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## The Lordship of Christ

E. W. Rogers

We did not live in those days when the Ruler of the old Roman world was called LORD. The notion of the divine right of Kings has been temporarily exploded, though to be sure it will be revived in days yet to come, when the Man of Sin will set himself up in the temple of God claiming that he is God, and demanding the worship of all within his jurisdiction (2 Thess. 2:4; Rev. 13:15).

The believer, by the Spirit of God calls Jesus "Lord" (1 Cor. 12:3) and rightly so, because not only is He so spoken of in the Old Testament (Psalm 110:1 and Matt. 22:22, 43 and 44) but by His resurrection from the dead "God has made (i.e. vindicated) that same Jesus ... both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). At His birth it was announced that the One born was "Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11), yet during His lifetime it was evident that man in general, and the disciples in particular, did not fully understand the fact. After He was raised from the dead Thomas called Him "My Lord" (John 20:28), and Peter so proclaimed Him, but the mass of mankind did not believe it. The good news, however, was spread far and wide that "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead thou shalt be saved" (Romans 10, 9). The acknowledgment, then, of the Lordship of Christ is vital if one is to be saved from the penalty of his sins, as well as if the life is to be adjusted to the glory of God and the good of its owner. In these papers we shall seek to set out something of what the Scriptures teach touching this matter.

### He is Lord of All

Thus declared Peter in the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:36). This bracketed phrase must, indeed, have struck the centurion with astonishment. That the claim

of universal lordship should be made for Jesus the Nazarene was nothing if not remarkable. Peter is emphatic. Of Him alone could this be said: He, and He alone, is Lord of all. And His Lordship extends not only to persons, Jew and Gentile, all men alike, but also to "all things". The limitless immensity of the universe is now-a-days acknowledged by man as the result of his scientific discoveries, but little do most scientists appreciate that the Universal Lord of all the domain, a fraction of which bewilders them, is the Christ of God, the babe of Bethlehem's manger, the sufferer on Calvary's Cross. This is a truth which should bring the utmost peace to the hearts of God's people, for that Lordship is not a mere nominal one, it is one that He actively exercises in the interests of His own now, as one day He will actively enforce it to "the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:11).

Even the winds and the waves obeyed Him. The fish brought the money to His feet. The demons released their captives at His bidding. Disease and death vanished from His presence. He, by whose word creation in the first instance came into existence, is the One who upholds it now, and by His miracles displayed that He was and still is Lord of all things.

His Lordship did not commence with His birth, much less with His resurrection. David addressed Him thus (Psalm 110:1) for He was eternal, His birth not being the commencement of His being. The Hebrew word 'Adon' has its counterpart in the New Testament Greek word Kurios, and both words have a wide territory of meaning, such as Sir, Owner, Master. The Lord of all Power and Might condescended to enter human existence, not at its source in the days of Adam, but midway down the stream, when many generations had played their little part in life and had passed away; and thus He who was the root whence David sprang became also his offspring: hence it was that the Psalmist

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“in spirit” designated as his Master, One who was to be raised up out of his own tribe and family.

Not merely is He Lord of all things, but He is also Lord of all people. “The same Lord of all is rich unto all that call upon Him” (Rom. 10:12). Peter, under the direction of the Spirit, had gone outside the bounds of Judaism with the gospel of God’s grace, and though this was an initial ministry and not permanent for him—for he was the Apostle of the circumcision (Gal. 2:8), it was perpetuated by the preaching and writings of the Apostle Paul who was entrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision (Gal. 2:8). “Christ both died and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living” (Rom. 14:9). His Lordship is over all people without limitation. That is why, in a future day, every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord no matter whether they are in Heaven, on earth or in the infernal regions (Phil. 2:10-11).

There are those who voluntarily and gladly now, in time, confess Him as Lord and, indeed, call Him “My Lord”. David did so before He became incarnate (Ps. 110:1); Elizabeth did so at His incarnation (Luke 1:43); Mary did so when He was dead (John 20:13); Thomas did so when He was raised (ibid v. 28); and Paul acknowledged Him as “My Lord” when He saw Him in glory (Phil. 3:8). Have we really done this? If you will examine the lives of all these persons, despite any failures that may be detected therein, you will find that this acknowledgment affected their conduct and so molded their lives that they are worthy of our emulation. David was “the man according to God’s own heart”, whatever we, with a fallen nature that ever loves to grasp at the unsavory, may say touching his sin with Bath Sheba and its shocking concomitants. Elizabeth’s long married life had been governed by the Lordship of Christ (see Luke 1, 6). Whatever may be said of Thomas’ skepticism, we cannot but believe that in reverence he shrank from implementing his own suggestion, his words expressing the deep and lasting conviction of his heart. And who can doubt that Mary’s whole life from the time of her mighty deliverance was governed by the glad surrender of herself entirely to her Owner-Lord? And the converted history of Saul of Tarsus, which began with the word “Lord” is eloquent testimony to the fact that it was not in word only, but in deed that he owned Christ Jesus as his Lord.

