way, Acts 20. 17, 28. The instructions in 1 Timothy 3. 1-7 form a check list of qualifications for those who were doing pastoral work in the assembly. Neither was Timothy sent there to act as a chairman or

superintendent over elders. His presence and ministry would restrain those who were introducing erroneous teaching and counteract this with healthy teaching and practice. Paul exhorts him to do the work of an evangelist which would keep him mobile and with his face towards a needy world, 2 Tim. 4. 5. Paul also entreats him to come to him before winter, involving a journey to Rome which was a considerable distance from Ephesus, 2 Tim. 4. 21. The letter to Titus was probably written in A.D. 65 whilst 2 Timothy, Paul's last letter, would have been written in a.d. 66. In it we find that Titus had already gone to Dalmatia, our modern Albania, which is a long way from Crete. Apparently his stay on the island of Crete was of a very temporary nature, 2 Tim. 4. 10. It is obvious that the present ministerial system has no Scriptural basis for its existence in the work in which these two servants of God were engaged.

If one could make a distinction between the teaching in the three letters it would seem that the emphasis in 1 Timothy is "Order in the house of God". In Titus the insistence is upon "good works" j conduct and behaviour must correspond with doctrine. In 2 Timothy the individual rather than the collective testimony is in view, so general is the departure of the last days which is described in it. Or to put it in another way, in 1 Timothy we have the house of God, in Titus the grace of God and in 2 Timothy the man of God.

The Ministry of Women

I TIMOTHY 2. 9-15; 5. 2-16; TITUS 2. 3-5

Prior to the advent of Christianity, the position of women in pagan Greece and Rome was decidedly inferior. As in Islam today, they were forced to lead very secluded lives. With some exceptions., the wife was regarded merely as a piece of property completely under the control of her husband. History shows that Christian teaching concerning women stood in sharp contrast to anything found in the heathen world.

Luke's Gospel especially emphasises our Lord's attitude to women. It was one of courteous sympathy. It gives the account of His anointing by the city sinner in chapter 7 and of the gracious service of Martha and Mary of Bethany, 10. 38-42. Luke 8. 2-3 mentions three women by name who ministered unto Him. This is the only passage in the Gospels which tells how Jesus and His disciples lived when they were not entertained by hospitable persons. Women were last at the cross and first at the tomb.

But as regards public ministry, it is significant that twelve men were chosen to be apostles. At the institution of the Lord's supper in the upper room, only men were present. The apostolic commission in Matthew 28. 16-20 was given to men only. Later Paul mentions only men as witnesses to the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15.

Paul in his categorical instructions as to the position of women in the church has been accused of being a confirmed bachelor, completely out of sympathy with the

opposite sex. But no one who reads Romans 16, and considers the courteous and appreciative things that he says about a number of women, could have any doubt about his sympathy with the valued service of those about whom he writes. But far more important than what others may say is the fact that what Paul writes in this regard has apostolic authority behind it and the stamp of divine inspiration upon it.

Paul's teaching is that in the oneness of the body there is neither male nor female, Gal. 3. 26-28, but in the public ministry of the Word in the church there is a difference. Three main passages in his Epistles deal with the subject: 1 Cor. 11. 2-3; 14. 34-35; 1 Tim. 2. 12. The last two enjoin silence on the woman in the church. Some would soften this by translating it as "to be quiet". But Paul makes his meaning clear in 1 Corinthians 14. 34 by adding, "for it is not permitted unto them to speak" and again "for it is a shame for women to speak in the church", 14. 35. Then he adds, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord", 14. 37.

At Corinth, Paul's teaching of emancipation from the principle of law gave rise to an over-emphasis on freedom. Apparently one of the abuses at Corinth was the fact that women took part publicly and that without having their heads covered. Paul corrects the uncovered head in chapter 11 and the abuse of taking part publicly in chapter 14. He says categorically that the woman must be silent in the church.

The instructions in 1 Timothy 2 concerning the position of women in the church emphasises what he had taught

six years previously to the Corinthians. The Corinthian passage has its background in the order established at creation, but the teaching in 1 Timothy is based on what happened at the fall. Eve, instead of consulting her head, Adam, when she was tempted, acted independently with disastrous consequences, not only to herself but to all her posterity. It is a well-known fact that many of the heretical cults today were either started or greatly influenced by women.

There are four keywords relating to the sister in 1 Timothy 2. 9-15; sobriety, subjection, silence and salvation. In 1 Corinthians 11 the problem had been the refusal of the head covering, here it is the other extreme of over-decoration, the adornment of the natural glory and the extravagance of weaving gold and jewels into the hair. Peter, referring to the same subject, says, "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart... the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price", 1 Pet. 3. 3-4. Paul uses the term "sobriety" twice and "silence" twice. His words appear to be more emphatic in Timothy than in 1 Corinthians.

