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"The Righteous Lord Loveth Righteousness"

Joel Portman

Repeated references impress every thoughtful Bible reader with the truth that God is righteous. Remember Psalm 11:7, "For the righteous LORD loveth righteousness; His countenance doth behold the upright." Notice Heb. 1:8-9, "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Ezra 9:15 indicates that those who are restored by His mercy are glad to acknowledge His righteousness in what He had done: "O LORD God of Israel, thou art righteous: for we remain yet escaped, as it is this day: behold, we are before thee in our trespasses: for we cannot stand before thee because of this." Daniel recognized this in Daniel 9:14, "Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice." Again in Rev. 16:7, "And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments." Even wicked Pharaoh had to confess in Ex. 9:27, "I have sinned this time: the LORD is righteous, and I and my people are wicked." Many other passages of God's holy Word would verify that righteousness is one of God's attributes and that all His actions are governed by righteousness. Whatever He does is always right in every time, every place and in every situation. His is a righteousness that is incomparable and to which man cannot attain nor can he comprehend its entirety. Yet it is also a standard for a believer's behavior that is intended to reflect a spiritual relationship with a Righteous and Holy Person. If He is righteous, then His own are also to be.

Righteousness Defined

"Righteous" and "righteousness" are defined by W. Wilson (*Old Testament Word Studies*) as the quality of "being right, straight." It is also translated in the Old Testament as "just." In the New Testament, the word is very similar, giving a consistent rendering. With men, it is the quality that corresponds to God's laws and demands upon them, causing them to do what is right in His sight, acting justly at all times and with moral rectitude. God's own character of perfect, undeviating righteousness is the standard, and obviously, at best, men fall far short of it. It is only by a judicial declaration of God that men can be counted righteous in His sight, though they may be relatively righteous in their lives and behavior (such as Noah in Gen. 6:9, or Job as God declared him to be one who "was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil" in Job 1:1). Righteousness has a spiritual character because it is related to man's relationship with God; it is expressed in moral consistency and uprightness of behavior, avoiding evil and adhering to that which is declared by God to please Him.

It was God's righteousness that proclaimed the judgment of death to Adam if he ate of the forbidden fruit of the garden (Gen. 2). It was a righteous God who destroyed a wicked world with a flood but, at the same time, saved righteous Noah. It is a righteous God who will eternally punish sin and those who continue in sin even as He saves those who have trusted His righteous provision for their salvation, expressed in the sufferings and death of His beloved Son. It is an offense to a righteous God to look upon a world that is corrupt, degenerate and filled with

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unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18, 29). He declares that *“there is none righteous, no not one,”* (Ps. 14:1-3, 53:1-3, Rom. 3:10). His is a perfectly righteous and accurate assessment, evaluating man’s condition from the standpoint of perfect righteousness.

Righteousness in a Nation

God declares that *“Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people,”* (Prov. 14:34). Some degree of unrighteousness has always prevailed among mankind by virtue of the innate sinfulness of men. However, when this is the norm, when unrighteousness is accepted, and when doing right before God is denied, rejected, and ridiculed, a condition exists that displeases God and calls for His judgment. The flood of God’s judgment came upon a world where *“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) and that it *“was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth,”* (6:12). When Habakkuk objected to God’s using the sinful nation of the Chaldeans to punish His unrighteous people, Israel, God revealed to him that He would also judge that nation for their evil (Hab. 1:12-13, 2:5-8). God traces the downward decline of mankind in Romans 1:18-32, showing that those who reject the knowledge of God and His ways find it impossible to retain or maintain a standard of morality or decency until we read in Rom. 3:10, *“There is none righteous, no, not one.”* When Israel forsook the knowledge of God and obedience to His truth, their moral condition degenerated correspondingly, until they were as bad or worse than the heathen nations around them. No nation or people can truly prosper socially, morally, economically or politically when unrighteousness permeates that society, influences its government, and dictates its decisions. Isaiah’s lament (Isa. 59.14) was *“And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.”* That lament was repeated numerous times as faithful prophets cried out against the evil of the people, though it was masked by outward religious hypocrisy.

