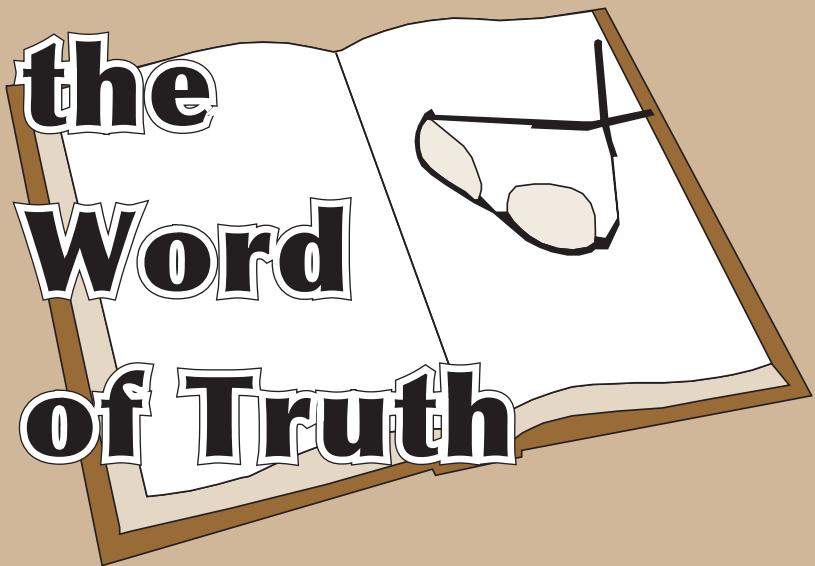


Rightly

Dividing



by C. I. Scofield

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INTRODUCTION

In 2 Timothy 2 the believer is presented in seven characters: as son (v. 1), soldier (v. 3), athlete (v. 5), husbandman (v. 6), workman (v. 15), vessel (v. 21), and servant (v. 24). As a son, Timothy is exhorted to be strong in grace. Grace goes with sonship, just as law goes with servitude. We learn this from Galatians. As a soldier, Timothy is exhorted to endure hardness and to avoid worldly entanglements; these are right elements of good soldiership. As a vessel, he is to be cleansed and separated; as a servant, he should be gentle, patient and meek.

In 2 Timothy 2:15 he is told what is required of him as a workman: “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

The Word of Truth, then, has right divisions, and one cannot be “a workman that needeth not to be ashamed” without observing them, so any study of that Word which ignores those divisions must be confusing. Many Christians confess that they find the study of the Bible weary work. More find it so, but are ashamed to admit it.

The purpose of this pamphlet is to indicate the more important divisions of the Word of Truth. Enough is given to enable the diligent student to perceive the greater outlines of truth and something of the ordered beauty and symmetry of that Word of God which, to the natural mind, seems a mere confusion of conflicting ideas.

Do not receive any doctrine upon the authority of this booklet, but, like the Bereans (Acts 17:11), search the Scriptures whether these things are so. No appeal is made to human authority: “The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you” (1 Jn. 2:27).

JEW, GENTILE, AND CHURCH OF GOD

Whoever reads the Bible cannot fail to perceive that over half of its contents relate to one nation, the Israelites, and that they have a very distinct place in the dealings and counsels of God. Separated from the mass of mankind, they are taken into covenant with Jehovah, who gives them specific promises not given to any other nation. Their history alone is told in Old Testament narrative and prophecy – other nations being mentioned only as they touch them.

It appears, also, that all the communications of Jehovah to Israel as a nation relate to the earth. If faithful and obedient, the nation is promised earthly riches and power; if unfaithful and disobedient, it is to be scattered “among all people, from one end of the earth even to the other” (Dt. 28:64). Even the promise of the Messiah is of blessing to “all the families of the earth.”

Continuing his research, the student finds much in Scripture about another distinct body called the Church. This body also has a peculiar relation to God, and, like Israel, has received from Him specific promises. But there the similarity ends, and the most striking contrast begins. Instead of being formed of the natural descendants of Abraham alone, it is a body in which the distinction of Jew and Gentile is lost. Instead of the relation being one of mere covenant, it is one of birth. Instead of obedience bringing the reward of earthly greatness and wealth, the Church is taught to be content with food and raiment, and to expect persecution and hatred. Just as Israel is connected with earthly and temporal things, so is the Church connected with spiritual and heavenly things.

Further, Scripture shows the reader that neither Israel nor the Church always existed. Each had a recorded beginning. That of Israel he finds in the call of Abram. Looking then for the birth of the Church he finds (contrary to his expectations, for he has probably been taught that Adam and the Patriarchs are in the Church) that it certainly did not exist before, nor during the earth-life of Christ, for he finds Him speaking of His Church as yet future when He says, “Upon this rock *I will* build my church” (Mt. 16:18): not *have* built, nor *am* building, but *will* build.

He finds, too, from Ephesians 3:5-10, that the Church is not once mentioned in Old Testament prophecy, but was, in those ages, a mystery “hid in God.” He finds the birth of the Church in Acts 2 and its termination on the earth in Thessalonians 4.

The student also finds, in the scriptural division of the race, another class, rarely mentioned, and distinguished in every respect from either Israel or the Church – the Gentiles. The comparative position of the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church may be briefly seen in the following Scriptures:

The Jew

Romans 9:4-5
John 4:22
Romans 3:1-2

The Gentile

Ephesians 2:11-12
Ephesians 4:17-18
Mark 7:27-28

The Church

Ephesians 1:22-23
Ephesians 5:29-33
1 Peter 2:9

Comparing, then, what is said in Scripture concerning Israel and

the Church, the student finds that in origin, calling, promise, worship, principles of conduct, and future destiny, all is contrast.

Callings Contrasted

Israel

“Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee” (Gen.12:1).

“For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land ... a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness” (Dt. 8:7-9).

“And he said, I am Abraham’s servant. And the LORD hath blessed my master greatly, and he is become great” (Gen. 24:34).

“The LORD shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face” (Dt. 28:7).

“And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail, and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath” (Dt. 28:13).

Church

“Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling” (Heb. 3:1).

“For our citizenship is in heaven” (Phil. 3:20 RV).

“Begotten unto a lively hope ... to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Pet. 1:3-4)

“Unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place” (1 Cor. 4:11).

“And Jesus ... saith unto His disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God!” (Mk. 10:23).

“Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?” (Jas. 2:5).

“Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Mt. 18:4).