The last verse in chapter 2, "Notwithstanding she shall be saved in child-bearing if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety" has given rise to a good deal of controversy as to its meaning. There are two main interpretations: (i) That it refers to the promise of the Redeemer, the seed of the woman. The woman shall be saved through the childbearing, namely, the birth of Christ, (ii) That the salvation is from daily temptation through occupation with her sphere in the

home and raising a family. In Genesis there was a twofold sentence on the woman as a result of the fall, (i) In sorrow she would bring forth children and (ii) she was to be in subjection to her husband. It is very likely that the salvation referred to in verse 15 is not the salvation of her soul, but daily salvation in her primary function of taking care of the home and her children.

To summarize, the apostle teaches that women are not to take part audibly in public worship; this includes preaching, praying in a mixed company and teaching men in public. This does not mean that a woman may not teach her children, for Timothy himself was taught the Scriptures by his mother and grandmother. There is the exhortation too in Titus 2. 3-4 that the aged women are to teach or train the younger women to be sober, to love their husbands and to love their children. She must never usurp the authority that God gave to the man to lead in the public ministry in the church. This is the pattern established in Scripture.

The comments of W. H. Hoste on 1 Timothy 5. 5 and Titus 2. 3 are very much to the point: "The qualifications of a true widow indicate clearly some phases of women's work. They are sevenfold: (i) She must be a woman of prayer, like Anna; (ii) well reported of for good works, like Phoebe or Priscilla; (iii) have brought up children, like Lois or Eunice; (iv) lodged strangers, like Lydia; (v) washed the saints feet, like Mary; (vi) relieved the afflicted, like Dorcas; (vii) diligently followed every good work, like Per sis. Then, again, the elder women are exhorted to teach (not, it must be noted, the brethren, but) the younger women 'to be sober, to love their husbands... It seems clear that the home is the typical sphere for the women, and that her service, though it

may be varied, should always be in keeping with this. It would clearly not be the mind the Lord, if a desire for prominent service led anyone to neglect the humbler and more prosaic duties of the home life".

The Mystery Of Christ

The Mystery Of Christ

T. Ernest Wilson

The last decade of the first century A.D. was critical for the infant Church. Its doctrinal foundations were being under-mined by heretical teachers with pagan ideas. As Paul had foretold, the wolf from without and the false teachers from within were doing their nefarious work. Chief among these were the Gnostics. Their name means "knowledge," and they professed to have specialized information that the ordinary believers did not possess. Of these there were two parties. The leader of one was Cerinthus, who taught that Jesus was the natural son of Joseph and Mary, and that the Divine Spirit took hold of Him only after His baptism, but forsook Him on the cross. Another party, the Docetists, denied the reality of His manhood and of His human body. They linked evil with the flesh; therefore, they claimed His body was merely a phantom.

The Apostle John, last survivor of the Apostolic Band, lived at Ephesus where Cerinthus also lived and taught. In these adverse circumstances, toward the end of his life, John wrote two books to combat these teachings and to restate for all time the truth concerning the person of Christ.

History frequently repeats itself and today the same ideas are being taught by heretical cults. The vital centre of Christianity is Christ, and as Carlyle has said, "If this doctrine of the divinity of Christ had been lost, Christianity would have vanished like a dream."

The key to John's doctrinal books hangs by the door. His Gospel defends the essential Deity of the Son of God, and in the first paragraph four pregnant sentences clearly state this fact. In a similar arrangement, his First Epistle has in the opening paragraph four verbs which specifically describe His perfect humanity. The two passages are parallel and should be studied together.

The Deity Of Christ

In the four clauses of John 1:1-2, are four walls guarding the person of Christ from external attack. Throughout this chapter John uses four titles of Christ, "The Word," "The Lamb of God," "The Son of God," and "The King of Israel." These give four phases of His character and work. For the present we are concerned with "The Word." The term reveals our Lord Jesus Christ as the Spokesman of the Godhead. He is the visible interpreter in time of the mind and purposes of God. Critics would like to tell us that John copied this word from Philo the Alexandrian, but it is more likely that John is using an Old Testament term and is thinking of how God spoke to men in the past, and of how these revelations are now concentrated and consummated in His Son. Let us look at John's four opening clauses.

"IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD:" This takes us back to creation. The statement runs parallel to the first sentence in the Bible, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." These simple words have survived all the attacks of evolutionists, pantheists, and atheists. Astronomers quote fantastic figures in terms of light years for the birth of the suns, planets, and island universes. Their theories change with years, but we can put complete confidence in the inspired statement of the

Word of God. At the origin of all things “The Word” was already there. John’s first proposition is the Eternal Pre-existence of The Word.

“AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD”: This implies, first, a distinct personality, and in second place, fellowship between at least two persons.