There are those who would have, at one time, called the United States a “Christian nation,” (even though it never truly was). At the least, however, there was a time when those righteous principles were recognized to have value and importance, when the Bible was acknowledged and revered to some extent, and when that standard was brought

to bear on actions according to or contrary to it. However, in our day, it is evident that those conditions and attitudes no longer prevail. Sin is tolerated, nay, is promoted in its various forms, whether in the promotion of lifestyles that are contrary to Scripture, in “marriages” that are an abomination to God, or even in devious business and governmental dealings that are not righteous. When universities have seminars to teach and promote deviant immoral practices, we are in an unrighteous nation. When governments pass laws to protect and encourage such activities, or when courts uphold laws that are contrary to the moral and spiritual well-being of a people, we are in an unrighteous nation. When religious leaders promote and teach that such behavior is acceptable (according to their interpretation of the HOLY Bible), it is unrighteous. Other unrighteous conditions and actions that characterize our world could be enumerated, but space wouldn’t allow it. and We need

No nation or people can truly prosper socially, morally, economically or politically when unrighteousness permeates that society, influences its government, and dictates its decisions.

not expect that such conditions will improve, for Paul warns Timothy that *“in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;”* (2 Tim. 3:1-4). And in 2 Tim. 3:13, *“But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.”*

God hates all unrighteousness, and though we, as believers in Christ, are in such a world, we are commanded not to partake of any form of it (2 Cor. 6:14-18). The repeated call of God is for His people to stand apart in exercised separation from all evil, having no close association with it. Interactions with a corrupt, unrighteous world must be evaluated by each believer to determine whether any association will contribute to personal righteousness or if it will detract from it. Sadly, many believers are living so close to the world that they can hardly distinguish what is a necessary involvement and what is bringing ruin to their lives and testimonies. Corinthian conditions are normal in our world today, and though we are never called upon to change the world, we not to be *“conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind”* (Rom. 12:1-2). Is it conformation when one is occupied with the world’s entertainment, be it on a TV or with videos? Is it conformation when saints are found in sports arenas with the multitudes of others who avidly pursue those activities?

The environment is contrary to godliness and it can have an erosive effect on a Christian. Are not these things contributing to the unrighteousness that seems to be rising among us? An elder actually told me that he learned that when a group of young people went together to a Bible conference, they pooled a certain amount of money to pay for speeding tickets on the way. Is this righteous or unrighteous? The world is pressing us into its unrighteous mold, and it is having a detrimental effect on Christians and assemblies.

Longed-for Righteousness

This prevailing unrighteousness is only another feature that increases the longing of saints for the coming of the Lord. We not only refer to the rapture of the church, that imminent deliverance out of an evil world that we anticipate at any moment, but also to the anticipated coming of our Lord in power and glory, when He will establish righteousness in the earth. Then *“the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea,”* (Isa. 11:9). Then *“truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven,”* (Ps. 85:11). Then there will be the *“new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”* (2 Pet. 3:13).

(continued)

**Men may spurn our appeals,
reject our message,
oppose our arguments,
despise our persons,
but they are helpless against
our prayers.**

-- J. Sidlow Baxter

Headship

Larry Steers, Toronto, CA
1Cor.1:2, 11:2-16

The “church of God” (1 Cor. 1:2) is a spiritual house. Yet there are seven tangible items associated with the house, the assembly. There is the Word of God, water for believer’s baptism, bread and a cup for the Lord’s Supper, the hair of both brethren and sisters in 1Cor.11, and the head covering in the same chapter. The purpose of this article is to consider the head covering.

There were two groups of people residing in the ancient city of Corinth before the Apostle Paul arrived and the Gospel was proclaimed. Dwelling in Corinth were Jews and Gentiles.

On the Sabbath the Jews of the city would make their way to the synagogue which represented the focal point of their lives. Their culture, family and friends were associated with the synagogue.

The Gentiles frequented the idol’s temple. While there were many idolatrous temples in the city one was well known. The Temple of Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love, was situated on the Acrocorinth. At 1886 feet above sea level, this was the highest point of land in Corinth. On any day of the year Gentile idolaters would make their way to this temple or one of the other idolatrous temples to pray, sacrifice and feast before a dumb idol.

The Gospel of the grace of God reached into the darkness of wicked Corinth. Jews and Gentiles were saved and taught the truth of God. What a tremendous privilege for these new converts, to sit at the feet of Paul for a year and six months (Acts 18:11) and listen to the exposition of spiritual truth. A precious moment arrived when a company of believers gathered in the Lord’s Name to break bread for the first time. It must have touched the heart of Paul when he looked over those assembled on that first occasion for he wrote later after reminding the Corinthians of some of the grossest of sins (1 Cor. 6:9-10), *“And such were some of you”* (1Cor. 6:11). This newly planted assembly was composed of saved Jews and Gentiles. Now Paul could write that at Corinth there was not only Jew and Gentile but also “the church of God” (1 Cor. 10:32).

For the saved Jew to identify with “the church of God” would be a costly step. He could no longer associate with the synagogue where the Lord whom they now loved was despised and rejected. To continue in the synagogue they would be like the blind man to whom the Lord restored sight (John 9:3) and who was cast out. Their only alternative was to seek fellowship “outside the camp” (Heb. 13:13) with the newly formed assembly.

For the saved Gentile the idol’s temple was an evil place. Idolatry and immorality are twins. There were a thousand harlots identified with the temple of Aphrodite. They could no longer be found frequenting such a place. The only alternative was to forsake their friends and the old way of life, and at a great cost become members of the church of God.

