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Unique Events in Acts and Solutions, pt 1

Robert Surgenor

Walking with Luke the physician and apostle in the Book of the Acts, we find the divine history of the Church, from its commencement on the day of Pentecost, until the confinement of the apostle Paul in his own hired house at Rome; "Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him" (Acts 28:31).

It is interesting that in the twenty four chapters of Luke's gospel, and the twenty eight chapters of his historical account of the acts of the Holy Spirit through believers, Luke never mentions himself by name. When coming on any recorded scene he simple changes the pronoun from "they" to "we, or, "us." You will see this in Acts 16 where Paul was going to take the gospel into Europe for the first time. Notice: "After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not. And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them. Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis; And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain

days. And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither" (Acts 16:7-13).

A Physician in Time of Need

Thus Luke informs the reader that he joined the company of Paul just prior to entering Philippi. One sees the wisdom and consideration of God in joining Doctor Luke to the company, so that after Paul and Silas were beaten there was a physician immediately on hand to care for His servants. It seems that perhaps Luke also preached to the women at the river side, yet seemingly he escaped the arrest and beating experienced by Paul and Silas. Philippi was a Roman stronghold, consequently Jews were held in contempt. The accusation before the magistrates was; "These men being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city." The fact that the preachers were Jews inflamed the situation all the more. However, Luke, being a Gentile, escaped apprehension, and was able to administer professional medical care to Paul and Silas. We could perhaps say, that Luke was the physician and the newly converted jailor and his wife were the nurses.

It doesn't seem to be the nature of Luke to highly elaborate on incidents that he records. In many cases he merely mentions the bare facts. It is only in his recordings that Christians today know what day to hold the Lord's Supper. This is found in Acts 20:7; "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them." Notice the brevity. There is no mention of the cup, that is taken for granted. His recording of baptisms are the same. The formula given by our Lord in Matthew 28:19; "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," is never mentioned, it was taken for granted that the words were spoken. He simply records that they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. That is, they were baptized in the authority of the Lord, employing the words of Matthew 28:19.

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is a monthly publication that is freely available on the Internet and is intended to be a help to believers who appreciate the timeless truths of God's Word and who recognize the unchanging principles of God's will for His people. It is primarily intended to strengthen those who enjoy fellowship in local assemblies of believers who are gathered to the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ alone.

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Believers From The House of Israel

Luke also records three events in Acts that could prove confusing to those unlearned in the Scriptures, and it is with these three that we hope to expound. The first event is found in Acts 2:36-42.

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

The Pattern of Today

In our day and age the pattern of obtaining salvation is: (1) The word of God is heard; (2) Conviction of sin through the Spirit's operation, is experienced; (3) Repent-ance is evidenced in the convicted one; (4) Faith is placed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and upon trusting Christ as one's own personal Saviour, that person is immediately indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ. Shortly after, that saved one submits to the waters of baptism to declare that they have died with Christ, and have been raised with Christ, to walk in newness of life. Their water baptism does not save them, but simply announces what has taken place when they trusted Christ.

You won't find this order in Acts 2, and the question arises - why? It seems strange to some that the folks of Acts 2 could not receive the Holy Spirit until they had submitted to the ordinance of water baptism. The portion seems contradictory to what we have today. However,

there is a valid explanation, and it is found in the context. We must remember that the Book of Acts is recording a transitional period from law to grace. Do keep that in mind.

Also we want to consider the hidden meaning of some of the words employed in our King James Version. There are some shortcomings in our version, but remember this, it is still the most reliable version that a person can possess.

Error of the Campbellites

There is a denomination called, "The Church of Christ," founded during the beginning of the 19th Century by Thomas Campbell, that claim baptism is essential for salvation, and the portion under consideration is one of their main points.

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

They tell us, "See, you have to be baptized FOR the remission of sins, and unless you are baptized, your sins will never be remitted." What they don't understand is the full meaning of the words in Greek manuscripts.

That Little Word – "For"

Let me explain the word, "FOR." When a hero comes home from the battles of war, a date is set for his award. His heroic activities on the front line have earned him the Medal of Honor. The awarding date is set, and the day comes when he is standing before the President of the United States to be awarded with the Medal of Honor. As he stands before dignitaries, the President pins the medal on the hero for his bravery. Notice I said, "FOR his bravery." Now then, what made the man brave? Was it the pinning on of the medal? Did the medal being pinned on him make him a hero? Hardly! He was decorated with the medal because of his bravery.