The doctrine of the Trinity is denied today, but while Scripture does not use the word, the doctrine is woven into its warp and woof. God, the Father, purposes; God, the Son, redeems; God, the Spirit, proceeds from and executes the purposes of the Godhead. St. Patrick’s object lesson of the shamrock, the three leaves on the one stem, plainly illustrates this truth.

“AND THE WORD WAS GOD”: Here is the great essential statement. John Trapp the Puritan divine said, “This whole Gospel is a continue demonstration of Christ’s Deity, which began to be denied, while the Evangelist lived, by Ebion, Cerinthus, and other antichrists.” We may also add, by many in our day. John goes on to demonstrate that while here on earth, Christ possessed all the Divine attributes, yet at the same time He was in complete subjection to the Father’s will.

“THE SAME WAS IN THE BEGINNING WITH GOD.” Here the three previous statements are summarized and emphasized. The four expressions give us the length, breadth, depth, and height of the essential Deity of Christ. They set forth “The Word” as being Eternal, as being a Person holding communion with God, and as being in Himself Divine. “John does not stop to define his terms, but at the end of his prologue identifies this Eternal, Personal, and Divine Word as his own Lord and Master.” (A. Maclaren). The remainder of his Gospel is

the marshalling of the witnesses to His Deity, climaxed by the confession of the erstwhile skeptical Thomas as he saw Christ in resurrection, "My Lord and my God."

The Humanity Of Christ

John's first epistle was written at the close of his life. In it there is a change of emphasis from his Gospel. While the Gospel was written to prove that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God (John 20:31), the epistle was written to show that Jesus Christ came in flesh, (1 John 4:1-4).

His introduction (1 John 1:1-3) gives us four verbs which clearly describe the historic Christ and His manifestation among men. This first paragraph refutes the Gnostic Docetic teachings prevalent in John's latter years which denied the true corporeal humanity of Christ. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon (contemplated), which our hands have handled of the Word of Life." The four words, "heard," "seen," "contemplated," "handled," show that He was audible, visible, intelligible, and tangible. They give a progression in the intimacy with, and in the revelation of the Perfect Man, Christ Jesus, in the same bodily senses of other men. He was manifested to the ears, eyes, minds, and hands, of the people. Note how he begins.

"THAT WHICH WAS FROM THE BEGINNING": The beginning here is different from that in the Gospel. There it was the beginning of all things, the creation of the Universe; here it is the beginning of Christianity, i.e. from Bethlehem. The prepositions in the two passages are different and make clear this distinction. As far as Deity is concerned He was in (en) the beginning, but as

touching His humanity He was from (apo) the beginning, i.e. from His manifestation among men. Then again the tenses of the verbs are different. The first two, "heard" and "seen" are perfect tenses and describe a series of experiences retained as a permanent possession; the latter two, "contemplated" and "handled" are aorist point tenses and indicate a definite incident in the writers mind. Let us look at them.

"THAT WHICH WE HAVE HEARD": First at the Jordan, and then for about three years under His incomparable teaching. After 60 years the words were still a part of John himself. In this Epistle he quotes many expressions from the teaching of the Lord in the upper-room, "Abide," "Love one another," "Eternal life," "The Word," etc. This truly is the manifestation of Christ to ears and hearts. "Faith cometh by hearing." The testimony of those sent to arrest Him was, "Never man spake like this Man."

"THAT WHICH WE HAVE SEEN WITH OUR EYES": Here the Lord is manifested visibly to sight. John's Gospel begins with, "Behold, the Lamb of God," (John 1:29), and ends with Pilate's statements, "Behold the Man," "Behold your King," (John 19:5 and 14). John is careful to assert that he himself was an eyewitness. He says, "We beheld His glory, glory as of an only begotten from a Father, full of grace and truth," (John 1:14 R.V.) He saw the scenes in Pilate's Judgment Hall, (chap. 18:15), at the cross of the piercing of His side from which flowed blood and water, (chap. 19:35). Repeatedly he refers to the evidence of his eyes. It was no optical illusion but something which a sensible fisherman, a reliable witness, saw and understood.

“WHICH HAVE LOOKED UPON (Contemplated)”: The Greek word, “etheasametha”, indicates a spectacle which broke upon John’s vision, says David Smith. It is a point tense looking back to a specific incident in his life. This might be invertly illustrated by the occasion when John and Peter stood in the tomb. As the two men looked at the disposition of the grave clothes, and the head-cloth lying wound around (entulisso) in the place where the head had lain, it evinced to them that a miracle had taken place. The body had passed from the clothes leaving them collapsed in the shape and position of how and where the body had been, “And they saw and believed,” (John 20:3:8).

“AND OUR HANDS HAVE HANDLED”: The physical body of the Lord had been made real to their sense of touch. John here employs the very word used by the Lord on Easter Day, “Handle Me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have,” (Luke 24:39). This was the tangible evidence that Thomas wanted. Thank God! Even skeptical Thomas was completely satisfied, and he reached the highest point of adoration in this Gospel when he cried, “My Lord, and my God.”