Demonstration of Headship

Among the many precious truths which had been taught at Corinth was the doctrine of headship. The Jewish man who always covered his head in the synagogue would now remove the yarmulke in the assembly. That covering represented his culture and meant very much to him. The Jewish

woman who may never have covered her head in the synagogue must now veil herself. They would be disowned, mocked, and ridiculed by other Jews for forsaking the ancient religion of their fathers. However culture must give way to scriptural practice.

The Gentile woman never wore a head covering in the idol's temple. Now, she would look strange to other Corinthians when she made her way to the gatherings of the assembly with covered head.

Why must the sister cover her head and the brother have no head covering? Is this simply tradition as some affirm or just Paul's ideas? Some today suggest the head covering is optional and it is the prerogative of a sister to choose. When the Word of God is so clear and definite, why do we see this truth set aside by many? Is there a sense of less embarrassment to wait until entering the hall before covering the head? It was very real and precious in Corinth to identify themselves with the Lord outside the camp (Heb. 13:13) which was, for the Jew, outside the old religious system and for the Gentile, outside the idolatrous immorality of Corinth.

Why has the man been given this solemn responsibility as the head? Some would immediately suggest it is because God is sovereign. While this is true, there are other reasons.

Headship Implies Authority and Subjection to Authority

It was to the first-created one that God gave authority and headship. Adam had this responsibility before

Eve was created. As a demonstration of Adam's headship God brought the living creatures to Adam who had responsibility to name them *"and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof"* (Gen. 2:19).

As the head of the garden Adam was responsible to his Creator for the word of God with which he was entrusted. He could freely eat of every tree of the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Authority and headship was given to Adam and after God created Eve she was to be in subjection to God's invested authority. The great truth of headship is a fundamental principle initiated by God as the order of His creation in Genesis chapter 2 and is valid today.

Eve sinned by taking the fruit of the forbidden tree. But her act has even greater significance as she disobeyed not only Adam but her God. As the head Adam is held responsible, for the scriptures make it abundantly clear, *"Wherefore as by one man (Adam, not Eve) sin entered into the*

world." Adam allowed Eve to usurp his headship.

Key Verse: 1 Cor. 11:3

"The man is the head of the woman." This expresses a universal truth which has never been annulled. Why is the man the head? Because he was first created and there was no woman to fulfill this responsibility. It must be further noted in 1 Cor. 1:8 that *"the man is not of the woman."* Only one man ever lived of whom this would have been true and that was Adam. Every other man born into this world has a mother. Note in the same verse *"but the woman of the man."* The only woman who is of the man is Eve. The great truth of headship was God's required order from the beginning

Headship Never Implies Inequality

Note again that in 1 Cor. 11:3 *"the head of Christ is God."* Our Lord was never less than God. He *"thought it not robbery to be equal with God"* (Phil. 2:6), but during His sojourn here on earth He willingly took a place of subjection to God as head. Nor does headship in any way suggest inferiority. Headship as taught by the Spirit of God in 1 Cor. 11 does not imply that a sister in the assembly is in any way inferior to a brother. All have their place in manifestation of God's order.

God is now teaching other angels the truth of headship by that which is displayed in the gatherings of the assembly.

Practical Manifestations of Headship

1 Cor. 11 teaches the manifestation of this vital truth in the assembly by the physical head of both the brother and the

sister.

The physical head of the sister is symbolic of her spiritual head, which is the man. We are taught that the woman is the glory of the man in verse 7. All that the brother has accomplished in earthly pursuits, his glory, has no place in the assembly. He leaves all of this at the door. The sister covers her head indicating her subjection to her head, the man, but also that nothing of man has a place in the gathered company. It is veiled, not seen, as indicated by the sister's covered head. We are reminded by the sisters' covered heads that *"That in all things He must have the pre-eminence"* (Col. 1:18).

Also, for the sister, her covered head, which indicates her subjection to the man as her spiritual head, also displays an attitude of Christ likeness. As Christ was subject to God, she is subject to the man.

It is essential to note that the teaching of 1 Cor. 11 is not the relationship between a husband and wife. This is clearly

taught in other passages of scripture (Eph. 5:22 – 23, Col. 3:18, 1 Pet. 3:1). The unmarried sister is included in the display of headship. In verse 10 *“For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head”* is better rendered by Newberry “the sign of being under authority”

But we must also carefully observe that “the head of every man is Christ” (1 Cor. 11:3). The man’s physical head illustrates his spiritual head who is Christ. His uncovered head is a declaration of the exercise of the gathered company to proclaim to a dark and perishing world the unveiled glories of Christ.