A Public Declaration Required

Come to our verse now. Why were the men of Israel exhorted to be baptized? Certainly not to remit their sins, which only the blood of Christ can do, but they were exhorted to be baptized because of the remission of their sins.

Their sins had previously been remitted through trusting Jesus as their Messiah, and because of this they are exhorted to proclaim this truth by submitting to the baptism of water. Furthermore, before they could receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, they had to submit to the ritual of water baptism. Why? Today as soon as a person confesses Christ Jesus as their Lord, they receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Why the difference here? The answer is found in the context. Notice the people being dealt with - "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (vs.36).

The scene is entirely Jewish. These people represent "the house of Israel." The house of Israel had publicly denied the Lord Jesus, and before any of them, on this particular occasion, were to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, they were required by God to publicly confess Jesus Christ as their Messiah, and being baptized publicly fulfilled that obligation. Upon repenting they were saved, but before God would empower them with the Holy Ghost, He required of them to make their confession public through baptism. This procedure was only on the day of Pentecost, and was never repeated. It was a unique event.

Three Thousand Steadfast Souls

The chapter closes beautifully; "Then they that gladly received His word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:41-47). People have questioned how three thousand souls could be baptized in such a short amount

of time, but Luke is not concerned about satisfying one's curiosity, he simply states the facts, and since the facts are divinely inspired, I accept them as truth. What tremendous addition to the new church at Jerusalem. How could they conduct the Lord's Supper with such a large number? Luke, in his brevity, doesn't tell us.

Being added to a local assembly is a tremendous thing, but continuing steadfastly is even better. The word "steadfastly" carries the thought of, "adhering to one, to be devoted or constant to one, to be steadfastly attentive unto, to give unremitting care to a thing, to persevere and not to faint." In other words, nothing was more important to them than God's assembly. It was a place where the apostle's doctrine was taught, which produced a fellowship that was expressed in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

There were no New Testament epistles at this time. All teaching came from the Old Testament Scriptures, and also from the divine revelations given to the apostles from time to time, referred to as "traditions" (2 Thess. 2:15).

This ministry was intently listened to, and unswervingly obeyed. The teaching was daily. I am afraid that it is different today. How many assemblies do you know that would welcome twelve weeks of ministry meetings? Some assemblies today are "tired" after three nights of ministry. Shame on them. There was a reality in the early days of the Church on earth. The assembly at Jerusalem continued daily with one accord in the temple, besides having love feasts in their own homes on a daily basis. Their love for each other was so great that they shared their possessions with each other. A few years later Paul lamented, "For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's" (Phil. 2:21).

For Me to Live – Christ!

We are so busy today with multiple "irons in the fire," that the things of God are relegated to the back seat. How different was Paul, who exclaimed, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). How different from the world, who says, "For to me to live is wealth;" Or, "For me to live is fame;" Or, "For me to live

is power;" Or, "For me to live is pleasures." Christian, what is your goal in life? Is it, "for me to live is Christ"?

There was a beautiful simplicity to the gathering, which the words, "singleness of heart" indicate. They praised God and the unsaved onlookers praised them, and most blessed of all, "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Some assemblies today do not even see one soul added in a year.

(continued)

Faith has one thing to do; that is, to walk before God, realizing the presence of Him who is alike Sun and Shield. It is for God to remove difficulties, to clear away hindrances, to defend, to succor, and to help; and it is for Faith calmly to walk on, even though a Red Sea lies before and an enemy's host behind.

Various Issues regarding the Lord's Supper, pt 4

Joel Portman

We have noticed that the Lord's Supper in the New Testament was marked by its simplicity, spirituality, an expression of unity of assembly, and was a remembrance of the Lord (not only His death). Its having been instituted in the night while the Lord Jesus was being betrayed (1 Cor. 11:23 ..imperfect), shows that it is the Lord's intent that only true disciples should partake of the supper. His thoughts were not on His suffering but on the disciples and their remembrance of Him. It followed the Passover and began a new thing. Passover looked back to deliverance, but the Supper looks forward to His coming (as well as back to His suffering). It centers upon occupation with/remembrance of HIM, more than thanks or blessings (though there is certainly room for our sincere thanksgivings).