Thus the prefaces to John’s Gospel and to his First Epistle are complimentary, and give us the complete truth as to the glorious Person of our Lord. Another has expressed it: “The Eternal Son, equal in power, majesty, and glory with the Eternal Father, possessing all the attributes of essential Deity, in incarnation became what He never was before. He took into unity with His Deity, perfect, sinless, holy, humanity, never more to be divided or separated. In Manhood He still possessed the full plenitude of the attributes, the outward manifestation of

glory being veiled or covered. While on earth He emptied not Himself of these Divine attributes but of their independent use. He was voluntary subject to the Father's will."

As we think of these tremendous truths, let us bow the knee and acknowledge Him as Lord of all.

The Overcomer and the Earthdweller in the Book of Revelation

The letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2-3 introduce four symbolic expressions indicating sinister movements to undermine and destroy their testimony.

They are: 1. Nicolaitanism in Ephesus and Pergamos, 2. 6, 15. 2. The synagogue of Satan in Smyrna and Philadelphia, 2. 9; 3. 9. 3. The doctrine of Balaam in Pergamos, 2. 14. 4. The teaching of Jezebel in Thyatira, 2. 20, These would stand respectively for..

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These would stand respectively for

1. The rise of a hierarchy, subjecting the rank and file to their control.
2. The Judaizing and legalistic element which dogged the footsteps of the apostle Paul.
3. The breakdown of separation between the church and the world.

4. The introduction of immoral idolatry and religious persecution, typified by the worst woman in Scripture.

As well as these four movements, there was the deterioration of early love in Ephesus, 2. 4, the half measures and coldness of death in Sardis, 3. 2, and the spiritual pride, indifference and self-complacency of Laodicea, 3.17. Behind this pessimistic picture, we see Satanic power feverishly working behind the scenes to wreck and destroy everything of God. Satan is mentioned six times in these two chapters; we read of his throne, his dwelling, his synagogue and the depths of Satan.

In contrast to all this, the overcomer is mentioned seven times. The term "overcomer" (literally, one who gains the victory) is found twice in the Gospels, twice in Paul's Epistles, but six times in John's first letter and sixteen times in Revelation. Nearly half of the occurrences in Revelation are in chapters 2 and 3. The question may be asked, who is the overcomer? At least three answers have been given:

1. Some would say that the term describes a spiritual elite, an alert faithful remnant, and that they only will be worthy to be raptured when the Lord shall come.
2. Others insist that the term includes every born-again believer. They are characterised by perseverance to the end and will overcome by faith.
3. A careful examination of the context suggests that the overcomer is one who is able to rise above local conditions and is not swamped by the prevailing departure.

We should note carefully that it is neither a question of salvation nor of being found worthy to rise when the rapture takes place. Other scriptures make it clear that the church which is His body will be complete at the coming of the Lord. Paul says, "Christ the firstfruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming", 1 Cor. 15. 23. The church will be raptured, not ruptured. The redemption of the body, like the salvation of the soul, depends entirely on the sovereign free grace of God and not on our works. In the messages to the overcomer it is not a question of salvation, but of rewards. These are given in sequence, stretching from access to the tree of life in the paradise above, to sitting on the throne in kingdom glory. The deeper the departure, the higher reward for the overcomer.

In contrast with the overcomer in the book of Revelation, we find the earthdweller mentioned twelve times. See 3. 10; 6. 10; 8. 13; 11. 10; 12. 12; 13. 8, 12, 14; 14. 6; 17. 2, 8. An examination of these passages shows that the term refers to those that have all their ambitions fixed on things on earth, in contrast to those whose hope is in heaven. They are the unregenerate. It is upon them that the judgments of chapters 6-19 fall; they rejoice and make merry over the death of God's witnesses, 11.10; they are the followers and worshippers of the beast, ch. 13; they are linked with the harlot, ch. 17; and we are told that their names are not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, 17. 8.

It seems clear that the two terms, overcomer and earthdweller, indicate two entirely different types. The overcomer is the true believer who is able to rise above the darkness and apostacy of his surroundings and maintains a testimony for God, while the earthdweller is

the poor worldling, deceived by the god of this world,
drifting along with the tide to his inevitable doom.

The Scholar In God's School

The Scholar In God's School

T. E. Wilson

The Scriptural reading: Isaiah 50.

In this chapter Isaiah pictures the Lord Jesus as the Scholar with the opened ear, and then he discusses the four lessons the Lord had learned. The Man Christ Jesus was awakened every morning by His Teacher to receive the instruction of His Father God.