Indeed, it was his habit when referring to Him historically to give Him the title “Lord Jesus”. For instance, in referring to the grace of the Lord Jesus, who “though He was rich yet for our sakes He became poor” (2 Cor. 8:9), he did not speak of “Jesus” but gave Him His title. Similarly, when he says “The night in which the Lord Jesus was betrayed” (1 Cor. 11:23). How strange, then, that so many today fail to give Him His due when speaking or preaching of Him, yet they

ascribe to His apostles the prefix “Saint” to which they are not specially entitled above any other of His people! We should eschew this snare. But there are those who “deny the Lord that bought them” (2 Peter 2:1). Here, confessedly, the word “despot” is used, but the gist is the same. They repudiate His proprietary rights over them, whose they were by creation and by whom they have been purchased when “He sold all that He had, and bought the field” in order to acquire the treasure within it (Matt. 13:44). “Our lips are our own: who is lord over us?” they say (Ps. 12:4). They are utterly lawless, insubordinate, rebellious. But their day will come to an end. His Lordship implies His Deity.

### **Implies His Deity**

This is seen in the use of the word “Kurios” in the New Testament for the word Jehovah in the Old. Kurios is Greek and Jehovah is Hebrew, and Isaiah 40:3 is quoted in Matthew 3:3, which respectively gives these words. The identification is indubitable. John was the forerunner, preparing the way of Him who was God manifest in flesh. There are many such passages in the New Testament, and sometimes it is not easy to determine whether the title refers to the Lord Jesus or to God, the statements concerned being applicable to both because they are co-equal each with the other. This is all the more remarkable seeing that the early Christians were, for the most part, Jews and, therefore monotheistic. They could not on any account sanction the thought of more than one God, but they saw, by faith, in the person of the Lord Jesus “the true God” (1 John 5:20). In fact, it may be that James uses the conjunction “and” in an explanatory way in his Epistle (1:1) and we might read his words as “James, a servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ”.

We must not suppose that everyone who addressed the Lord Jesus by the word Kurios recognized this truth. Sometimes, indeed very often, in the days of His flesh those who approached Him thus meant no more than “sir” or “master,” an acknowledgment of superiority with the view of getting a need met. This is clearly seen in the English version of John 4:11 and the reader will discern other like cases. In John 9:36 the word “Lord” appears to have the lesser sense: but in verse 38 the greater, for the erstwhile blind man believed.

The recognition of this will give us to see the true significance of the word “worship” in its many occurrences in the Gospels. It does not always imply that the worshipper intelligently apprehend the deity of the One before him. It often was no more than an act of respect, specially in view either of need or of gratitude. But the title Lord, certainly denotes authority.

### **Denotes Authority**

This is clearly seen in such a passage as John 13:13 and 14. The apostles called the Lord Jesus “Master

(Teacher) and Lord”, but the Lord Jesus reverses the order and speaks of “Lord and Teacher”. The circumstance was that of His having washed the disciples feet: He had given them a lesson in action, not in speech. That action called for imitation, and such imitation could only be acknowledged as a binding duty if they recognized His Lordship over them. How easy it is for us all to be more occupied with the Word than with practice. Luke records “all that Jesus began both to do and to teach” (Luke 1:1), putting action before speech. The two on the Emmaus road spoke of the Lord as one “mighty in deed and word before God and all the people” (Luke 24:19), and here in the Upper Room the Lord Himself places His authority before His teaching. For if His authority be repudiated His teaching will have no effect. But own His Lordship, then His teaching at once becomes authoritative and binding.

It was this that Paul sought to press on the Corinthians, who were apt to ignore his teaching. “If any 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. If he does not recognize this, he himself should not be recognized” (1 Cor. 14:37-38 NEB). Paul was not imposing on the Corinthians his own fancies or whims, for they could never be binding. But the Lordship of Christ implies that His word has the effect of a command, and calls for prompt obedience.

Is this the reason why there is everywhere so much departure from scriptural patterns; why the writings of Paul are brought into question; why there seems to be a desire to evade the plain teaching of the epistles under the plea that they are written for conditions that then existed—which conditions do not obtain in our day? Many fail to see that such writings embody principles which are applicable at all times.

The reader would find it a most profitable study to go through Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians and note how frequently he speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ our Lord, the Lord Jesus, and so on. It is in verses 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10 of the first chapter to say nothing more of the rest of the Epistle. He speaks of the “Lord of glory” (2:8); “the mind of the Lord” (2:16); services given by the Lord (3:5); the knowledge of the Lord (3:20); the examination at the coming of the Lord (4: 4-5); and so we could go on through the whole letter. The Lordship of Christ is the authority for disciplinary action (ch. 5) and the demand of cleanness of life (ch. 6). On his authority Paul can legislate in regard to marital relationships (ch. 7). To us, he says, there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ (8:6 RV). It is the Lord who has regulated touching the maintenance in material things of His servants (9:14). No less than seven times does he use the title in connection with the Lord’s Supper (ch. 11, vv. 23-32). The title

stands at the gateway of the apostolic teaching touching church gatherings (12:3) and the whole of chapters 12-14. Both Paul and Timothy work under the same Lord and their plans are subject to His permissive will (16:7-10).