Of Course it is not meant that a godly Jew did not, at death, go to heaven. The distinction is that the incentive to godliness in his case was earthly reward, not heavenly. Needless to say, in this dispensation, neither Jew nor Gentile can be saved except by the exercise of that faith on the Lord Jesus Christ whereby both are born again (Jn. 3:3,16) and are baptized into that “one body” (1 Cor. 12:13) which is “the Church” (Eph. 1:22-23). In the Church, the distinction of Jew and Gentile disappears (1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:14; Eph. 2:11, “in times past Gentiles”; 1 Cor. 12:2, “when ye were Gentiles”).

Rules Given Contrasted

The contrast between Israel and the Church further appears in the rules given for the conduct of each.

Israel

“When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee ... thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them nor show mercy unto them” (Dt. 7:1-2).

“Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe” (Ex. 21:24-25).

Church

“But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Mt.5:44).

“Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat” (1 Cor. 4:12).

“But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also” (Mt. 5:39).

Worship Contrasted

In the appointments for worship we find another contrast. Israel could worship in only one place, and at a distance from God – only approaching Him through a priest. The Church, by contrast, worships “wherever two or three are gathered,” has “boldness to enter into the holiest,” and is composed of “priests.” (Compare Lev. 17:8-9 with Mt. 18:20; Lk. 1:10 with Heb. 10:19-20; Num. 3:10 with 1 Pet. 2:5.)

Future Contrasted

In the predictions concerning the future of Israel and the Church, the distinction is still more startling. The Church will be taken away from the earth entirely, but restored Israel is yet to have her greatest earthly splendor and power.

Church

“In My Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto

Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (Jn. 14:2-3).

“The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Th. 4:16-17).

“For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory” (Phil. 3:20-21 RV).

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is” (1 Jn. 3:2).

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years” (Rev. 20:6).

Israel

“Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end” (Lk. 1:31-33).

Of the seven promises to Mary, in these verses, five have already been literally fulfilled. By what rule of interpretation are we authorized to say that the remaining two will not be fulfilled?

“Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets, as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up” (Acts 15:14-16).

“I say then, Hath God cast away His people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin ... I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy ... For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of

Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob” (Rom. 11:1,11,24-26).

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people ... And He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth” (Isa. 11:11-12).

“For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob” (Isa. 14:1).

“Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be said, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt: but, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither He had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers” (Jer. 16:14-15).

“Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in Mine anger, and in My fury, and in great wrath: and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: and they shall be My people, and I will be their God” (Jer. 32:37-38).

It may safely be said that the Judaizing of the Church has done more to hinder her progress, pervert her mission, and destroy her spirituality than all other causes combined. Instead of pursuing her appointed path of separation, persecution, poverty, and non-resistance, she has used Jewish Scripture to justify her in lowering her purposes to the acquisition of wealth, the use of an imposing ritual, the erection of magnificent churches, the invocation of God’s blessing upon the conflicts of armies, and the division of an equal brotherhood into “clergy” and “laity.”

SEVEN DISPENSATIONS

The Scriptures divide time – by which is meant the entire period from the creation of Adam to the “new heaven and a new earth” of Revelation 21:1 – into seven unequal periods, called “dispensations” (Eph. 3:2), “ages” (Eph. 2:7) and “days,” as in the “day of the Lord” (2 Pet. 3:10).

These periods are marked off in Scripture by some change in God’s method of dealing with mankind, or a portion of mankind, in respect of the two questions of sin and of man’s responsibility. Each of the dispensations may be regarded as a new test of the natural

man, and each ends in judgment – marking his utter failure.

Five of these dispensations, or periods of time, have been fulfilled. We are living in the sixth, probably towards its close, and have before us the seventh, and last – the millennium.

1. Man Innocent

This dispensation extends from the creation of Adam (Gen. 2:7) to his expulsion from Eden. Adam, created innocent and ignorant of good and evil, was placed in the garden with his wife, Eve, and put under responsibility to abstain from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The dispensation of innocence resulted in the first failure of man and in its far-reaching effects, the most disastrous of the failures of the natural man. It closed in judgment: “So He drove out the man” (Gen. 1:26; 2:16-17; 3:6; 3:22-24).

2. Man Under Conscience

By the fall, Adam and Eve acquired and transmitted to the race the knowledge of good and evil. This gave conscience a basis for right moral judgment, and hence the race came under this measure of responsibility – to do good and shun evil. The result of the dispensation of conscience was that “all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth,” that “the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” And God closed the second testing of the natural man with judgment – the Flood (Gen. 3:7,22; 6:5,11-12; 7:11-12,23).

3. Man in Authority Over the Earth

Out of the fearful judgment of the Flood, God saved eight persons to whom, after the waters were calmed, He gave the purified earth with ample power to govern it. This, Noah and his descendants were responsible to do. The dispensation of human government resulted, upon the plain of Shinar, in the impious attempt to become independent of God and closed in judgment – the confusion of tongues (Gen. 9:1-2; 11:14; 11:5-8).

4. Man Under Promise

Out of the dispersed descendants of the builders of Babel, God now calls one man Abram, with whom He enters into covenant. Some of the promises to Abram and his descendants were purely gracious and unconditional. These either have been, or will yet be, literally

fulfilled. Other promises were conditional upon the faithfulness and obedience of the Israelites. Every one of these conditions was violated, and the dispensation of promise resulted in the utter failure of Israel, and closed in the judgment of bondage in Egypt.

5. Man Under Law

Again the grace of God came to the help of helpless man and redeemed the chosen people out of the hand of their oppressor. In the Wilderness of Sinai He proposed to them the covenant of law. Instead of humbly pleading for a continued relation of grace, they presumptuously answered, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." The history of Israel in the wilderness and in the land is one long record of flagrant, persistent violation of the law; and at last, after multiplied warnings, God closed the testing of man by law in judgment, and first Israel, and then Judah, were driven out of the land into a dispersion which still continues. A feeble remnant returned under Ezra and Nehemiah, of which, in due time, Christ came, "born of a woman – made under the law." Both Jews and Gentiles conspired to crucify Him (Ex. 19:1-8; Rom. 3:19-20; 10:5; Gal. 3:10, Rom 3:19-20; 2 Ki. 17:1-18; 25:1-11; Acts 2:22-23; 7:51-52).

6. Man Under Grace

The sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ introduced the dispensation of pure grace – which means undeserved favor, or God giving righteousness, instead of requiring righteousness, as under Law. Salvation, perfect and eternal, is now freely offered to Jew and Gentile upon the one condition of faith.

"Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent" (Jn. 6:29).

"He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life" (Jn. 6:47).

"He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life" (Jn. 5:24).

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish" (Jn. 10:27-28).