It is composed of breaking the bread and drinking of the cup. "Breaking the Bread" is not

an official act, but it is what each believer does when partaking of it. It represents His perfect body given for us as a sacrifice. Drinking the cup is also personal. It represents His precious blood, the price of our redemption.

Its placement in assembly meetings seems that it had first place in order when the assembly met. (in Acts 20, 1 Cor. 11 it is first, then the ministry of chapter 14).

It is an ACT of . . .

- a. Obedience "this do ye
- b. Remembrance "in remembrance of Me"
- c. Fellowship an assembly act, with Him and with one another.
- d. Proclamation "show the Lord's Death until He come."

It is NOT a

a. Social Gathering, as the Corinthians had made it with their feasting beforehand.

b. Man-instituted gathering, it has the authority of Christ as Lord

c. Irregular, spontaneous gathering, "as oft.." how oft? The pattern instituted was that the disciples gathered on the 1st day of the week. We have no basis for other days.

d. Careless gathering. Cf. vs. 27-29. "Examine..." is discern true condition of life.

Lord's Supper (as the Burnt Offering) forms basis of all other activities of assembly. All others derive their value from this highest form of our worship. All other assembly gatherings are important as well! However, this touches all the rest.

If we partake of the Lord's Supper in a right condition and frame of thought, then we also will want to be present at all the other meetings of the assembly.

It acknowledges His claims upon us and recognizes His sovereignty in our midst.

Issues and Questions that arise.

What is wrong with believers on a vacation or trip having the Lord's Supper together? Lord's Supper is always connected with a local assembly testimony. Never else. Paul was often journeying as in Acts 20, but didn't carry out the Lord's Supper until with the assembly. The Lord's Supper is never to be seen as something to fit into my convenience, but my yielding to the Lord's will.

How is the Lord's Supper a Worship meeting? Wrong to call it such? What is Worship? It is a gathering supremely and primarily for worship, not a place for petitions or asking. Worship is the act of prostrating oneself before the Lord in submission and recognition of His greatness, His glories, His supreme worth. It is an occupation with an Infinite Person. However, it is not called a worship meeting in the Bible, and we do best to avoid words if not scriptural. There is clearly room for thanksgiving from our hearts at the supper.

Where is our worship carried out? We physically worship where we are gathered. Our bodies are not transported elsewhere, but we spiritually worship in the heavenly sanctuary, where our Lord Jesus is now. This is not some ethereal, mystical experience, but rather that our spirits are centered upon Him and we are in His presence. As the Great High Priest, now in heaven, He leads in worship.

Why is not everyone who professes to be a believer received to the Lord's Supper? Reception to the assembly is NEVER to the Lord's Supper but to the entire fellowship of the local assembly. The Lord's Supper is a function of those who are able to sit down in fellowship one with another and with the Lord. Being in the Body of Christ is not the same as being in the local assembly fellowship. Reception is an acknowledgment of fellowship that exists.. agreement, desires alike. That can only take place when there is an exercise of heart, a life that is suitable. Those who claim that every believer should be allowed fail to see the importance of maintaining and carrying out assembly reception, and also (usually) discipline.

Why is it that the chairs are usually arranged in a circle at the Lord's Supper, and those who are not in the assembly sit in a separate area (and not at other meetings)? We usually arrange the chairs in a Circle, because of the purpose of the meeting. Arrangement of chairs usually expresses the kind of meeting that it is. If for ministry or teaching, they face the speaker. In the case of the Lord's Supper, we are gathered for worship, not to hear a sermon. Forming a circle expresses our FELLOWSHIP, indicates that the purpose of our gathering is to FOCUS OUR ATTENTION ON THE BREAD AND THE CUP, and it also expresses the

reality of THE LORD IN THE MIDST. "In the midst," (en meso) Matt. 18:20 is a term that indicates a circle with a center, and He is in the center of His people. An interesting expression is in Song 1:12.. "sitteth in his circle (table)" There we see a picture that illustrates the Lord's Supper. Because the Lord's Supper expresses uniquely the fellowship of the assembly, those who are not in fellowship sit separately. This is not involved in any other meeting.