The subject at the beginning of the chapter is the nation of Israel, Israel that as the wife of Jehovah had drifted away from God into spiritual adultery. Because of their dreadful national declension, when the Lord Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and when later as an adult He appeared among His own people, they received Him not. Prophetically the Lord says concerning this, "Wherefore, when I came, was there no man?" (to receive Him) "When I called, was there none to answer?" "Is My hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? behold, at My rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness: their fish stinketh, because there is no water, and dieth for thirst. I clothe the heavens with blackness, and make sackcloth their covering." Here is Deity; God incarnate in perfect manhood!

Although the One born in Bethlehem is God's holy well-beloved Son, He declares, "The Lord hath given Me the tongue of the learned, ... He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned." How could it be that the Lord Jesus was a scholar in the school of God? The Word of God makes

it absolutely plain that while, on the one hand, He was the Son of God, on the other He was a helpless babe in the arms of Mary. As the Son of God, He was Omniscient, and this word means to possess full and complete knowledge, but as the dependent Man, there were lessons He had to learn by experience. These He learned in order to be a merciful and faithful High Priest able to succour the tempted. Let us now consider the lessons learned by the Lord Jesus:

The Lesson Of Sympathy

The Lord Jesus learned to “know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary” (V. 4). It is impossible to properly sympathize with another person unless you have had some experience. The Lord Jesus in order that He might be our present High Priest had to learn to sympathize with man in everything. He was hungry, thirsty, and He shed tears on at least three occasions. Sympathy means to suffer together, and comes from a word that means suffering. A young couple serving the Lord on the mission field lost their only child. Many of their friends tried to console them, but only one could really comfort; she, a young mother had likewise lost her baby. She put her arms around the sorrowing mother, and said, “I know just how you feel.” The two young mothers then wept together, the one in grief, the other in sympathy. There is One in the glory Who knows exactly how we feel and can sympathize with us.

The Lesson Of Silent Suffering

“He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He

openeth not His mouth" (Isa. 53:7). These were not the sufferings of the cross, but the sufferings immediately prior to the cross. Before He went to Calvary, the sweat fell down to the ground in Gethsemane, and He had the humiliation of being betrayed by one of His own disciples. On the way to the cross His hands were bound, and the Roman lash tore into His flesh; yet, He never uttered a word. He suffered silently, leaving us an example, "that ye should follow His steps" (1 Pet. 2:21).

The Lesson Of Self- Restraint Under False Accusation

The leaders of Israel judged the kind works of Jesus as being wrought by the power of the devil, and they called Him a blasphemer. Some of God's servants have been called upon to pass through similar experiences. Job's friends called him a liar and a hypocrite, and in this they were absolutely wrong. They also said that he was suffering because of some secret sin in his life, and that God was dealing with him because of this. We should not make hurried conclusions or say unkind things against God's beloved people. What did the Lord Jesus do? "When He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously" (1 Pet. 2:23). The saints of God might well raise the challenge, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth" (Rom. 8:33). Jesus could say, "He is near that justifieth Me." We can likewise leave our case in God's hands and He will eventually vindicate the right.

The Lesson Of Confidence In The Lord

All of God's people have difficult experiences which they cannot understand; for all such we have the word of encouragement, "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay upon his God" (Isa. 50:10).

A small deaf and dumb boy in a French school was asked by a visitor, "Who made you?" The little fellow wrote on the blackboard, "God." The visitor then enquired, "How do you hope to get to Heaven?" The boy answered by writing, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son." The visitor then submitted his last question, "If God made you, and the blood of Christ cleanses you, why did God make you the way you are?" The reply was forthright and clear, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight."

Our blessed Lord, from the darkness of the cross cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He was forsaken that we might trust in the Name of our Lord, and stay upon our God.

The Winding Sheet of Time

The Winding Sheet of Time

Ernest Wilson

In the First Epistle of the Corinthians chapter 7, the Apostle Paul gives instructions to the saints at Corinth in regard to marriage relationships, and he uses the expression, "The time is short." The word he employs for "short" (*sunestalomenos*) is an interesting one, occurring only twice in the New Testament, in this passage and in Acts 5:6. There it is used for the wrapping up of the dead body of Ananias in its last winding sheet. The word is derived from the verb, *sustelloto* place together, to draw together, or contract. Marvin Vincent says that it is also used for furling a sail or packing up luggage. In this instance the R. V. gives correctly the force of the passive voice, "The time is shortened;" therefore, it is ready to be wrapped up. The time (*kairos* not *chronos*) is not the time of mortal life as Calvin thinks, but the season, the period, or the age. Paul pictures the foreshortening of the time which must elapse before the coming of the Lord. The idea is that the period has been so shortened that the Christians should hold earthly ties and relationships loosely.

Just as Ananias was dead and wound up in his winding sheet for burial, so with the present dispensation, its sails have been furled, its luggage packed; the grave clothes are wrapping it around, and soon it will terminate in the coming of the Lord.