"For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9 RV).

The predicted result of this testing of man under grace is judgment upon an unbelieving world and an apostate Church (Rev. 3:15-16; Lk. 18:8; 17:26-30; 2 Th. 2:7-12). The first event in the

closing of this dispensation will be the descent of the Lord from heaven, when sleeping saints will be raised and, together with believers then living, caught up “to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Th. 4:16-17). Then follows the brief period called “the great tribulation” (Mt. 24:21-22; Zeph. 1:15-18; Dan. 12:1; Jer. 30:5-7).

After this, the personal return of the Lord to the earth in power and great glory occurs, and the judgments which introduce the seventh and last dispensation (Mt. 24:29-30; 25:31-46).

7. Man Under the Reign of Christ

After the purifying judgments which accompany His personal return to the earth, Christ will reign over restored Israel and over the earth for one thousand years. This is the period commonly called the Millennium. The seat of His power will be Jerusalem, and the saints, including the saved of the dispensation of grace (the Church) will be associated with Him in His glory (Acts 15:14-17; Isa. 2:1-4; Rev. 19:11-21; 20:1-6; Isa. 11).

But when Satan is “loosed a little season” he finds the natural heart as prone to evil as ever, and easily gathers the nations to battle against the Lord and His saints, and this last dispensation closes, like the others, in judgment. The “great white throne” is set, the wicked dead are raised and finally judged, and then come the “new heaven and a new earth.” (Rev. 20:3,7-15; ch. 21,22).

TWO ADVENTS

Whoever carefully considers Old Testament prophecies must be struck by two seemingly contradictory lines of prediction concerning the coming Messiah. One body of prediction speaks of Him as coming in weakness and humiliation, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, a root out of dry ground, having no form nor comeliness, nor beauty that He should be desired. His visage is to be marred, His hands and feet pierced. He is to be forsaken of man and of God, and to make His grave with the wicked (Isa. 53; 7:14; Ps. 22:1-18; Dan. 9:26; Zech. 13:6-7; Mk. 14:27).

The other line of prophecy foretells a splendid and resistless Sovereign purging the earth with awful judgments, regathering dispersed Israel, restoring the throne of David in more than Solomon’s splendor, and introducing a reign of profound peace and perfect righteousness (Isa. 11:1-2,10-12; Dt. 30:1-7; 24:21-23; 40:9-

11; Jer. 23:5-8; Dan. 7:13-14; Mt. 1:1; 2:2; Lk. 1:31-33).

In due time the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy began with the birth of the virgin's Son (Isa. 9:6) in Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2) and proceeded with perfect literalness unto the full accomplishment of every prediction of Messiah's humiliation. But the Jews would not receive their King, "meek and sitting upon an ass," but instead crucified Him (Zech. 9:9; Mt. 21:1-5; Jn. 19:15-16).

But we must not conclude that the wickedness of man has baffled the deliberate purpose of God, for His counsels include a second advent of His Son, when the predictions concerning Messiah's earthly glory will receive the same precise and literal fulfillment as did those which concerned His earthly sufferings (Hos. 3:4-5; Lk. 1:31-33; Acts 1:6-7; 15:14-17; Mt. 24:27-30).

The Jews were slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken concerning the sufferings of their Messiah; we are slow of heart to believe all that they have spoken concerning His glory. Surely the greater reproach is ours, for it ought to be easier to believe that the Son of God would come "in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory," than that He would come as the babe of Bethlehem, and the Carpenter of Nazareth. Indeed, we believe the latter because it has happened, not because the prophets foretold it, and it is time we ceased to reproach the Jews for their unbelief.

If it be asked how they could possibly be blinded to the evident meaning of so many predictions, the answer is that they were blinded in the same way that many Christians are blinded to the equally evident meaning of a far greater number of predictions of His earthly glory, by the process of "spiritualizing" Scripture. In other words, the ancient scribes told the people that the prophecies of Messiah's sufferings were not to be interpreted literally, just as some modern scribes are telling the people today that the prophecies of Messiah's earthly glory are not to be literally interpreted.

But the second advent is a promise to the Church as well as the Jew. Among the last words of comfort addressed by our Lord to His perplexed disciples before He was sacrificed on the cross were these: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am there ye may be also" (Jn. 14:1-3).

Here the Lord speaks of His coming again in precisely the same terms as of His departure. If His departure was personal and bodily, His coming again must be likewise, since there is no Scripture that indicates otherwise.

In the very moment of our Lord's disappearance from the sight of His disciples, "two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:10-11).

Of the same significance is 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17: "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Tit. 2:13).

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 Jn. 3:2).

For this "blessed hope" we are taught to "watch" (Mk. 13:33,35,37; Mt. 24:42; 25:13), to "wait" (1 Th. 1:10), "and be ready" (Mt. 24:44). The last prayer in the Bible, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus," is one for Christ's speedy return (Rev. 22:20).

These Scriptures make it clear that the second advent will be personal and bodily. Therefore it does not mean the death of the believer, nor the destruction of Jerusalem, nor the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, nor the gradual diffusion of Christianity; but that it is the "blessed hope" of the Church, the time when sleeping saints will be raised, and, together with saints then living, who will be "changed" (1 Cor. 15:51-52), caught up to meet the Lord – the time when we who are now the sons of God will be like Him, and when faithful saints will be rewarded for works done after salvation, for His name's sake.

The following Scriptures contrast the two advents of our Lord.

First Advent

"And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn" (Lk. 2:7).

"But now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb 9:26).

"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Lk. 19:10).

"For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (Jn. 3:17).

Second Advent

“And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Mt. 24:30).

“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Heb. 9:28).

“And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Th. 1:7-8).

“Because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead” (Acts 17:31).

Enough has been presented to show that both the promises to Israel and to the Church imperatively require a return of our Lord to the earth. It may be helpful to consider, briefly, the theories which are here and there put forward to oppose the scriptural doctrine of the personal and bodily second advent of Christ.

It will, of course, be clearly understood that the Scriptures which speak of His visible and bodily appearing at the close of this dispensation of grace must be distinguished from those which refer to His divine attributes of omniscience and omnipresence, by virtue of which He is with us always, even unto the end of the age.

But the man Christ Jesus is now personally and bodily at the right hand of God: “But he (Stephen) ... looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God” (Acts 7:55). Hebrews 1:3 further points out that Jesus, “when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high.” Then Colossians 3:1 tells us, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.”