The term "Back Seat," is a misnomer that has crept into our language. Never found in the NT! Actually, the only closest place is in 1 Cor. 14... "seat of the unlearned." And there it is with relation to a meeting for teaching.

What Gift is needed for the Lord's Supper? Absolutely none. There is no gift of worship or praise. What is needed is time spent, occupation with Christ, meditation on Him, desire to give honor to His Name. Mary, Jn. 12, braved all to expend her worship on the Lord. Let us not deprive Him of receiving what is His due because of our laziness or carelessness.

Other questions are frequent as well. Why is there only one loaf and one cup? Must the bread be unleavened? Wine or juice? There should be one loaf in view of what it represents. First of all, it represents the ONE body of the Lord Jesus given for us in which He suffered on the cross. It also represents the One mystical body of Christ and the fellowship of the local assembly, of which we are a part. It speaks of the UNITY of HIS PERSON seen physically and also the spiritual truth of it with relation to His people. To have wafers or several loaves is to indicate that the body in which He suffered was not a unified person, and also it would indicate that the fellowship that He formed in the church in both aspects is divided. No, it is seen as a unified whole. The action of breaking the bread does not refer to what a brother might do when he divides a loaf for convenience in passing it. Breaking the bread is the individual taking his/her portion from it when they eat.

Was the bread unleavened? It was at the institution after the Passover, but it is never defined afterwards. The word used is the word for plain, ordinary bread. It is not a type, but a

memorial. So one can find no justification for requiring the bread to be unleavened. It is a memorial of the Lord's body, not a symbol. Conditions that existed at the institution of the supper didn't continue in subsequent remembrances.

There is one cup, because it represents the ONE Sacrifice of the Lord Jesus when His blood was shed for us. Emphasis is not on the wine, but on the singularity of the cup, so one would suggest that to have individual cups would be to violate the unique element that it represents.

We also hear some ask if the contents should be wine or grape juice? We would judge that it was wine that was used in the NT. The only reference I can think of that speaks of grape juice squeezed from the grape and then consumed is in the dream of the butler when he recounts it to Joseph in Gen. 40:11. However, nothing is said of it being wine in the New Testament. It is called the "fruit of the vine". Debate is often heard over the meaning of that term, or "wine", but all other references in the books following the gospels are clear that wine has an intoxicating aspect to it, which is not true of grape juice. So, no verse says we must use wine, but we know it was very likely used by believers, because in the area of Bible, grape juice would ferment to wine fairly rapidly. It is also "slightly" more sanitary, though it is not the disinfectant that some brethren believe it to be. Also, wine has a certain bitterness about it (especially the natural wines), so it would suggest the bitterness of the suffering of our Savior when He endured the judgment for us.

Another suggestion that may be applicable is that the bread and wine represent the body and blood of the Lord. During the days of His humanity, those elements of life were united ("flesh and blood", Heb. 2:14, 1 Cor. 15:50), but on the table they are separated. This teaches that death has taken place, and we are reminded in this way of the life and the death of our blessed Lord, and we are enabled to remember Him with sincere worship from our hearts.

What should one do if he has sinned or if there is any problem in his life? 1 Cor. 11:27-31 speaks of eating or drinking unworthily, and that we are to examine ourselves. We are to

examine, judge, assess ourselves (obviously those who are already in assembly fellowship). This should be followed by confession to Lord. Then we are to eat. Not "stay away!" It is the eating and drinking that is emphasized...physically partaking is part of our worship and it expresses our participation together with the other believers. The problems in Corinth demanded self-examination. They were not doing so! Therefore they were being judged. Disunity and issues with brethren should be resolved (Matt. 5:23-24). Believers cannot worship as they ought when they are in a wrong relationship with the Lord or with one another. The priests in OT washed at the laver before they approached altar, and before they entered the Sanctuary.

So may these limited thoughts on the Lord's Supper serve to stimulate our hearts and give us added cause to appreciate the holy privilege that is ours to obediently remember Him as He has commanded until He comes again.

(concluded)

Order at the Lord's Supper

We never read of a deacon, elder, pastor, or even an apostle taking control. There is not a scintilla of evidence that there was a human leader, and not a jot or tittle to support the traditional observances of Christendom. From whence then came such perverted traditions? From the same source as the traditions of the scribes and Pharisees. Men assume a position of leadership, which is not warranted in the Scripture, and the low spiritual state of believers permit such an assumption. Then, having obtained such power, clerisy is born, and the laity (so-called) are subjected to convenient rules and regulations that strengthen the cleric and weaken the so-called laity, and many love to have it so.