The Apostle applied this fact to five phases of the Christian's life which should be conducted in view of the

shortened time: Marriage, sorrow, joy, commerce, and daily life in the world (29-31). All or any of these things are liable to occupy time and attention unduly. All should be viewed from the standpoint of the approaching end of the age. If this was true in Paul's day, how much more so in ours upon whom "the end of the age is come." Let us look briefly at these five relationships of life.

MARRIAGE: This is the home life and is the immediate context of the passage. In a heathen community like Corinth there must have been many complicated and difficult cases to settle among the believers. Every pioneer missionary has similar experiences. Paul gives a fourfold answer to their questions summarized at the end by the three principles of verse 39: Marriage is for life; remarriage is permissible only on the death of one partner; marriage must be in the Lord, that is, there must not be an unequal yoke; and this holy and divine relationship the foundation of society, must be subordinated to the fact of the imminent return of the Lord. All are not called to completely sever home responsibilities like Paul and many another devoted pioneer evangelist. On the other hand, some people make a god of their home, their own comfort and personal well-being has first place with them.

SORROW: "Those that weep as though they wept not" (V. 30).

This points to the tragedies and bereavements of life. Oh the tears that are shed in secret! It is possible to allow our sorrows and trials to so occupy our thoughts that we have not time for the service of the Lord. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." Often God's choicest saints are those who drink most deeply of this cup. We must

not allow the cares of this life to choke the good seed. Weeping may come in to lodge at eventide but joy cometh in the morning. Undue occupation with our troubles, after all, is another form of selfishness.

JOY: Life is not all sorrow and weeping. At times the sun will shine brightly and prosperity will knock at the door. Paul, eleven times over, bids the Philippians to rejoice. The Christian life is a life of joy. Some seem to flit through life like a butterfly going from flower to flower sipping nectar. They never learn that "Life is real, life is earnest, and the grave is not its goal." The pleasures and joys of this life are transient, over occupation with even our blessings can blind us to the fact that "Men die in darkness at our side, without a hope to cheer the gloom." We are here for a little while to help pluck them from the burnings.

COMMERCE: "Those that buy as though they possessed not" (V. 30). This points to the subtle snare of making money and possessing things. The rich fool of Luke's Gospel chapter 12 is the type. Modern business men and politicians discussing the budget talk glibly of billions. Millionaires have come to be very ordinary individuals. For the Christian now it is the piling up of things to be left behind for the Antichrist and his servants. Scripture exhorts us not be slothful in business, but it is possible to be so occupied with it, that we have not time for the things of the Lord.

THE WORLD: "Using but not abusing it" (Using to the full, R. V. margin). Another version says, "Every contact with the world must be as light as possible, for the present scheme of things is rapidly passing away." The Christian has been taken out of the world by the cross of

Christ, and then sent back into it as an alien (John 17:6 and 11). His citizenship and politics are in Heaven (Phil. 3:20). Contacts in school, business, and factory are unavoidable and legitimate but he must never contract an unequal yoke to become like Lot in Sodom, sitting in the gate and administrating their civic affairs. That would be using it to the full, going all out, becoming like one of themselves. The reason given is that the fashion of the world, like the current Paris creations or the latest city models, pass away like the moving panorama of the picture show. John tells us, "He that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (1 John 2:17). Thus Paul, in a few brief words, applies the great truth of the shortness of time and the imminence of the coming of our Lord Jesus to our matrimonial, emotional, commercial, and social lives.

The atomic age with its grim portents of apocalyptic judgments has dawned. "It is later than we think."

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Elijah was pre-eminently a man of prayer, being thus accustomed to dealing with the Sovereign of the universe at His lofty throne, he did not dread Israel's petty sovereign sitting upon his throne, whatever might be the strength of the armed guard around him.

From "Elijah the Tishbite"

by W. Fereday

Wanted: A Man

"And I sought for a man... that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap...but I found none", Ezek. 22. 30.

Ezekiel was a prophet who had been taken captive to Babylon with king Jehoiachin in 599 B.C. when he was twenty-three years old. Seven years later he started to prophesy and continued for twenty years. He was contemporary with Jeremiah who remained in Jerusalem - both were priests as well as prophets. Jeremiah was the man of tears, but Ezekiel looked beyond present conditions to the ultimate triumph.

His book divides into three parts: chapters 1-24 describe conditions in Judah which brought on the captivity. The central portion, chapters 25-32, shows that God would deal with the pagan nations who were jubilant over the fall of the house of Judah. The last part outlines the coming restoration. Ezekiel was prepared for his ministry by the tremendous vision of the throne and the Shekinah glory recorded in chapter 1; he mentions this repeatedly in his book.