How solemn the two fold warning in this chapter. First *“Every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoreth her head”* (verse 5). That is, the brother is dishonored, as his place of responsibility has been assumed by the woman, the same ground which Eve usurped in the Garden of Eden. But there is also a warning for the brother in verse 4 who may try to pray in an assembly gathering with a covered head. Christ is dishonored by His glories being symbolically veiled, a denial of the whole purpose of an assembly to sound out to this world the glories of Christ.

There is another solemn issue with the setting aside of God’s purpose for the demonstrating of the truth of headship. *“For this cause ought the woman to have power (the sign that she is in subjection to authority) on her head because of the angels”* (verse 10). In 2 Peter 2, Peter is reminding us of teachers and prophets who rebelled against the truth of God. We are told in verse 4 *“For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgement.”* The fall of Babylon in Isaiah 14 is compared to the fall of Lucifer (Isa. 14:12 -15). Angels which rebelled against the supremacy of God were cast down to hell. God is now teaching other angels the truth of headship by that which is displayed in the gatherings of the assembly.

Exercise of Gift, pt. 2

William Rogers
(excerpted from

“Notes on St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians”)

The various mistakes in the exercise of gift, to which we have drawn attention, are all clearly illustrated by the Apostle’s references, here in 1 Cor. 12, to the members of our bodies. Each of these has its own function, or as we may call it, gift, which another member cannot perform SO well,

and indeed in many cases cannot perform at all. Should a member from any cause cease to function, all the body suffers as a result.

If these points were given due consideration, it would save us from the foolish ideas already mentioned, which cause brethren, and at times sisters also, to take it upon them to exercise gifts that they do not possess. And on the other hand it would deliver us from the slothful spirit manifested by so many, who say, “I am not gifted,” and thus find excuse for showing no spiritual activity.

All, as Paul shows us, are not prophets or teachers, but all, as members of the Body, have their own place and use. Will it not stir me up to deep soul exercise about my responsibility before the Lord, if I realize that there is something for me to do, some function to perform, which none other can do so suitably? If I neglect it, all the members suffer loss, but myself most of all. A part of the human body which is never exercised becomes atrophied and useless. Would it be going too far to say that many of God’s people have got into a condition something like this, simply through lack of spiritual exercise?

There are, we know, some learned men who would persuade us that certain organs in our bodies have no present use; but we who bow before the record given us in Genesis as to how God created man, are not likely to be convinced of this. Paul certainly did not believe it when he said, *“Those members . . . which seem to be more feeble are necessary,”* a statement that should be a message of comfort to many, and at the same time a call to action.

In the parable of the Talents it was the man who had got least that failed to make use of what he did get, and so it usually is still. In our chapter it is the lesser gift in that, envying the greater, ceases to perform its own function. The foot (v. 15) says, *“Because I am not the hand I am not of the body,”* forgetting that, without it, the hand will not get to the spot where it can effectively do its work. The ear says, *“Because I am not the eye I am not of the body,”* ignoring the fact that it has power to gather up, in the body’s service, what has been seen by a multitude of eyes the world over.

On the other side the danger with what we may call the greater gifts is that of despising the lesser ones, and thus hindering their development. The eye (v. 21) in its foolish pride says to the hand, *“I have no need of thee”*; and the head in like manner to the feet, *“I have no need of you.”* It is just here that the love of ch. 13 steps in to put an end to the discord; for love on the one hand *“envieth not,”* and on the other *“vaunteth not itself”* (ch. 13. 4).

In the early part of ch. 12 there are two tests of gifts and their exercise, that are of the utmost importance. The first,

which is given us in v. 3, suggests that all true gifts, rightly used, will honor the Lord Jesus; while the second, found in v. 7, reminds us that they will be to the profit of His saints. To the latter of these we have already drawn attention; but the former is quite as important, and almost as easily applied. It is in fact the very first note struck by the apostle in introducing his subject, and is brought before us in a manner at once simple and far reaching, by the use of a phrase that forms the bedrock of all Christian testimony, "Jesus is Lord." No great gift is required for the utterance of this, which is the confession of all who are saved; while the opposite expression, "Jesus is accursed," represents the attitude toward Him of the Christ-rejecting world. Yet, while thus put in the most extreme form possible, a test is here suggested which may readily be applied to every exercise of gift, but especially to that which is commonly spoken of as "ministry." Does it glorify Christ, and bring home to me that "Jesus is Lord?" If so, there cannot be much the matter with it; while if the reverse is the case, no display of human ability or eloquence can make the evil thing right. These two tests, the glorifying of Christ, and the profiting of saints or sinners, set up boundaries beyond which no deviation is permissible. But within them there is ample room for diversity, diversity in the gifts themselves (v. 4), diversity in their ministry (v. 5), and diversity in their workings (v. 6 R.V.). It is somewhat interesting to note that these three verses, which show how wide is the diversity, are literally sandwiched between the two (vs. 3, 7) in which we find the tests that limit it.