One can imagine that the Lord, who walks in the midst of the lampstands (Rev. 1.) would say to many today “Why call ye Me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say” (Luke 6:46). It will not suffice to say that we have preached: we have done many wonderful things; we have eaten and drunken in His presence (Luke 13:26). That will be of no avail in that day. It is all too easy for us to rest on the doctrine — and it is a scriptural one — of the eternal security of the believer and yet so to live that we repudiate day by day His claims of Lordship. That repudiation shows that we are not true believers, and are not entitled to claim the security which belongs alone to those who in truth “confess Jesus as Lord”. These are solemn thoughts, and those of us who are most vocal and who are most before the eyes of our brethren need, of all men, to be the most careful.

### **Personal Responsibility**

Each one has a responsibility to the Lord and this Paul enforces when dealing with matters in which believers do not see eye to eye. The reader should peruse Romans 14 and the early part of chapter 15. He speaks of the master (kurios) in 14:4; of the Lord no less than three times in verse 6; and likewise three times in verse 8. He cannot stress it too much. We are not responsible to our brethren for our actions — for our liberties or for our forbiddings, but to the Lord, and each of us will give an account of himself to God. This is often forgotten and we are prone to draw a line which our brethren must toe because it is one which suits us. But not all have the same faith or the same liberty. Some are weak in their conscience, and others are strong. We must not despise nor must we condemn. They are our brethren for whom Christ died: why then should we despise them? We are not invested with judicial authority over them: why then should we judge them? It will suffice if we can give a satisfactory account of ourselves in respect of things which we allow or disallow in our own lives. That is as much as we can manage.

The true Christian loves to serve God and aims to please God, and fears to offend God, and that not occasionally, but habitually. Is this the case with each of us?

No man understands or lives upon the doctrines of the Gospel, who does not prize and practice its precepts. The doctrines rightly understood lead into fellowship with God; and the man who enjoys fellowship with God is concerned to walk by the precepts of the Word of God. It cannot be otherwise.

## Without a King

A Nation without a king—a people without a visible head! Such was Israel, God's ancient people, once upon a time. How odd they must have looked when compared with the nations around. Those nations had their kings; but Israel had no king—at least none whom the world could see. They owned "Him who is invisible". How helpless they must have appeared in the sight of the nations! Their condition, as a people without one visibly ruling over them, must have seemed nothing short of "foolishness" in the eyes of the uncircumcised. The faithful Israelite, no doubt, could point upward and say, "Our King, our Ruler, is yonder: the Lord reigns over us". Yet all this would be utterly beyond the comprehension of those who were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel.

But Israel's eye was getting off the Lord; and, even after raising their Ebenezer and saying, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us" (1 Sam. 7:12), we see them in the very next chapter boldly demanding a king! Hitherto the Lord had helped them; now they were going to get some other one to help them. They did not exactly mean this; they would not have admitted it on any account. No; they would still look to the Lord all the same; but, in addition to that, they wanted a king. "Now," they said, "make us a king to judge us like the nations" (1 Sam. 8:5). The anointed eye can easily perceive here that when Christians get away in soul from the Lord, there is at once a craving for something that will please the sight—a desire for an outward appearance of strength. When a company of believers get cold and carnal, there springs up a wish for something or some one to lean, upon. The carnal eye soon wearies in looking at the things that are not seen and eternal (2 Cor. 4:18). The flesh cannot wait upon God; nor can it understand how we are to be ruled by one away in the heavens, who cannot be seen. In the history of the Church how painfully this has been verified. In the condition of things around how plainly it is exhibited!

It may be asked, what connection can there be between Israel wanting a king, and the people of God now? There is a very striking connection; and, in these ancient records, there are very solemn lessons for us on whom the ends of the world are come. God's ancient people, Israel, were His chosen earthly people; and they had no king, and they had no lack. The Lord reigned over them, as Gideon once reminded them in a moment of their weakness (Jud. 8:23). While they were content that the Lord should reign over them, all went well, although they must have appeared "a feeble folk" in the eyes of the nations around, and "not like other people at all". This is so far clear. Well, in the present day, God has chosen heavenly people—that is ourselves, we who are saved; and, like Israel of old, we are ruled by One whom the world cannot see. In other

words, we have no visible head; and, praise His name, we have no lack. How similar is our condition to that of Israel of old! Indeed, the only difference seems to be that they were God's earthly people, while we are His heavenly people. We gather round One who is revealed only to faith. The carnal eye cannot see Him. And thus we are often told: "But you have no head over you". Quite true, so far as visible, or an "ordained," head is concerned. But we have a Head—even Him who is "Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body". Unto Him we gather--His name alone the rallying word—His person the attractive power—His Word our guide. Our coming together in such a manner, as an assembly of God's people, must appear "foolishness" in the eyes of the world. It cannot be otherwise. Scripture plainly says that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14).

Now look at that company of believers gathered to the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to wait on Him, to worship Him. They are, it may be, bowed in silence before the Lord, waiting that the Spirit may distribute to each severally as He will (1 Cor. 12:11). There is no chairman or president to "keep things in order". The company seems to be gathered round nobody. In the eyes of the worldlings the spectacle must be "weak and beggarly" in the extreme. But God has told us that in their eyes it shall be so. If it were man's order of things, man would like it; but because it is God's order of things, the flesh rebels against it. Such has ever been the case. Scripture and experience alike testify that God's order of things is not approved by the multitude. The cry of the people was, "Nay, but we will have a king". And the answer of the Lord was simply this: "They have rejected Me". It mattered not how Israel might explain the matter, or justify themselves, the divine conclusion was this: "They have rejected Me".