In chapters 20-22, he divides the nation into four classes, the priests, the princes, the prophets and the people, exposing the failure of each class. The priests ignored the difference between the holy and the unclean; the princes abused their authority and were like wolves devouring the prey; the prophets daubed their hearers with untempered mortar, seeing vanity and divining lies; while the people were engaged in violence and oppression. In this dark background comes the word of the Lord through Ezekiel, "I sought for a man".

God's Provision in a Dark Day, a Man

First, there were Enoch and Noah; then Abram was called out of Ur of the Chaldees, and Moses at the Exodus, Joshua stood in the gap for God, while in the dark days of the Judges, God had His men. There was then much failure, but the main lesson of the book of Judges is that at each critical period, when things were drifting into chaos, God had His men ready.

Similarly church history provides many examples. Athanasius of Alexandria stood for sound doctrine against the flood tide of heresy; Luther protested against the abominable abuses of the papacy; John Wesley preached the Gospel of God's grace. Then we may mention John Nelson Darby, who learned the truth of the one body of Christ and its glorified Head, thereby separating from the evils of denominationalism.

Revival and its Backwash

A consideration of these men and the associated revivals shows that they all follow a pattern. First, in the prevailing darkness and apathy, God raises up His man and many are led into the light. As long as he lives, spiritual conditions prevail, though sometimes at a decreasing tempo. A few generations after his death, the revival degenerates into a movement with a downward trend. Spirituality gives place to intellectuality and finally ends in repudiation of the truth which the man who led the revival preached and practiced.

Where do we Stand Today?

During the past one hundred years, many New Testament assemblies have been planted in most parts of the world. The men who founded them were men of

conviction. There was a genuine desire to follow the scriptural principles of gathering. Many of these men suffered severely, both socially and financially; they were ostracized by life long friends because, unable to continue with organized religion, they separated from it. But today, many of their children and grandchildren think differently. We have arrived at the third generation, in which some have slipped right back to what their fathers had left. It is regarded as intolerant bigotry to expose or criticize either popery or clerisy. History is surely repeating itself.

Among assemblies, admittedly, there is much weakness and failure. There is always the tendency to go to extremes. Some have formed sectarian circles of fellowship with centralized control. Others are in the process of breaking down all hedges, allowing no line of demarcation between inside and outside. The two extremes are mutually antagonistic and have little or no fellowship with each other.

But there is a path of balanced truth. The New Testament autonomous assembly still functions, and we believe it will until the end. But a lot depends on the leaders. Where we have men of spirituality and conviction, who hold the truth in love, and who refuse to be swayed by current superficial propaganda, we have the basis for spiritual progress. But where these are lacking, there is nothing to stem the tide of decay. Where are the men to stand in the gap? Will you be one?

Who are the "brethren"?

The brethren can be simply described as companies of Christians to be found in many countries of the world who are attempting in all sincerity to practice early church principles as they are outlined in the teaching of Christ and His apostles in the New Testament.

Any intelligent observer looking at the mainline churches in Christendom today, cannot fail to notice a wide divergence between the teaching and practices of the early church and that being taught and practiced today. In the course of church history, the Holy Spirit has raised up men of spiritual vision who have been burdened about the decline and whom God has used to re-discover long-lost truth.

Martin Luther in the sixteenth century was appalled by the departure from primitive Christianity and his vibrant protest resulted in the Reformation. He recovered the great truth of justification by faith alone in the vicarious death of Christ. The evangelical revivals in the eighteenth century under the Wesleys and Whitefield were undoubtedly a work of the Holy Spirit, but both of these movements failed to revive very much vital truth buried under ritual and tradition.

In the nineteenth century the Holy Spirit moved again. It happened concurrently in widely scattered parts of the world, each quite independent of the other. A number of godly spiritual men, many of them scholars and theologians, were raised up to promote scriptural truths which had been ignored and neglected for centuries. Most of them were young men filled with a burning

desire to get back to the Bible and to practice what they had learned.

It must be remembered, however, that in every age of church history there were small persecuted groups that met in all simplicity for worship and testimony. The ruling ecclesiastical hierarchy attacked them and sought to destroy them. E. H. Broadbent in his important book, *The Pilgrim Church* traces their history down through the ages.

The origin of the people known as ‘the Brethren’ can be traced to a group of young men, most of them with an aristocratic background, who met in the palatial home of Lady Powerscourt, located near Dublin in Ireland. On a Sunday morning in 1830, four of them met in a home in Dublin to celebrate the Lord’s supper. The numbers gradually grew and they rented a building to carry on their meetings for worship and the ministry of the Word. The leader of this group was John Nelson Darby, who on account of conviction had resigned his position as a curate in the Church of Ireland. About the same time another group started meeting along similar lines in Plymouth in England. The growth here was rapid and in a short time more than a thousand people were meeting in the Lord’s name. Outsiders called them ‘Plymouth Brethren’ and the name has adhered to them ever since, but they preferred to be known simply as brethren or Christians (Acts 11:26). Simultaneously another company of believers met in Bristol under the leadership of George Muller and Henry Craik. The name of Anthony Norris Groves was prominent at the commencement of the movement. He is credited with making the suggestions that later developed into the principles from

the Holy Scriptures under which the brethren met and carried on their church services.