To illustrate, consider the movement of General Von Moltke during the Franco-Prussian War. By his genius, skill and a network of telegraph wires, he was present on every battlefield, though visibly and personally present in his office in Berlin. Later in the war, he joined the army outside of Paris, after which his actual and visible presence was there. So our Lord, by virtue of His divine attributes, is present with His Church now, but He will be visibly and personally present upon the earth at His second coming.

Answers to Six Theories Opposing the Second Advent

1. The prophecies concerning the return of the Lord were not fulfilled by the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, nor by His manifestation in powerful revivals and prayer meetings, because:

a. This interpretation practically nullifies the doctrine of the Trinity, making the Holy Spirit only a manifestation of Christ.

b. In Christ's promise of the descent of the Spirit, He distinctly speaks of Him as "another Comforter" (Jn. 14:16), and in John 16:7 Christ says, "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you."

c. The inspired writers of the Acts, the Epistles, and the Revelation, mention the return of the Lord more than one hundred and fifty times, after Pentecost, and always as yet future.

d. None of the events predicted to accompany the second advent of Christ occurred at Pentecost. These are: the resurrection of sleeping saints (1 Cor. 15:22-23; 1 Th. 4:13-16); the "change" of living believers, by which they "put on incorruption" – their "vile bodies" being "fashioned like unto His glorious body," and their being caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Cor. 15:51-53; 1 Th. 4:17; Phil. 3:20-21); and the mourning of all the tribes of the earth because of the visible coming of the Son of man in power and great glory (Mt. 24:29-30; Rev. 1:7).

These are the phenomena associated with the event of our Lord's return. When He comes these phenomena will be present. Not one of these things occurred at Pentecost, nor in any other manifestation of the Holy Spirit.

2. The conversion of a sinner is not the coming of the Lord. One would think this theory too silly to be seriously put forth as an explanation of prophecies so numerous and circumstantial.

a. According to Scripture this is exactly reversed. Conversion is the coming of a sinner to Christ, not the coming of Christ to a sinner (Mt. 11:28; Jn. 5:40; 6:37; 7:37).

b. None of the events enumerated above, predicted to occur when the Lord returns, accompany the conversion of a sinner.

3. The death of a Christian is not the coming of Christ.

a. When the disciples understood the Lord to say that one of their number should tarry until He came, the saying went abroad among them that "that disciple should not die" (Jn. 21:22-24).

b. The inspired writers always refer to a believer's death as his

departure. In not one instance is the coming of the Lord connected with a Christian's death (Phil. 1:23; 2 Tim. 4:6; 2 Cor. 5:8). Dying Stephen saw the heavens opened, and the Son of man, not coming, but "standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7:55).

c. None of the events predicted to occur when the Lord returns accompany the death of a Christian.

4. The destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans was not the second coming of Christ.

a. In Matthew 24 and Luke 21, three events are foretold: the destruction of the temple, the coming of the Lord, and the end of the world (age). The confusion of these perfectly distinct things gave rise to the notion that the fulfillment of one was the fulfillment of all.

b. The Apostle John wrote the Revelation after the destruction of Jerusalem, but still speaks of the coming as a future event (Rev. 1:4,7; 2:25; 3:11; 22:7,12,20). The last promise of the Bible is, "Surely, I come quickly." The last prayer of the Bible is, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

c. None of the events predicted to occur when the Lord returns occurred when Jerusalem was destroyed (1 Th. 4:14-17; Mt. 24:29-31; Mt. 25:31-32).

5. The diffusion of Christianity is not the second coming of Christ.

a. The diffusion of Christianity is gradual, whereas the Scriptures refer to the return of the Lord as sudden and unexpected (Mt. 24:27,36-42,44,50; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 3:3).

b. The diffusion of Christianity is a process; Scripture invariably speaks of the return of the Lord as an event.

c. The diffusion of Christianity brings salvation to the wicked, whereas the coming of Christ is said to bring, not salvation, but "sudden destruction" (1 Th. 5:2-3; 2 Th. 1:7-10; Mt. 25:31-46).

6. These alleged explanations and theories, though widespread, do not appear in the books of reputable theologians of any school or denomination, nor are they maintained by any recognized critical explanation of the Bible. These all maintain the bodily and visible second coming of Christ.

It is, however, sometimes said that this coming cannot occur until after the world has been converted by the preaching of the gospel, and has submitted to the spiritual reign of Christ for one thousand years. This view is wholly erroneous for the following reasons:

a. Scripture clearly describes the condition of the earth at the second coming of Christ to be one of awful wickedness (Lk. 17:26-32;

Gen. 6:5-7; Gen. 13:13; Lk. 18:8; 21:25-27).

b. Scripture describes the whole course of this dispensation from the beginning to the end in such terms as to exclude the possibility of a converted world in any part of it (Mt. 13:36-43,47,50; 25:1-10; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:1-9; 4:3-4; 2 Pet. 3:3-4; Jude 17-19).

c. The purpose of God in this dispensation is declared to be, not the conversion of the world, but to “gather out of the Gentiles a people for His name.” After this He “will return,” and only then will the world be converted (Acts 15:14-17; Mt. 24:14 [“for a witness”]; Rom. 1:5 [“among” not “of” all nations]; Rom. 11:14 [“some” not “all”]; 1 Cor. 9:22; Rev. 5:9 [“out of” not “all” of]).

d. It would be impossible to “watch” and “wait” for an event which we knew could not occur for more than one thousand years.

TWO RESURRECTIONS

The Bible teaches in the clearest terms that all the dead will be raised. No doctrine of the faith rests upon a more literal body of Scripture authority than this, nor is any more vital to Christianity: “But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain” (1 Cor. 15:13-14).

But it is important to observe that the Scriptures do not teach that all the dead are raised at one time. A partial resurrection of saints has already occurred: “And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many” (Mt. 27:52-53).

Two resurrections – differing in respect of time, and of those who are the subjects of the resurrection – are yet future. These are variously distinguished as “the resurrection of life” and “the resurrection of damnation,” as “the resurrection of the just and the unjust.” The following Scriptures refer to this important event:

“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation” (Jn. 5:28-29). If it be objected that the word “hour” indicates a simultaneous resurrection of these two classes, it is answered that the “hour” of verse 25 has already lasted eighteen hundred years. (See also “day” in 2 Pet. 3:8; 2 Cor. 6:2; Jn. 8:56.)

“But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just” (Lk. 14:13-14). In this passage, our Lord speaks of the first resurrection only. In 1 Corinthians 15 the distinction further appears: “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming” (vv. 22-23).

“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first” (1 Th. 4:13-16).