Then, beloved, we need not be surprised if the, "ways that be in Christ" seem strange in the eyes of the world, and even in the eyes of many who are the true seed. Be it ours to be faithful, that with undimmed eye we may set the Lord always before us, praising Him that although our position is one of seeming weakness in the sight of all around, yet our habitation is in the Rock, in whom is everlasting strength. The Lord would have us lean only on Him, whom having not seen we love. Thus we raise our Ebenezer, saying, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us". It is God who hath blessed us heretofore. To Him alone let us look to bless us still.

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Many choose rather to be great than humble; forgetting that only they who choose to be humble, are truly great.

## Order in God's House

1 Timothy 2:8-15

Joel Portman

In a world of disorder and rebellion, it delights God's heart to see saints who seek to maintain and display those principles that originated in His purposes, instituted first in creation. Those principles include the headship and leadership of the man and the submission and proper decorum of the woman. The fall of man in sin introduced an attitude that diminished the first and sought to erase the second. We see a world today where God's order is ignored, man's responsibility toward God is rejected and where the woman's place is denied. The assembly is responsible to display those qualities that are pleasing to the Lord and give honor to His name.

Paul emphasizes this order here as well as in other of his epistles. This is not "Paul's prejudice against women", nor is it man's opinion. This teaching is according to godliness and which is essential to maintain a proper testimony for God in the world. In general, the current practices of the world religiously and socially have rejected these principles, for men are not allowed or expected to lead in prayer in every place, nor are women expected to manifest subjection or suitability in dress. Even in assemblies, practices are creeping in which are undermining both aspects of this truth.

In this section we will see 1.v 8, Activity of Brethren, 2. v 9-10, Adorning of Sisters, 3. v. 11-15, Attitude of Sisters.

### Activity of Brethren v. 8

#### Who are to Pray:

Paul, by apostolic authority, declares his will (God's will) for brethren regarding prayer. It is not "men" in general (Gr. "Anthropos"), but rather "the males" (Gr. "Aner"), who are to pray "everywhere", or "in every place". This obviously doesn't preclude sisters from praying, but rather it indicates that where both are present, the males are to take the public part and lead the company in prayer. These places are wherever the saints are gathered, mainly in assembly capacity but also wherever both brethren and sisters come together. In the early church, there are no special buildings designated as "churches", but the saints met wherever they were able. As to gatherings outside the local assembly, we do not find them in the New Testament, so the principle would seem to apply in all cases. Obviously, this is not a practice that is normal in "churches" today, mainly only in local assemblies.

#### How they are to Pray:

"Lifting up holy hands", is not necessarily a physical act, though it may have been true among Jews especially. "Standing to pray with upraised hands was

regarded as reverent among the Jews and was common in the early church," (First Timothy, D. Edmond Hiebert). However he also says, "The important thing is not the bodily posture but the inner life". Paul means that those who lead God's people in prayer must be those who are morally suited, not allowing unjudged sin in their lives nor engaging in practices that are wrong. Holding up hands in prayer would signify presenting to God a clean, separated life. "Without wrath" would indicate that they are enjoying right relations with their brethren, and "without doubting" indicates a right attitude toward God, having confidence in Him.

Public prayer does not require spiritual gift, nor does public worship; however, it does require a spiritual and moral fitness to represent the company of believers before God, since one who prays in such a manner is not praying solely for themselves but for the entire assembly. In public prayer, it is not what "I" need or what "I" want, but such prayer includes all the saints and represents those who also pray, even if silently. It should be the exercise of all the brethren to be able to fulfill their responsibility and to enjoy the privilege that God has given to them.

### Adorning of Sisters v. 9-10

When man sinned in Eden, God clothed the sinning pair (Gen. 3:7). This indicates that His will is that the body should be covered in a suitable manner. One snare, or trap, that came into the world by man's sin has been that of physical emphasis in which the object of dress is not to cover one's body, but to expose it, to display and to decorate it, to make a show of it. God's people are not to follow that pattern of dress nor behavior. They must be marked by modesty and control in both aspect and in all areas of life. We quote James Allen (What the Bible Teaches, First Timothy), "Generally, dress expresses taste and interests and, in fact, displays character; thus how a woman dresses shows what kind of a woman she is. While the apostle has still in mind the gatherings of the saints, inevitably the subject has wider implications, for the habitual and daily apparel of the sister reflects what she is."

The expression, "in like manner" connects this instruction with his expressed desire in v. 8. This only continues the teaching giving God's purpose for saints in relation to assembly gatherings. The praying is not only when an assembly is "officially" gathered, and neither is the principle of a sister's adorning. This is to mark sisters in all spheres of life since it is also a part of the testimony of a local assembly. "Neither is the Apostle limiting the exhortation concerning the adornment of women to the times when they assembled themselves with the church and took part in silent prayer. The following context makes that clear," (1 Timothy, W. E. Vine) "Adorn" indicates an orderly arrangement, preparation, not slovenliness in

dress or appearance. It is the same word as in Tit. 2:10, 1 Pet. 3:5. But the arrangement is to be that of modesty, a shrinking from all that unbecoming or immodest (including clothing that is revealing or not suitable to represent Christian testimony) and “sobriety”, or showing self-restraint and spiritual control of one's person. It is not of the outward display that the world practices, with ostentatious arrangements of hair involving gold or pearls, nor the decoration of one's body with ornaments or putting on of garments for the purpose of making a show. Our dress and behavior should manifest to others that we are not of this world, and that we desire to represent godly character and conduct by outward appearance as well as behavior. There is a manner of dress that reflects the godly character of our sisters, and while they do not take a public part, they have the privilege of manifesting a testimony for Christ by what is seen. Sadly, many of our sisters are not only dressing according to the pattern of our degenerate world, but even coming to the meetings of the assembly dressed in such an unbecoming manner. May we get back to God's Word and its pattern for God's House.