In the remainder of our chapter this variety in the gifts forms the most prominent feature. Not merely is it shown to be allowable, but it is insisted upon as necessary. The Apostle's reasoning is that if all were but one member, there would be no Body at all. "If," says he, "the whole were an eye, where were the hearing?" (vs. 17-20). Nor will he permit them to escape by saying, perhaps we have the "seeing, and some other assembly the "hearing." "Ye are (the) Body of Christ," he replies, "and severally members thereof" (v. 27, R.V.). It has been sometimes asserted that the term "Body" is used only of the Church universal, but we have here at least one exception to that rule; and the implication seems to be that God designs each local company of His people to be a miniature (ed. note, perhaps better, "representative") of the whole, so far as that is possible.

This line of truth was no doubt much needed at Corinth, and it is just as much needed today, for we are

slow to see any value in gifts that differ appreciably from our own, or from those to which we have been accustomed. We incline to say to such, "I have no need of thee," and that all the more readily if, as is sometimes the case, at the back of the diversity of gifts there are different types of minds. This is perhaps what is suggested by the use, in the list of nine gifts which occupies vs. 8-10 of our chapter, of two separate Greek words for "another." The distinction between these is that one of them, "Eteros," as may be seen in "Trench on New Testament Synonyms," or any similar work, signifies "one of a different kind or type," while the other, "Allos," merely suggests "another of the same kind or type." The former word occurs but twice, between the 2nd and 3rd, and again between the 7th and 8th, of the nine gifts; while the latter is used in all the other cases. The effect of this is to sort the gifts into three groups, consisting of two, five, and two, respectively, in each of which those included are somewhat similar in type to one another, but differ widely from those in another group. The first contains those pertaining to knowledge, the last those pertaining to language, while the middle one includes those that are more noticeably miraculous. These groups are easily distinguishable in the R.V., because the members of each will be found coupled by "and"; while the separate groups are not, but have a colon instead of a semicolon between them. The distinction made is not without purpose, and does seem to imply that to different types of person are allotted differing types of gifts.

We must not however, fail to notice that this diversity, of which the chapter is so full, is designed to promote real and vital unity. "There are many members," says Paul, "yet but one Body." And again, "God hath tempered the body together . . . that there should be no schism in the Body." And in Eph. 4 it is even more forcibly emphasized that the goal in view in the use of the gifts is "Till we all attain (R.V.) unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

Another lesson, which at first sight appears very strange, is taught us here. It is that the lesser gifts are those which least of all can be done without. As the Apostle expresses it, "Much more those members . . . which seem to be more feeble are necessary" (v. 22). And yet this is true even in nature, for we may make shift to do without an eye or a hand, while there are parts, hidden and internal, deprived of which we could not live. So in the Church we may manage to get along in some fashion without great

A test is here suggested which may readily be applied to every exercise of gift, but especially to that which is commonly spoken of as "ministry." Does it glorify Christ, and bring home to me that "Jesus is Lord?"

teachers or great evangelists: but the brethren, and sisters also, whose names are unknown outside their own immediate circle, and perhaps not much set by even there, form the “uniting bands” of Col. 2:19 and Eph. 4:16, binding in a quiet way the saints of God together, and pushing on His work while keeping in the background themselves. THESE are what we cannot do without. So let us see to it that we bestow the more abundant honor upon him.

God never goes back, and if we walk with Him, we never shall. Walking is a regular, uniform motion, step by step, each one in advance of the last. It is not a rush, a leap, a spurt, but a steady progress from one point to another. Going forward is the only security against going back. By slow degrees the likeness of Christ is perfected, as day by day we sensibly dwell in the secret of His presence. Men who walk with God understand in their own real experience what it is to hear the soft footfall of the Divine Master, and to hear His whisperings in their hearts.

Thomas Cook

Jonah, pt 6

Steve Walvatne

The Manifestation

“...What meanest thou, O sleeper? ...I am an Hebrew; and I fear the Lord...Cast me forth into the sea...for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you” (1:6, 9, 12).