This “resurrection of life,” of “the just,” of “the dead in Christ,” is that of which Paul speaks in Philippians 3:11 (RV): “If by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead” (not “of the dead” as in the KJV). The resurrection *of* the dead would imply that all the dead were raised simultaneously; but “from the dead” necessarily implies a selection, that some of “the dead” remain. Literally it is “the resurrection out of the dead ones.” If the Apostle had in mind a resurrection of all the dead, how could he speak of attaining it “by any means” since he could not possibly escape it?

In Revelation 20:4-6 the two resurrections are again mentioned together, with the important addition of the time which intervenes between them: “And I saw thrones, and they that sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. Thus is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.” In verses 12 and 13 the second resurrection is “unto damnation.”

The testimony of Scripture, then, is clear that believers’ bodies are raised from among the bodies of unbelievers, and caught up to meet the Lord in the air one thousand years before the resurrection

of the latter. It should be firmly held that the doctrine of the resurrections concerns only the bodies of the dead. Their disembodied spirits are instantly in conscious bliss or woe (Phil. 1:23; 2 Cor. 5:8; Lk. 16:22-23).

FIVE JUDGMENTS

Neither the expression, “general judgment” nor the idea conveyed by that expression is found in the Scriptures. Dr. Pentecost well says: “It is a mischievous habit that has led the Christian world to speak of the judgment as being one great event, taking place at the end of the world, when all human beings – saints, sinners, Jews and Gentiles, the living and the dead – shall stand up before the Great White Throne and there be judged. Nothing can be further from the teaching of the Scriptures.”

Scripture speaks of five judgments, and they differ in four respects: subject, time, place and result of the judgment.

Judgment 1

Subject: The sins of believers have been judged
Time: A.D. 30
Place: The cross of Calvary
Result: Death for Christ and justification for the believer

“And He bearing His cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha: Where they crucified Him” (Jn. 19:17-18).

“Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree” (1 Pet. 2:24).

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God” (1 Pet. 3:18).

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Gal. 3:13).

“For He (God) hath made Him (Christ) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21).

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1).

Judgment 2

Subject: Judgment of sin in the believer
Time: Anytime
Place: Anywhere
Result: Chastisement

“For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world” (1 Cor. 11:31-32).

“If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?” (Heb. 12:7).

Judgment 3

Subject: The works of believers are to be judged
Time: When Christ comes for His own
Place: In the air (1 Th. 4:17; Mt. 25:24-30)
Result: To the believer, reward or loss of reward, “but he himself shall be saved”

Although Christ bore our sins in His own body on the tree, and God has entered into covenant with us to “remember them no more” (Heb. 10:17), every work of the believer must be judged.

“Wherefore also we make it our aim, whether at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto Him. For we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:9-10 RV).

“We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ” (Rom. 14:10).

Both passages are limited by the context to believers. In the first, the apostle has just written of us as in one of two states: either we are at home in the body and absent from the Lord, or absent from the body and present with the Lord – language which could not be used of unbelievers. “Wherefore we make it our aim,” either with the Lord, or in the body, to please Him, “for we must all be made manifest” (2 Cor. 5:8-9).

In the other passage the word “we” limits it to believers. The Holy Spirit never commingles the saved and the unsaved. Then, lest it should seem incredible that a blood-cleansed saint could come into any judgment whatever, Paul quotes from Isaiah to prove that “every knee shall bow,” and adds, “so then everyone of us shall give

account of himself to God.”

The following passage gives the basis of the judgment of works: “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire” (1 Cor. 3:11-15).

The following passages fix the time of this judgment:

“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works” (Mt. 16:27).

“And thou shalt be blessed ... for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just” (Lk. 14:14; 1 Cor. 15:22-23).

“Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts” (1 Cor. 4:5).

It is comforting, in view of that inevitable scrutiny of our poor works, to learn that in His patient love He is so leading us now that He can then find something in it all for which to praise us.

“Behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (Rev. 22:12).

“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day” (2 Tim. 4:8).

Judgment 4

Subject: The judgment of the nations

Time: The glorious appearing of Christ (Mt. 25:31-32; 13:40-41)

Place: The Valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:1-2,12-14)

Result: Some saved, some lost (Mt. 25:46)

Basis: The treatment of those whom Christ calls, “My brethren” (Mt. 25:40-45; Joel 3:3,6-7)

These “brethren” are believed to be the Jewish remnant who have turned to Jesus as their Messiah during “the great tribulation” which follows the taking away of the Church, and is terminated by the glorious appearing of our Lord (Mt. 24:21-22; Rev. 7:14; 2 Th.

2:3-9). The proof is too extensive to be put forth here. It is evident, however, that these “brethren” cannot be believers of this dispensation, for it would be impossible to find any Christians so ignorant that they do not know that acts of kindness to believers are really ministries to Jesus Himself.

As this judgment of the living nations is sometimes confounded with that of the Great White Throne in Revelation 20:11, it may be well to note the following contrasts between the two scenes.

Living Nations	Great White Throne
No resurrection	A resurrection
Living nations judged	The dead judged
On The earth	Heavens and earth fled way
No books	Books were opened
Three classes: sheep, goats, brethren	One class: the dead
When Christ appears	After He has reigned 1000 years

The saints will be associated with Christ in this judgment, and hence cannot be the subject of it (1 Cor. 6:2; Dan. 7:22; Jude 14-15). In truth, the judgment of the nations have but one thing in common: the Judge.

Judgment 5

Subject:	The judgment of the wicked dead
Time:	A determined “day” after the millennium (Acts 17:31; Rev. 20:5,7)
Place:	Before the Great White Throne (Rev. 20:11)
Result:	Judged, cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15)

Some may be troubled by the word “day” in Acts 17:31 and Romans 2:16. In the following passages “day” means a lengthened period: 2 Peter 3:8; 2 Corinthians 6:2; John 8:56. The “hour” of John 5:25 has now lasted more than nineteen hundred years. The scriptures also speak of a judgment of angels (1 Cor. 6:3; Jude 6; 2 Pet. 2:4).

LAW AND GRACE

The most striking division of the Bible is that between law and grace. These contrasting principles characterize the two most important dispensations: the Jewish and Christian: "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" Jn. 1:17).

It is not meant that there was no law before Moses, any more than that there was no grace and truth before Jesus Christ. The forbidding to Adam of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:17) was law, but grace was manifested in the LORD's seeking out His sinning creatures, and clothing them with coats of skins (Gen. 3:21), a beautiful type of Christ "made unto us ... righteousness" (1 Cor. 1:30). Law (the revelation of God's will) and grace (the revelation of God's goodness) have always existed, and to this Scripture abundantly testifies. But "the law" most frequently mentioned in Scripture was given by Moses, and characterized the time from Sinai to Calvary; just as grace characterized the dispensation which begins at Calvary and has its predicted end in the rapture of the Church.