### **Attitude of Sisters v. 11-14**

Subjection of the woman to man was another principle that God instituted in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:16). Mankind has been rejecting this principle related to man's fall along with the previous aspect of proper clothing of the body. Satan seeks to deceive and motivate mankind to reject God's principles and deny the effects of man's fall. The assembly and God's people in this world are a continuing testimony to that reality as well as manifesting subjection to God's will by their lives.

Here it is not the snare of physical emphasis but it is the snare of spiritual excess. It speaks against the tendency of a woman to move out of her sphere and usurp the place God has given to the man. She is instructed to maintain silence in the gathering of the saints (so far as speaking publicly) and to learn in subjection. God has not given her a public place, but that is not to say that she doesn't have a very important place among God's people. When brethren and sisters are come together, this is to be the prevailing principle. We find that older sisters are told to teach younger sisters privately (Tit. 2:3-4) and we see other examples of sisters teaching in private, sometimes along with their husbands, as Priscilla with Aquila (Acts 18:26). This instruction does not cover those instances. She is not to teach men in such a public gathering (this precludes women preachers) or to exercise authority as being in a place of control. Since the principle of her adorning prevails in every aspect of her life, so does this principle of her silence whenever believers gather together, whether

an “official” assembly meeting or not. God has given that place to men, and the reasons for this principle follow.

### **Principle of Creatorial Priority.**

When God created mankind, He created man first, and indicated that he was to have the position of headship and authority in human life. This wasn't Paul's prejudicial order, but this is clearly what God was declaring in creation. The woman was created from man to be a “help” that was suitable to him. She was to play a supporting role, not that of leading or control outside her sphere.

### **Principle of Spiritual Failure.**

The second reason was that it was the woman who was deceived by the devil, not the man. He knowingly took of the fruit whereas she was thoroughly beguiled. The expression “was in the transgression” (present tense) signifies a continuing state, an abiding result of her sin. What she did has brought “permanent effects of her act”, (1 Timothy, W. E. Vine).

As is well known, there are many interpretations of v. 15. It seems that out of them all, the best way to understand this teaching in the context of the passage, is that womankind will be preserved (from fall and sin) by recognizing and remaining in subjection to God's order and continuing in that sphere. That God-ordained sphere is in relation to the home, raising children (a very important work that is crying to be done with exercise today), and manifesting faith, love and holiness within the sphere of self-control. We think of the tremendous value and importance of that sphere in the lives of the mother and grandmother of Timothy as their influence was seen in his life for God (2 Tim. 1:5). When one moves out from the place that God intends for them and determines to act independently or in rebellion, there will be the inevitable result of a fall taking place and ruin resulting. May God help us as His people to recognize the importance of God's all-wise order for His people and may we be consistent in profession and practice to recognize and act according to it, whether we are brethren or sisters.

The Lord thinks most of them who think least of themselves; He looks upon the contrite with pleasure, and takes up His permanent residence with the humble.

## **2 Timothy 4 Part 2**

Steve Walvatne

### **Paul's Change**

Having looked at **Paul's Charge** in Part 1, we come now to the second section of this chapter (vv.6-8)

where Paul speaks of the glorious Change that's about to take him from time into eternity. In verse 6 he addresses THE PRESENT, in verse 7, THE PAST, and in verse 8, THE FUTURE.

**THE PRESENT:** *"For I am already being poured out, and the time of my release is come"* (JND). This literal translation describes Paul's attitude to the current extremity. Judicial deliberations were rapidly working against him; he expects no reprieve. The solemn charge to Timothy in verses 1-5, is especially urgent because "I, Paul (emphatic) am about to be martyred". That martyrdom he likens to a Drink Offering or libation poured out before God. Under law, Drink Offerings consisted of "strong wine" (Num. 28:7), a substance typifying "unadulterated joy" in that it "cheereth God and man" (Jud. 9:13; Ps. 104:15). These joyful outpourings always occurred in conjunction with the combined Meal and Burnt Offerings, signifying the delight that God and the offerer found in the fragrant life and death of the Lord Jesus. Paul's aim from conversion was that Christ might be magnified in his body, "whether it be by life or by death" (Php. 1:20), and now he pours out his life as an ultimate declaration of joy in the Person and work of his Savior. That pouring out – his martyrdom – was both volitional and violent. While tried, convicted, and sentenced to death by Rome, he could face Nero as his Lord faced Pilate and say, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above" (Jn. 19:11). Yet humbly, and with joy, he submits to God's will, enduring a violent end at the hands of executioners. He's well aware that the "decisive time" of his "release" (for that's how he views it) is imminent; that the stakes to his earthly tent are already being pulled in anticipation of his exodus to heaven.