Guilt like a tyrant gnaws at the mind and grates on the conscience, enfeebling both the spiritual and physical wellbeing of the one so burdened. “When I kept silence,” said David, “my bones waxed old through my roaring all the daylong” (Ps. 32:3). In the first half of this chapter, Jonah has gone from the Lord’s presence to the lowest part of a boat, yet silence is all we’ve gotten from him. Perhaps the weight of his deeds remained unfelt to this point, but the anxiety of guilt was certain to arrest him soon. Like bitter medicine, it was a necessary aid to recovery. However difficult or demeaning the process might be, Jonah had to come clean if God was to heal him. The same is true still if we dishonor our Lord. We’ll explore “The Manifestation” of Jonah’s sin under three headings, by noting,

1. His Confrontation by the Captain
2. His Confession to the Crew
3. His Concession to the Chaos

His Confrontation by the Captain

“...But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep. So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, ‘What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not’” (vv. 5-6). We have already noted Jonah’s downward course from God, but these words show its extent. Jonah likely groaned in recalling this. The end of verse 5 contradicts everything Jehovah commanded in verse 2. Jonah was to visit the hosts of “Nineveh, that great CITY,” but instead, he’s alone. He was to “ARISE” and “GO,” but he “reclines.” He was to “CRY” against Nineveh, but he’s “fast asleep.” In short, Jonah was Retreating, Reclining, and Retiring, all characteristics of a Christian in reverse.

Jonah Retreating: This is an early indicator of sin in a believer’s life, for disobedience evokes estrangement. Unjudged sin puts a distance between the offender and God, which inevitably spreads, affecting fellowship with other believers and attendance at assembly meetings. Convicted reading their Bibles, wayward souls avoid it or twist it to pacify their conscience, even lashing out at brethren who preach it faithfully. Modern-day Jonahs are miserable, but they need not remain so. Confession lightens the soul and restores fellowship with God. Jonah, however, remained unrepentant.

Jonah Reclining: No longer shocked by his strange surroundings, the prophet settled back. He grew increasingly comfortable; a clue things were descending from bad to worse. Those reaching this point, frequently mistake their transitory ease for spiritual strength. That notion is deceptive, however, because spiritual vitality is actually waning. Jonah’s relaxed state of concealment disqualified him for divine service – “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper...” (Pr. 28:13). Samson was correct in telling Delilah, “I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother’s womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall be like any other man” (Judg. 16:17).

Jonah Retiring: He was “fast asleep” or “snoring” (Septuagint). It was “deep sleep,” akin to Adam’s experience when God removed a rib to form Eve (Gen. 2:21). Though technically alive, Jonah was dead to everything. Even the heaven-sent storm hadn’t aroused him. As sailors struggled on deck, Jonah snoozed beneath their feet. Stunned by this lack of concern, the captain urged him to awaken and pray. Writes Douglas Stuart, “...The first words ascribed to the captain, ‘Get up! Call...’”, contain the two verbs God had used in summoning Jonah to preach against Nineveh in verse 2” (Word Biblical Commentary,

Jonah). Like Peter after denying the Savior, Jonah would have *“remembered the word of the Lord”* (Lk.22:61) and felt sin’s bitterness in his soul. *“Bread of deceit is sweet to a man; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel”* (Prov. 20:17). Difficult as it was, Jonah’s recovery was starting now. He was even pressed to pray, but when had he last done that? “Every sin,” said J.H. Jowett, “works like a drug, and continued sin tends to stupefaction. The more we sin, the less we care. It is the subtlety of sin to create delusive conditions, and a very fatal part of the delusion is a deadly sense of contentment...But it is the comfort of the opium-eater, it is the sleep of the benumbed...” (*The Eagle Life and Other Studies in the Old Testament*).

His Confession to the Crew

“I am an Hebrew; and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land” (v.9). Cornered, Jonah could no longer remain silent. He was now “summoned to the bar of justice” (Jim Flanigan quoting F.A. Tatford: *What the Bible Teaches: Jonah*). The mariners peered at Jonah, desiring answers to their queries. Solomon may have pictured just such a spectacle when writing, “A righteous man falling down before the wicked, is as a troubled fountain and a corrupt spring” (Pr. 25:26). The entire scenario was unseemly, yet Jonah could only blame himself. “Here was a righteous man fallen in the worst sense – fallen from his righteousness,” writes Patrick Fairbairn. “More than that, a prophet specially raised up and supernaturally endowed for advancing among men the interests of God’s kingdom...[is] found an occasion of trouble and distress, a terror to himself and a bane to others” (Jonah: *His Life, Character, and Mission*). If a prophet of God could sink so low, then surely we have reason to beware. Satan’s “fiery darts” (or, “ignited missiles,” Eph. 6:16) are particularly aimed at faithful believers, for if he succeeds in mar- rying their testimony, the potential for further fallout is enormous.

While Jonah’s answer was short, it was honest, and that’s the key ingredient. True confession never lends itself to wordiness. Contrite souls, agonizing over failure, find tears flow freer than words. But they must acknowledge their sin. “Nothing is settled until it is settled right...and being right with God, everything else will fall into its place...” (Joseph Parker: *Preaching Through the Bible: vol. 9*).

Restoration’s path tends to run backwards. A call to divine service originates privately before God. Once convinced of the Lord’s will, then and only then does the

servant step out before men. In restoration, however, God often uses individuals to expose wayward saints. We see it here regarding Jonah, and again, in other passages of Scripture (e.g. 2 Sam. 12 and Mk. 14:66-72). Following that exposure, the “caught” gradually understand the wickedness of their deed, and long to be right with God. Jonah’s recovery began aboard ship, but was finalized before Jehovah at the bottom of the sea.