From this inauspicious beginning, groups multiplied all over Britain, U.S.A., Canada, West Indies and in many countries overseas. On the continent of Europe they were found in France, Germany, Holland, Scandinavia, Italy, Spain and in Russia. Many assemblies sprang up along the valley of the Nile in Egypt. Some of the greatest expansion was in South America, especially in Argentina, Brazil and Venezuela. Practically all of the Latin Republics have assemblies. Central and South Africa has seen phenomenal blessing. Fred Stanley Arnot was the pioneer. He penetrated the heart of Africa with the gospel in 1881-1886 before the Belgian or British colonial occupation.

The movement which commenced in Dublin, Plymouth and Bristol in 1830 continued in fellowship with each other for nearly 20 years, but in 1848 they divided into two distinct groups. Darby, influenced by his episcopal background, initiated a centralized form of church government, which dictated policy, procedure and discipline to every individual and local assembly connected with it. They became known as exclusive brethren. Darby was a brilliant scholar, theologian and linguist. He translated the Bible from the original languages into English, German and French and other works into Italian. He is credited with the recovery of much truth, especially along dispensational and prophetic lines. But his policy of centralized control resulted in successive divisions over the years. On the other hand those who remained with Anthony Norris Groves and George Muller and who followed the principles outlined by Groves at the beginning, became

known as open brethren. But many today would prefer to be known simply as brethren without the capital B.

It would be opportune at this point to outline what those principles are. As each local assembly is autonomous with no creed but the Bible, there may be slight differences of interpretation in certain areas, but the general overall picture is as follows:

First of all these brethren hold tenaciously to the historic fundamental doctrines of Christianity, the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, co-equal and co-eternal, the essential deity and true impeccable humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ, His vicarious death on the cross for sin. His bodily resurrection and ascension, His High Priestly work and His coming again to reign in a literal millennium. They believe in heaven for the regenerate and eternal punishment for the Christ-rejector. They hold without reserve to the plenary inspiration and inerrancy of Holy Scripture in the original writings.

But there are a number of distinctive doctrines which they felt had been lost or altered and which they seek to emphasize and practice.

The church of the New Testament is called the body of Christ and has only one Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. Every horn-again believer is a member of that body. It commenced at Pentecost and will be completed at the Rapture.

The local church is composed of born-again believers meeting in the name of the Lord Jesus, refusing any denominational title, as that would put it on sectarian ground and would deny the truth of the one body. It is autonomous, responsible to the Head, the Lord Jesus

Christ, who according to His promise is in the midst (Matt. 18:20). There is warm fellowship with other local churches but no federation.

The local church is governed by a plurality of elders with delegated authority from the Risen Head to exercise leadership and discipline. Clerisy or one-man ministry is unknown in the New Testament. Elders are raised up by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28). They are not self-appointed but recognized by the local church as those who are fitted and doing the work (1 Thess.5:12-13).

The priesthood of all believers. Every believer is a holy priest to worship and a royal priest to witness (1 Pet. 2:5, 9). This negates entirely a clerical caste and a so-called laity. There is glorious freedom for Spirit-led worship and ministry.

The role of women in the church. They are to be in silence as far as public teaching in the church is concerned (1 Cor. 14:34; 1 Tim. 2:11-15). Her subjection to this ordinance is indicated by her wearing a head covering (1 Cor. 11:1-16). But she has a tremendously important sphere of service, both in the home and among her own sex (Titus 2:4).

Baptism by immersion in the name of the Trinity for born-again believers only, on confession of faith.

The priority and importance of the Lord's Supper, observed on the first day of every week. There is never chairman nor presiding elders: they recognize the Lordship of Christ and the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit to lead and guide the worship and in the ministry of the Word.

The dispensational interpretation of Holy Scripture. The importance of distinguishing between the earthly calling and the promises to Israel in the Old Testament and the heavenly calling of the church in the New Testament.

While there may be cases in their fellowship of those who hold other views of the Lord's Coming, it would be true to say that the majority of brethren believe and teach the pre-tribulation and pre-millennial rapture of the church.

An active outreach with the gospel both at home and abroad has always characterized the brethren assemblies. It has been said that in relation to their numbers at home, the brethren have more full-time missionaries in most parts of the world than any other evangelical body. Following the example of Anthony Norris Groves and George Muller they go forth commended by their local assemblies, with no stated salary, looking to God alone in simple faith for their daily needs and supplies.

These principles may seem idealistic and impractical in this modern world, but many thousands of God's servants in the past 150 years have proved experimentally that God's work done in God's way can count on God's blessing.