**THE PAST:** *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith"* (RV). Paul contemplates his past service as: (1) **A LAUDABLE CONFLICT:** *"I have fought the good fight."* From salvation's day onward, Paul waged a relentless battle against evil, "a ceaseless, strenuous conflict with Satan and his minions, with evil men, and with forces of spiritual wickedness" (D. Edmund Hiebert: 2 Timothy). That fight was a "noble" one, and it remains so today. As combatants, we take our stand on hostile soil – soil stained with the Savior's blood and that of a million martyrs – and there, mid the struggle, we lift our banner heavenward. This is a *battleground*, not a *playground*, so in the spirit of John Darby we glance homeward and say, *"I've no thought in the waste to abide."* Wrote Maclaren: "This world is not to be for us an enchanted garden of delights...We are here for serious work; let us not be too eager for pleasures that may hinder our efforts and weaken our vigor" (*Expositions of Holy Scripture: 2 Timothy*). (2) **A**

**LENGTHY COURSE:** *"I have finished the course."* It was a marathon, not a sprint; a route that stretched over many years, entailing numerous circumstances. Paul rejoices at the goal line, grateful to have finished the arduous journey, for many don't finish. Instead, they become distracted or disqualified; something hinders their progress (Gal. 5:7) and obstructs their vision. For these, looking back is hard, because the past is checkered with failure and clouded by regret. But Paul maintained his focus and ran obediently, living in view of the "ages to come" (Eph. 2:7). (3) **A LARGE COMMITMENT:** *"I have kept the faith."* Life was no aimless venture to Paul, but a thing of dire consequence. He'd been entrusted with a sacred deposit of truth – "the faith" – and felt its solemn obligation. Earnestly he'd *preached* it, *practiced* it, and *preserved* it from enemy encroachment. Now he transfers that deposit unmolested to Timothy. It's in our hands today: how have we handled it? Loosely? Lightly? Loyal? The measure of our commitment will be manifested at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

**THE FUTURE:** *"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give to me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also, that love His appearing."* Paul rejoices in righteousness. He'd known the hurt of earth's injustice, but that's about to change. Ahead lays heaven's true verdict of his service and with it the victor's crown (*stephanos*), which he and all that habitually "love" or "set their hearts on" (NEB) Christ's appearing, will wear. "Alone in his dungeon, alone before his judge when 'no man stood by' him, soon to be alone in his martyrdom, he leaps up in spirit at the thought of the mighty crowd among whom he will stand in that Day, on every head a crown, in every heart the same love to the Lord whose life is in them all and makes them all one" (Maclaren). What an incentive these words would be to Timothy! What an incentive they should be to us!

(Continued)

The less a believer has to do with God in prayer, the more closely does that believer resemble a man of the world. Let us see that we do not become like them that go down into the pit.

## "One-Eyed Christians"

Or "Blind to God's Viewpoint of Things"  
Sidney J. Saword, Venezuela, S. A.

*"On this condition will I make a covenant with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes, and lay it for a reproach upon all Israel"* (1 Sam. 11:2).

The incident related in this chapter is such as would arouse the righteous indignation of every human heart. Nahash, the Ammonite, had the defenseless

inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead under his power. They made no attempt to resist him but plead for a treaty of subjection to him. His ruthless terms were that they permit him to thrust out their *right* eyes. This would mean losing their principal line of vision. Saul's prompt and noble response to the S.O.S. message from that city stands out as probably the most commendable act in his life. He delivered Jabesh-gilead, and their gratitude never died out, for the dark closing chapter of Saul's sad history is illuminated by the beam of kindness and respect shown to his memory by that people. Their valiant men went to Beth-shan, took the bodies of Saul and his sons from the wall, where the Philistines had hung them in mockery, brought them to Jabesh and after burying the bones, fasted for seven days.

However, there is a most important spiritual lesson underlying this inspired record. Jabesh means *dry*. This becomes true of us when we are not enjoying the benefit of the "Upper Springs" of fellowship with God, and the "nether springs" of fellowship with His people. When the channels are open and clean between the mighty aqueduct of God's love (Jer. 31:3) and our souls, then they are kept as a watered garden (v. 12). But like Israel, when they robbed God of His rightful place amongst them, we too may become "as a garden that hath no water," that is: dry! (See Isa. 1:3 and 34).

Nahash means *Serpent*, and is a picture of Satan, the great adversary of our souls. He has us at a disadvantage when we are dry, and we are unprepared to resist his relentless imposition. Like Nahash, Satan seeks to gain a strategic advantage over the Christian. He does not claim both eyes, but the *right* eye. Some might think it not too bad as long as they have one eye, and that they could manage to get along in that way. But however well this might work out physically, it only spells disaster in the **spiritual sphere**, for the RIGHT EYE would indicate the *Christian's principal line of vision*; that spiritual faculty of discernment by which he can see things from God's viewpoint. The left eye would suggest that inferior line of vision—the human or natural viewpoint. What a tragedy it is when our spiritual vision becomes impaired!