Carefully note Jonah’s response to the mariners’ questions. They sought the perpetrator behind their dilemma and verse 10 says the mariners *“knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them.”* Then they wanted personal information, which Jonah gave in verse 9. “It is somewhat to his credit,” writes J. Flanigan, “that he offers no justification for his disobedience, nor does he seek to mitigate it in any way.”

“I am an Hebrew,” said Jonah. Right from the start, he linked himself to God’s chosen people derived from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Ex. 9: 1). Hebrews throughout history were a reproached people, yet Jonah like Moses earlier (Heb. 11:24-26), was not ashamed to identify with them. Today, “Christians” (at least in the Scriptural sense) are maligned (even martyred), especially when linked to those gathering outside religious Christendom. Do we put our “colors to the mast,” or are we hesitant to own allegiance with ones so despised? Jonah clarified his relationship.

“I fear the Lord (Jehovah).” Though his current state belied this, Jonah’s words evidently carried some weight with the sailors. By alluding to the “God of heaven,” or better, the “God of the heavens” (JND), he distinguished himself from pagan idolatry (for other examples, see Gen. 24:3; Ezra 1:2; 5:11, 12; Neh. 1:5; 2:20; Dan. 2:19). Our profession and practice ought to do likewise, for all idolatrous ritual is an abomination to God (e.g. Deut. 7:25). We need not apologize for truth we uphold, because it emanates from God’s Word.

Jonah *“feared”* (“reverenced” or “worshipped”) *the God of the heavens who “hath made the sea and the dry land.”* This was “the One, Self-existing God; He who alone IS, who made all things, [and] in whose hands are all things” (E.B. Pusey: *Barnes Notes*). His specific reference to the land and sea would clearly resonate with these weary sailors. Though failing his divine call, Jonah spake faithfully to these men, going even further (“faithful unto death,” Rev. 2:10) in his next statement.

Whatever it costs to pursue a worldly path from God, always remember, that the price of a return ticket will be higher.

His Concession to the Chaos

“Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you” (v.12). Jonah conceded to the surrounding chaos by yielding his life to its power. How he acquired God’s mind in the matter is unknown, but “as the storm was sent for him, it would not go off without him” (George Young: *Lectures on the Book of Jonah*). His response to the mariners’ question was nothing short of courageous and likely elicited wonder from the crew. The poet caught the sense of this when he penned,

Lo! Upon the reeling deck, a weary stranger stands,
 And to the dark devoted crew, stretches suppliant hands;
 “From the face of God, from the face of God, from the face
 of God ye flee;
 ‘Tis the blast of breath from His nostrils, that shakes this
 stormy sea.
 But take ye me and cast me, into the troubled deep,
 And the wrath roused up against you, will be pacified and
 sleep.”

“Take me up,” said Jonah, and after much effort to avoid it, the mariners *“took up Jonah”* (v.15), something E. W. Bullinger says was done with “reverence or care” (*The Companion Bible*). The Lord Jesus also spoke of being “lifted up” (Jn. 12:32), but His handling came *“by wicked hands” that cruelly nailed Him to the tree*” (Acts 2:23).

“And cast me forth into the sea.” What a dreadful death sentence! For sailors to be spared, Jonah must sink in the sea. We cannot read this without thinking of Calvary. There, the “Greater than Jonah” sank into “the deeps” (Ps. 88:6), that sinners might be saved!

But stop a moment and consider the true cost of Jonah’s flight from God. What he paid the captain paid in comparison to what he paid now. There’s a lesson in this. Whatever it costs to pursue a worldly path from God, always remember, that the price of a return ticket will be higher. We cannot sin with impunity. Naomi was a sorrowful witness and warning to this: *“I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty...”* (Ruth 1:21). Praise God that He brings us home, but as Jonah was finding, the avenue through which He brings us, is punctuated by pain. *“Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby”* (Heb. 12:11).

We close by noting Jonah’s last words to the crew: *“I know, that for my sake this great tempest is upon you.”* The prophet’s disobedience had far-reaching effects, for sin is not easily contained. “How very solemn...if God in dealing

with us for our unfaithfulness and sin must bring trouble and distress to those about us!” (G.C. Willis: *Lessons from Jonah*). These may include family members, fellow saints, or even business associates, “for none of us liveth to himself” (Rom. 14:7). Surely, thoughts of this, search our hearts. *“He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God”* (Micah 6:8).
(continued)

“COMPARISON” Robert Surgenor

Those who are well acquainted with holy scripture will acknowledge that the God of Israel, who is the Father of all Christians, is a God of divine order. This is repeatedly manifested in the Bible. Would it surprise you to know that God programmed a timetable of 490 years for three great eras of time?