It is, however, most vital to observe that Scripture never, in any dispensation, mingles these two principles. Law always has a place and work distinct from that of grace. Law is God prohibiting and requiring; grace is God beseeching and bestowing. Law is a ministry of condemnation; grace is one of forgiveness. Law curses; grace redeems from that curse. Law kills; grace makes alive. Law shuts every mouth before God; grace opens every mouth to praise Him. Law puts a great and guilty distance between man and God; grace brings guilty man near to God. Law says, "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth"; grace says, "whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." Law says, "Hate thine enemy"; grace says, "Love your enemies, bless them that despitefully use you." Law says, do and live; grace says, believe and live. Law never had a missionary, grace is to be preached to every creature. Law utterly condemns the best man; grace freely justifies the worst. (Lk. 23:43; Rom. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:15; 1 Cor. 6:9-11). Law is a system of probation; grace is one of favor. Law stones an adulteress, grace says, "Neither do I condemn thee." Under law the sheep dies for the shepherd; under grace the Shepherd dies for the sheep.

Everywhere the Scriptures present law and grace in sharp contrast. The mingling of them in much of the current teaching of

the day spoils both, for law is robbed of its terror and grace of its freeness.

The student should observe that “law” in the New Testament Scriptures always means the law given by Moses (Rom. 7:23 being the only exception). But sometimes the whole law is meant; sometimes the commandments only; sometimes the ceremonial only. Passages referring to the first type are Romans 6:14; Galatians 2:16, and 3:2. Verses referring to the second are Romans 3:19 and 7:7-12. Colossians 2:14-17 is an example of the third type. It should be remembered also that in the ceremonial law are enshrined those marvelous types – the beautiful foreshadowings of the person and work of the Lord Jesus as priest (Ex. 25-30) and sacrifice (Lev. 1-7) – which must ever be the wonder and delight of the spiritually minded.

Three Errors Concerning Law and Grace

1. *Antinomianism* denies all rule over the lives of believers. Those saved by God’s free grace, wholly without merit, are not required to live holy lives. “They profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (Ti. 1:16). “For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our Lord into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ” (Jude 4).

2. *Ceremonialism* demands that believers should observe the Levitical ordinances. A modern form of this error teaches that Christian ordinances are essential to salvation: “And certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved” (Acts 15:1).

3. *Galatianism* mingles law and grace and teaches that justification is partly by grace, partly by law; or that grace is given to enable an otherwise hopeless sinner to keep the law. Against this most widespread of the three errors, God’s strong warning, unanswerable logic and emphatic declaration comes in the Epistle to the Galatians: “This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” (Gal. 3:2-3). “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ ... but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ ... let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:6-8).

The following may be helpful as an outline of Scripture teaching on this important subject of the moral law.

What the Law Is

“Wherefore the law is holy” (Rom. 7:12).

“The law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin” (Rom. 7:14).

“I delight in the law of God after the inward man” (Rom. 7:22).

“The law is good, if a man use it lawfully” (1 Tim. 1:8).

“And the law is not of faith” (Gal. 3:12).

The Lawful Use of the Law

“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Rom. 3:20).

“Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions” (Gal. 3:19).

“Now we know, that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God” (Rom. 3:19).

“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them” (Gal. 3:10).

“For whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (Jas. 2:10).

“The strength of sin is the law” (1Cor. 15:56).

It is evident, then, that God’s purpose in giving the law (Jn. 1:17; Gal. 3:17) was to bring to guilty man the knowledge of his sin and of his utter helplessness in view of God’s just requirements. It is purely a ministration of condemnation and death.

What the Law Cannot Do

“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Rom. 3:20).

“No man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident; for, the just shall live by faith” (Gal. 3:11).

“And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:39).

“For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God” (Heb. 7:19).

The Believer Not Under the Law

After declaring the doctrine of the believer’s identification with

Christ in His death, of which baptism is the symbol (Rom. 6:1-10), Romans 6:11 begins the declaration of the principles which should govern the walk of the believer – his rule of life. This is the subject of the rest of Romans 6. Verse 14 gives the great principle of his deliverance, not from the guilt of sin that is met by Christ's blood, but from his bondage under it: "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."

Lest this should lead to the monstrous Antinomianism – saying that a godly life was not important – the Spirit immediately adds, "What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid" (Rom. 6:15). Surely every renewed heart answers, "Amen" to this.

Then Romans 7 introduces another principle of deliverance from law: "Wherefore, my brethren ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God" (Rom. 7:4).

"But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster" (Gal. 3:23-25).

The Believer's Rule of Life

"He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked" (Jn. 2:6).

"Dearly beloved ... abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (1 Pet. 2:11).

"Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love" (Eph. 4:1-2).

"Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us" (Eph. 5:1-2).

"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light" (Eph. 5:8).

"Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16).

"This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you" (Jn. 15:12).

"And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.

And this is His commandment, That we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment” (1 Jn. 3:22-23).

A beautiful illustration of this principle is seen in a mother’s love for her child. The law requires parents to care for their offspring, with a penalty for the willful neglect of them; but the land is full of happy mothers who tenderly care for their children in perfect ignorance of this law. The law is in their hearts. In this connection, remember that God’s appointed place for the tables of the law was within the ark of the testimony. With them were “the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded” (one a type of Christ, the other of resurrection, and both speaking of grace). They were covered from sight by the golden mercy-seat upon which was sprinkled the blood of atonement. The eye of God could see His broken law only through the blood that completely vindicated His justice and propitiated His wrath (Heb. 9:4-5).

God’s Purpose in Grace

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8-9).

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ” (Ti. 2:11-13).

“That, being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Ti. 3:7).

“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).

“To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved. In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Eph. 1:6-7).

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:16).

How all-inclusive! Grace saves, justifies, builds up, redeems, forgives, bestows an inheritance, gives standing, provides a throne which we may approach boldly for mercy and help, teaches us how to live, and gives us a blessed hope! Note that these diverse principles of law and grace cannot be intermingled.

“And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work” (Rom. 11:6).

“Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (Rom. 4:4-5; Gal. 3:16-18; 4:21-31).

“For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (for they could not endure that which was commanded, and if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake). But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel” (Heb. 12:18-24).

It is not, then, a question of dividing what God spoke from Sinai into “moral” and “ceremonial,” because the believer does not come to that mount at all.