The great hero Nelson put the telescope to his blind eye, and although it worked well in his case, it is not so in the present day when Christians put the telescope of prayer to a sightless right eye. They ask amiss; God's glory is not uppermost in their thoughts when they present their petitions. When it is a matter of deciding some important question, they regard it from a natural point of view, and they might even find this to work out to their temporal advantage.

In Lot we see an example of this. He only considered the natural advantage of pitching his tent towards Sodom. It was apparently a "great stroke of business," but what

was the ultimate result of not making his choice from a spiritual point of view? He vexed his own soul, he courted the contempt and anger of the ungodly, saw God's awful judgment meted out on his wife, lost all his possessions and finishes with his name indelibly besmirched with shame.

Today we are exposed to the danger of deciding things from a natural viewpoint rather than from God's point of view. It may be a question of where we shall move to; what line of employment we shall engage in; how we shall run our home or bring up our children. Let our preeminent object in all these be to please and glorify God, or otherwise, even though there may be temporary prosperity in material things, the inevitable and ultimate outcome will be bitter remorse and irreparable loss.

If, like the people of Jabesh, the believer should be assailed by Satan's overwhelming power, he has One Who is infinitely greater than Saul, Who understands, sympathizes and is ready to deliver from the wicked one. He can flee to that Great High Priest above, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is able to succor them that are tempted (Heb. 2:18). Thus the Apostle Paul could testify: "*Thanks be unto **God**, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ.*"

"When Satan tempts me to despair,  
Telling of evil yet within,  
Upward I look and see Him there  
Who made an end of all my sin."

Nahash had a far-reaching purpose in view. He wished to bring reproach upon all the people of God. So when a believer loses his spiritual vision and ceases to look at things from God's standpoint, he not only brings trouble upon his own head, but gives occasion to the enemy to blaspheme the Name of Christ and reproach the testimony of those gathered unto His peerless Name. "*For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself,*" and again "*whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it*" (1 Cor. 12:26).

May we increasingly learn to value the faculty of spiritual sight, and to regard things in their true proportions, in the light of eternity.

Carnal believers will not endure the sound and healthy teachings of God's Word spoken in the Holy Ghost. They will rather run after the flattering flash-in-the-pan talk of popular preachers, who take care not to touch their consciences, and as long as they pay for such garbage, they will get plenty of it.

## **PROBLEM: Closed Platforms** **(from Words in Season, 1939)**

### **We are being threatened with the establishment of the closed Platform at Conferences: Is this Scriptural?**

Some years ago, there appeared in one of the then-current magazines for believers in this country a letter to the Editor suggesting such a procedure as mentioned in the above problem. The following is an answer written at that time but never sent for publication.

In your issue of February there has been raised the question of conducting our Conferences in Canada and United States. Reference is made to the earliest days of such gatherings on this Continent and the profitable character of the ministry at such times which resulted in the true Spiritual growth of the Lord's people and their practical separation from the world in its commercial, social and religious yokes and entanglements.

Permit me to state that those brethren, who then so profitably ministered the Word to us, were themselves standing testimonies to the truth so often declared by them "That Spirituality and exercise of heart to have messages from God, spoken in fellowship with God, rather than ability to speak fluently or even from wide assembly experience was what so affected the hearts and lives of the people of God". We think of those brethren, beloved of God, whose labors resulted in what are now the oldest and largest Assemblies on this Continent such men as D. Ross, D. Munro, John Smith, Jas. Campbell, Wm. Matthews, Thomas Muir; and younger men of that day as Jas. Goodfellow, R. Telfer, W. P. Douglas and many others who were among the earliest of ministering brethren at Conferences.

Those brethren, for the most part, were then young in years and all of them were comparatively limited in Assembly matters experimentally; no one of them had much above the other touching this world's learning yet their varied ministries were evident. And, believing that the risen Head of the church had given each their own peculiar gift, they made no attempt to restrain (by human arrangement either before or at those Conferences). The brethren differed because of their different abilities or differences of names, but the distinctive godly character of the older of these brethren made the younger fear to carelessly intrude in the ministry; hence the exercise that resulted in timely, helpful words and permanently practical results. Such beloved brethren as above named believed then, what, I trust, many of us believe still, that the less of man's ingenious arrangements and the more of godly exercise at such meetings, the more Scriptural and consequently more spiritual will such gatherings be.

The liberty which has obtained and does obtain for ministry at our conferences has been abused. This is beyond dispute; men little fitted and inexperienced have without doubt afflicted the Lord's people. That we, as a result, have suffered is without question; and that the inadequacy of professed ministry to help and the glaring unfitness of some who undertake to minister is just cause for discontent and complaint is clearly seen. Such things are indeed our shame and cause for humbling; but admitting all this, is our deliverance to come from repentance and doing the first works, that is, getting back to real exercise before God on the part of all who have professed to give themselves to ministry of the Word, seeking to exercise that reverence and godly fear which seemed so much to characterize both speakers and hearers in our early conferences; is this our remedy, or is our only or even best recourse to turn to human wisdom? Even that of older, abler and more experienced men among us and revert to prearrangement of speakers, some of whom do little else than go from one conference to another, *who* think little of traveling across the sea and *across* this vast continent, two, three, *or* even more times a year to do what has been prearranged for them to the exclusion of the ministry of brethren, whose often trying labors, have resulted in the Salvation and gathering together in Assembly character those who compose those very conferences.