The first era commenced when Israel went into the land of Canaan to possess their inheritance. That was in BC 1586. From that time to the establishment of the kingdom under Saul was 490 years, dated at BC 1096.

From the establishment of the kingdom under Saul, on to the servitude of Israel, was exactly the same amount of time as the first era, namely 490 years! In BC 606, Solomon's Temple was destroyed and Israel was taken down to Babylon for 70 years.

The third era also lasted exactly 490 years. That era was from the dedication of Solomon's Temple, in his eleventh year of reign in BC 1005, on to the dedication of the second temple in the sixth year of Darius' reign in BC 515 was exactly 490 years. (Date in Newberry Bible, 2 Chr. 5:1).

It is this third era that we wish to consider with you, for there are some very pregnant truths and exhortations for us, connected with Israel at that particular time. As Paul wisely said, *“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope”* (Rom. 15:4). Paul's little remark tells out one vital point in the Christian's life: Read and Study the Old Testament!

It is very interesting to note that the word “learning” in Romans 15:4, is translated, “doctrine” in 2 Timothy 3:16. *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness”* (2 Tim. 3:16). I have heard the old song that one cannot build a doctrine on Old Testament truths, but let me say this, that many scriptures

in the Old Testament very strongly correspond to New Testament doctrine. The scriptures cannot be broken and many divine principles are found in the Old Testament that enhance vital doctrines exposed in the New Testament. Take for example the Epistle to the Hebrews. How can one understand its truths if they are not acquainted with the writings of Moses? They can't! They are at a complete loss. It is amazing how many Christians are too lazy to delve wholeheartedly into the Old Testament, to mine with their spiritual pick and shovel, its wondrous truths. There is a saying:

“The New is in the Old concealed.
The Old is in the New revealed”

To separate the Old and New Testaments is unscriptural. Just as our text says, *“ALL scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine.”*

Now then, let us consider the title of this booklet, “Comparison, how do ye see it now?” That statement comes from Haggai 2:3, which says, *“Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?”* The question arises, why was this spoken, and to whom? What were their circumstances, and what are the houses the speaker is mentioning? Well, be patient and come with me back a few years to Ezra 1:1. The year is 536 and Cyrus is king of Persia. He has just come to the throne, and God's time had come for Israel to return to the land. Nothing could stay God's timetable. Nothing!

The Prophecy of Jeremiah

Jeremiah had prophesied that Israel was to come out of Babylon exactly 70 years after being taken captive (Jer. 25:11-12). The time was now at hand, so what happened? God stepped in and stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, that the house of God was to be erected in Jerusalem, and so a proclamation was made, that those Jews who were of a mind to return to their own land, return. Then we read, *“Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all them whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem. And all they that were about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, beside all that was willingly offered. Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them in the house of his gods; Even those did Cyrus king of Persia bring*

forth by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and numbered them unto Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah” (Ezra 1:5-8).

Now this is most wonderful to me, to think of these dear people, so in love for the place where Jehovah had chosen to place His name, as to be willing to leave behind their comfortable and prosperous living, to return to a forsaken land lying in desolation.

There was nothing in Jerusalem but broken down walls, the rubble of their burnt and destroyed temple, and fields that had returned to the weeds and wild brush of nature. In spite of all this, they purposed in their heart to return. A few among the returning number would be old enough to remember Jerusalem in its former glory seventy years ago, but I believe that most who returned were folks who had been born in Babylon. They never saw the former glory. All they would know about Solomon's glorious temple would be what they heard from the older folks. Yet, they had a burning desire to return. I can see a prophetic truth hidden in this, for there is yet coming a glorious day when the Spirit of God will energize and compel the Jews to return to their promised land. That, I believe, will take place in all its fullness, after the rapture of the Church.

(continued)

"Crowned or Crucified"

I stood alone at the bar of God;
In the hush of the twilight dim,
And faced the question that pierced my heart:
"What will you do with Him?
Crown'd or crucified? Which shall it be?"
No other choice was offered to me.

I look'd on the face so marr'd with tears
That were shed in His agony;
The look in His kind eye broke my heart;
'Twas so full of love for me.
"The crown or the Cross" it seem'd to say
"For or against Me choose thou today!"

He held out His loving hands to me,
While His pleading voice said, "Obey!
Make Me thy choice, for I love thee so,"
And I could not say Him nay.
Crown'd, not crucified! this must it be;
No other way was open to me.

I knelt in tears at the feet of Christ,
In the hush of the twilight dim,
And all that I was or hoped or sought,
I surrendered unto Him.
Crown'd, not crucified! my heart shall know
No King but Christ, who loveth me so!

Anonymous