BELIEVER'S TWO NATURES

The Scriptures teach that every regenerate person is the possessor of two natures: one, received by natural birth, which is hopelessly bad; and a new nature, received through the new birth, which is the nature of God Himself, and therefore wholly good. The following Scriptures will sufficiently manifest what God thinks of the old, or Adamic nature:

“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Ps. 51:5).

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jer. 17:9).

“There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one” (Rom. 3:10-12).

God does not say that the unregenerate are not refined or cultured, or able, or sweet tempered, or generous, or charitable, or even religious. But He does say that none are righteous, none understand God, none seek after God. It is one of the sorest of faith's trials to accept the divine estimate of human nature; to realize that our genial and moral friends are utter despisers of God's rights, and untouched by the sacrifice of His Son, whose divinity they deny, and whose Word they reject (1 Jn. 1:10; 5:10). This difficulty is vastly increased by the current praise of humanity from the pulpit.

How startling the contrast between appearance and reality in the time before the flood: "There were giants in the earth in those days, and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men, which were of old, men of renown" (Gen. 6:4).

It appeared that the world was growing better in men's eyes; a continual improvement could be traced, and the apparent result of the unholy intermarriage of the godly with the worldly was the lifting up of human nature to still grander heights. But "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5).

"Out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man" (Mk. 7:21-23).

"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him" (1 Cor. 2:14).

"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God ... they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:7-8).

The unconverted man may be gifted, friendly, generous and religious. He may be truthful, industrious, a good husband and father – but he has a threefold incapacity: he can neither obey God, please God, nor understand God.

The believer, on the contrary, while still having his old nature unchanged and unchangeable, has received a new nature which "after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." The following Scriptures will show the origin and character of the new man: that regeneration is the bringing in of a new thing, not the change of an old. Just as we received human nature by natural generation, so do we receive divine nature by regeneration.

"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (Jn. 3:3).

“But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (Jn. 1:12-13).

It will be observed what bearing these Scriptures have upon that utterly unscriptural phrase, “the universal fatherhood of God, and the universal brotherhood of man” – an expression all the more dangerous for the half-truth of the last clause. Not all who are born, but all who are born again are the children of God.

“And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph. 4:24).

“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor. 5:17).

And this “new man” is linked with Christ. “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2:20).

“For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory” (Col. 3:3-4).

“For to me to live is Christ” (Phil. 1:21).

“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4).

“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life: and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (1 Jn. 5:11-12).

But this new divine nature, which is Christ’s own, subsists in the believer together with the old nature. It is the same Paul who could say, “Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me,” who also says, “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing” (Rom. 7:18), and, “I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me” (Rom. 7:21).

Between these two natures there is conflict. Study carefully the battle between the two “I’s” – the old Saul and the new Paul in Romans 7:14-25. It is an experience like this which so discourages and perplexes young converts. The first joy of conversion subsides, the walk becomes unwatchful, and the convert is dismayed to find the flesh, with its old habits and desires, reassert itself. This leads him to doubt his acceptance with God. This is a time of great discouragement and danger. In this crisis, Paul cries out for deliverance, calling his old nature a “body of death.” The law only intensifies his agony, and he finds deliverance from “flesh,” not

through effort, nor through striving to keep the law, but “through Jesus Christ, our Lord” (Rom. 7:24-25).

The presence of the flesh is not, however, an excuse for walking in it. We are taught that “our old man is crucified with Christ.” In that sense, we “are dead” and we are called upon to make this constant experience by mortifying (“making dead”) our members.

The power for this is that of the Holy Spirit who dwells in every believer (1 Cor. 6:19), and whose blessed office is to subdue the flesh. “Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye may not do the things that ye would” (Gal. 5:16-17).

“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Rom. 8:13). Therefore, instead of meeting the solicitations of the old nature by force of will, or by good resolutions, turn the conflict over to the indwelling Spirit of God.

Romans 7 is a record of the conflict of the regenerate man with his old self, and is, therefore, intensely personal. In Romans 8 the conflict still goes on, but how blessedly impersonal! There is no agony, for Paul is no longer a part of it; the conflict is now between the “flesh” (Saul of Tarsus) and the Holy Spirit. Paul is at peace and victorious. Consider the following passages:

“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Rom. 6:6).

“Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God” (Col. 3:3).

“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:11).

“But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Rom. 13:14).

BELIEVER’S STANDING AND STATE

An important distinction to the right understanding of the Scriptures is that which concerns the standing (or position) of the believer, and his state (or walk). The first is the result of the work of Christ, and is perfect and entire from the very moment that Christ is received by faith. Faith alone confers standing in God’s sight, and before Him the weakest, most ignorant, most infirm and fallible man on earth, if he be a true believer on the Lord Jesus Christ, has precisely the same title as the most illustrious saint.

What our standing is, may be seen in the following Scriptures:

“But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name” (Jn. 1:12).

“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:17).

“To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith” (1 Pet. 1:4-5).

“Beloved now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him” (1 Jn. 3:2).

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation” (1 Pet. 2:9).

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal Life” (Jn. 3:16).

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus” (Heb. 10:19).

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings” (Eph. 1:3).

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved), and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:4-6).

“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ” (Eph. 2:13).

“What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?” (1Cor. 6:19).

Every one of these marvelous things is true of everyone who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. Not one item in this glorious inventory is gained by prayer, diligence in service, church-going, alms-giving, self-denial, holiness of life, or by any other description of good works. All are the gift of God, through Christ and therefore belong equally to all believers.

The very instant that the jailer of Philippi believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, he became a son of God, a joint heir with Christ, a king and priest, and the owner of an incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading inheritance. In the instant that he believed with his heart and confessed with his mouth, Jesus as Lord, he was justified from all things, had peace with God, a standing in His grace, and a sure hope of glory. He received the gift of eternal life, was made accepted in the full measure of Christ’s own acceptance, was sealed with the

Holy Spirit, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and was baptized into the mystical body of Christ. Instantly he was clothed with the righteousness of God (Rom. 3:22), quickened with Christ, raised with Him, and seated with Him in the heavenlies.

What his actual state may have been is quite another matter; certainly it was far, far below his exalted standing in the sight of God. It was not all at once that he became as royal, priestly, and heavenly in walk as he was at once in standing. The following passages will indicate the way these two things are constantly distinguished in the Scriptures.

Standing

“To the assembly of God which is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints” (1 Cor. 1:2 JND).

“But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:11).

“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son” (Col.1:12-13).

State

“For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren ... that there are contentions among you” (1 Cor. 1:11).

“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal ... For ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” (1 Cor.3:1-3).