We live in days when the call is everywhere made for organization; specialists are in demand for every department in business. Is it possible that we, as the people of God gathered to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, are headed in the same direction? We look at some countries where prearrangement predominates and where the closed platform is in evidence, *and we* do not feel convinced that human arrangement of meetings as suggested for conferences, large or small, has led to any advancement of outstanding spiritual growth nor has it enhanced the Pilgrim character of things which so marked our earliest and best days of collective testimony on both sides of the Atlantic.

Shall we not rather seek to humble ourselves because we have so signally failed, and instead of seeking deliverance in prearrangement, return again to God's arrangement, which is not at all haphazard, neither is it limited to the organization of any group of local overseeing brethren. Scripture gives no direct warrant for the closed platform, nor for any prearrangement of ministers or ministry, neither does it give license to unfitted men and consequently, uncalled men to impose themselves upon the people of God. "He gave some evangelists; some pastors and teachers" and grace should be exercised by those differently fitted; to use their gift in their sphere that all things may be to edifying!

D. L. R

## Preserving the Testimony

Franklin Ferguson

If the testimony to a Scriptural way of gathering is to be preserved, then brethren who teach in the meetings and minister at conferences will need to show more diligence in presenting from the Word the truths and principles of Church position and order. Truths which would liberate children of God from the bondage of organized systems of religion, and would set forth our holy and blessed privileges as saints, should be willingly and freely given. Truth, however, must be presented with grace (John 1:14); and herein some have failed and truth has been evil spoken of. The noble apostle Paul declared, "I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house"; and again, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27).

Satan has been able to mar and distort, to a great extent, the divinely-given Church order and arrangement, so that Christendom to-day has become, in its religious systems, totally unlike the original apostolic manner. Though majorities have departed from primitive purity and simplicity, yet minorities (at times very small) have stuck to the Lord's testimonies (Psa. 119:31). This has been the case all down the centuries, and will be to the end. Because the Church, in its broad aspect, has failed to maintain a true testimony, and reformations have not come up to expectations; this is no justification whatever for ceasing to carry on and advocate Scriptural Church Principles, saying, "There can no longer be a collective testimony, for the Church is in pieces like a wrecked ship, and now every man for himself on bits of broken ecclesiastical wreckage, and God for us all!"

No, no! Divine principles are binding upon the saints unto the coming of the Lord, whatever may be the wreck and confusion around. Wherever are found but two or three believers, owning no gathering Name save the precious Name of God's beloved Son, worshipping in spirit and in truth, seeking to observe whatsoever is commanded in the Word; such will have His approving testimony, "Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My Word, and hast not denied My Name" (Rev. 3:8).

Undoubtedly there is a Scriptural way of meeting for the people of God, and most certainly it is possible now. In all parts of the world are found today companies of saints endeavoring to carry out, though often in weakness, Church order and arrangement as at the first, in realized fellowship with the Lord. In order to maintain this testimony that it die not, there requires to be an all-round ministry from the Scriptures, embracing foundation Church principles.

The truths of the Bible are like gold in the soil. Whole generations walk over it, and know not what treasures are hidden beneath. So centuries of men pass over the Scriptures, and know not what riches lie under the feet of their interpretation. Sometimes when they discover them, they call them new truths. One might as well call newly dug gold, new gold.

## Directions for Young Christians

Walter Scott

1. Make the Holy Scriptures your sole authority for your justification, forgiveness, and hope of glory (Rom. 5:1; 1 John 2:12; Col. 1:27).
2. Make the Bible your daily companion, and prayer, at least night and morning, your characteristic daily habit (2 Tim. 3:15-17; 1 Thess. 5:17).
3. Confess Christ at all times, and under all circumstances, by word, behavior, or by silence (Lk. 12:8,9,11; 2 Tim. 2:12,13; 1 Pet. 3:4).
4. Do not in public relate your experience, telling how good you are, how devoted, how holy; let the life tell (Ex. 34:29; Ps. 66:16; Phil. 3:13-17).
5. Never go to meetings or join in amusements where you would not like the Lord to find you (Ps. 17:4,5; 1 Cor. 10:31; Titus 2:11-14).
6. Give up at once for Christ's sake, all habits, all ways unlike the Lord (1 Pet. 2:11; Eph. 5:13-18; 4:22; 5:1-4).
7. Do not choose as companions any who are not distinctly on the Lord's side (Ps. 1; Acts 4:23; 15:38-40).
8. Never ridicule or make fun of the mistakes or weaknesses of any, especially of Christians (Rom. 14; Eph. 4:2; 1 Cor. 12:21-26).
9. Avoid as you would the plague, all and every form of joking, jesting, and punning on the Word of God (Eph. 5:4; Ps. 119:22,63,103,133).
10. Make it a rule never to read books or periodicals, the writers of which do not regard the Bible as fully inspired (John 5:44-47; 1 Cor. 2:10-14; Rev. 1:3).
11. Meet with your companions often for prayer and conversation on the Lord's things (Jude 20; Mal. 3:16; Heb. 10:24,25).
12. Watch and pray. Live only and wholly for Christ. Wait for God's Son from Heaven (Matt. 26:41; 2 Cor. 5:15; Phil. 1:20,21; 3:7-15).