“Now some are puffed up” (1 Cor. 4:18).

“But now ye also put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds” (Col. 3:8-9).

Notice that the divine order, under grace, is first to give the highest possible standing, and then to exhort the believer to maintain a state in accordance with it. The beggar is lifted up from the dunghill and set among princes (1 Sam. 2:8), and then exhorted to be princely. See the following as examples.

Standing

“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed” (Rom. 6:6).

“Ye are the light of the world” (Mt. 5:14).

“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace” (2 Tim. 1:9).

“And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:6).

“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now ye are light in the Lord” (Eph. 5:8).

“For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him” (1 Th. 5:9-10).

“By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb. 10:10).

State

“If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?” (Col. 2:20).

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God” (Col. 3:1).

“Walk as children of light” (Eph. 5:8).

“Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober” (1Th. 5:6).

“Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do” (1 Th. 5:11).

“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly” (1 Th. 5:23).

“He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked” (1 Jn. 2:6).

Scripture makes a clear distinction between the standing and state of the believer. The believer is not under probation to see if he is worthy of an inconceivable exalted position, but beginning with the confession of utter unworthiness, receives the position wholly as the result of Christ’s work. Positionally he is “perfected forever” (Heb. 10:14), but looking within, at his state, he must say, “not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect” (Phil. 3:12).

It may be said that all the after-work of God in his behalf – the

application of the Word to his walk and conscience (Jn. 17:17; Eph. 5:26), the chastisements of the Father's hand (Heb. 12:10; 1 Cor. 11:32), the ministry of the Spirit (Eph. 4:11-12), all the difficulties and trials of the wilderness way (1 Pet. 4:12-14), and the final transformation when He shall appear (1 Jn. 3:2) – all are intended simply to bring the believer's character into perfect conformity to the position which is his the instant of his conversion. He grows *in* grace, indeed, but *not into* grace.

A prince, while a little child, is presumably as willful and as ignorant as other little children. Sometimes he may be very obedient, teachable and affectionate, and then he is happy and approved. At other times he may be unruly, self-willed and disobedient, and then he is unhappy and perhaps is chastised. But he is just as much a prince on the one day as on the other. It may be hoped that, as time goes on, he will learn to bring himself into willing subjection to every right way, and then he will be more princely, but not any more really a prince. He was born a prince.

In the case of every true son of the King of kings, and Lord of lords, this growth into kingliness is assured. In the end, standing and state, character and position, will be equal. But the position is not the reward of the perfected character – the character is developed from the position.

SALVATION AND REWARDS

The New Testament contains a doctrine of salvation for the lost, and a doctrine of rewards for the faithful service of the saved. It is of great importance to the right understanding of the Word that the student should make the clear distinction between these.

Salvation: A Free Gift

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8,9).

“Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water” (Jn. 4:10).

“Every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price” (Isa. 55:1).

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev. 22:17).

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:23).

But in contrast with the freeness of salvation, note that those works that are pleasing to God shall be rewarded.

Works To Be Rewarded

“And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward” (Mt. 10:42).

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness” (2 Tim. 4:7-8).

“And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (Rev. 22:12).

“And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities” (Lk. 19:17).

“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man’s work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire” (1 Cor. 3:11-15).

Salvation: A Present Possession

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life” (Jn. 3:36).

“He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath eternal Life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life” (Jn. 5:24).

“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace” (2 Tim. 1:9).

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Ti. 3:5).

“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and

this life is in His Son” (1 Jn. 5:11).

But rewards are for a future time.

Rewards Bestowed in the Future

“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works” (Mt. 16:27).

“For thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just” (Lk. 14:14).

“And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (Rev. 22:12).

“And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away” (1 Pet. 5:4).

“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me” (2 Tim. 4:8).

God’s purpose in promising to reward the faithful service of His saints with heavenly and eternal honors, is to win them from the pursuit of earthly riches and pleasures, to sustain them in the fires of persecution and to encourage them in the exercise of Christian virtues.

TRUE BELIEVERS AND MERE PROFESSORS

Ever since God has had a people of His own on this earth, they have been troubled by the presence of those who profess to be of them, but were not. Beginning under the very gate of Eden, this state of things will continue until “the Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity ... then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Mt. 13:41-43).

Scripture plainly tells of this mingling of tares and wheat – of mere professors among true believers. Yet this greatly confuses many Bible students, who apply the warnings meant only for the self-deceived or hypocritical to the children of God. Such admixture is abundantly recognized in the Scriptures. (See Gen. 4:3-5; Ex. 12:38; Num. 11:4-6; Neh. 7:63-65; 13:1-3; Mt. 13:24-30, 37-43; 2 Cor. 11:13-15; Gal. 2:4; and 2 Pet. 2:1-2.)

It is impossible, in a brief Bible reading, to refer to all the passages which distinguish true believers from mere formalists, hypocrites, and deceived legalists who are working for their own

salvation instead of working out a salvation already received as a free gift (Phil. 2:12-13; Eph. 2:8-9). The following, however, will sufficiently indicate the line of demarcation:

True Believers Are Saved

“He said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee” (Lk. 7:50).

“My sheep hear My voice, and I Know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand” (Jn. 10:27-28).

“All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out” (Jn. 6:37).

“I am the good shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine” (Jn. 10:14).

“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His” (2 Tim. 2:19).

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life” (Jn. 6:47).

“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world” (Jn. 17:24).

Mere Professors Are Lost

“But Peter said unto him ... Thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God” (Acts 8:20-21).

“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us” (1 Jn. 2:19).

“But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray Him. And He said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto Me, except it were given unto him of My Father. From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him” (Jn. 6:64-66).

“Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity ... Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?” (Mt. 23:28,33).

“Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not

prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name have cast out devils, and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity” (Mt. 7:22-23).

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance” (Heb. 6:4).

“Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him” (Heb. 10:38).

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Some texts are not free from difficulty, but with prayer, careful study, and never using a doubtful or obscure passage to contradict a clear and positive one, light will surely come. Do not use an *if* passage, such as Hebrews 6:6, to contradict a *verily* one, such as John 5:24.

The cases of Judas Iscariot and of Peter should present no difficulty. Judas was never a believer, as John 6:68-71 points out. Peter never ceased to be one, as Luke 22:31-32 clearly indicate.

Finally, remember that these principles are to guide us only in rightly dividing the Word of Truth, but are never to be applied to professors. The judgment of professors is not committed to us, but is reserved to the Son of Man (Mt. 13:28-29; 1 Cor. 4:5).

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