Scriptural order is to come together in absolute dependence on the Holy Spirit. Of course, spiritual men will lay the table, and then the gathered company wait before the Lord. One is moved to pray; another to read the Scripture; another to lead in a hymn. They are

not carried away in an uncontrolled ecstasy, but have subdued spirits under self-control (1 Cor. 14:16, 26). Women are in silence (1 Cor. 14:34); men only are to pray (1 Tim. 2:8, 12). Sisters have their heads covered, as an acknowledgement of Divine leadership and order. Notice carefully the order from 1 Cor. 11 to 1 Cor. 14. In chapter 11 there is the Lord's Supper, in chapter 12 the gifts severally divided, in chapter 13 the controlling power of love, and in chapter 14 the gifts functioning.

It is well to distinguish between priesthood and gift. All are priests, but all are not gifted to publicly minister to the saints. Ministry should not precede worship. Worship, praise, and prayer ascends to God; ministry descends from God. The order is the same in John's Gospel where, after the Lord had dispensed His own supper, we have the four chapters of ministry.

Speculation as to the use of wine or unfermented juice, or as to the use of bread or unleavened bread, is settled by a careful examination of the usage of the words. It was wine misused that made the Corinthians drunk, wine that "cheereth God and man" (Jud. 9: 13). Unfermented juice has had a preservative added to prevent fermentation, and would be akin to tampering with a Divine symbol. Doubtless, the Passover loaf used by the Lord in the institution of the Supper was unleavened, otherwise the Passover ordinance would have been marred. However, the Spirit of God does not discriminate between the words "bread" and "unleavened bread" ; but uses the word "artos" in 1 Cor. 11 of the bread for the Lord's Supper, and uses the same word "artos" in John 6: 7, and other places for ordinary leavened bread. It is not wise to go beyond what is written.

Every believer is called upon to "examine himself," before partaking of the bread and the wine. Failure to do so incurs God's displeasure. Unconfessed sin leads to varying degrees of judgment, and if persisted in, may finally even lead to physical death. "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (1 Cor. 11: 30).

May God enable us to separate from every evil thing, whether moral or doctrinal, and, as we anticipate the Lord's return, to

maintain the SIMPLICITY OF THE DIVINE PAT-
TERN! "For as often as ye eat this bread, and
drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till
He come" (1 Cor. 11:26).

(Wholesome Words, #7)

Righteousness— Doctrinal and Practical

Walter Scott

There is not a subject apparently more diffi-
cult than that of righteousness. Books and
treatises without number have been written on
it, and theologians all ages have crossed swords
over this knotty question. What is the result on
the whole of centuries of wrangle and strife?
Persons are as muddled and confused as ever,
and a subject which in itself is simple, has been
so tortured and twisted in polemical dispute,
that a clear exposition of the doctrine of righ-
teousness is an imperative need of the day.

Righteousness is the necessary basis of
God's dealings with saint and sinner; the
ground on which grace gloriously sways its
scepter (Rom. 5:21); and the superstructure on
which all Christian life, progress, and service
most surely repose. Hence a more impor-
tant theme can scarcely be thought of, and it
will be readily admitted that a mistake on this
subject so vital to all, may very seriously affect
the soul's relation to God and our responsibili-
ties to others.

Righteousness is a relative term, that is
it involves dealings or relationships with oth-
ers. The simple idea in the word is what is
right. This consideration will simplify a study of
the subject, because whatever additional
shades of meaning there may be, and however
variously applied, the root-thought in every
passage is that of a state of rightness in refer-
ence to God and to man.

The Righteousness of God (Rom. 3)

Signifies God's consistency with His nature, His
character in freely and perfectly justifying a
sinner believing in Him. Now this it will be
observed cannot be imputed to another. It is
God's righteousness, not man's. The question
of imputation does not occur in this chapter at
all, nor in any passage where the term "the

righteousness of God" occurs. In chapter 3 of
the Romans, after the demonstration of the
personal sin of Jew and Gentile (1-19), we have
the revelation of the righteous ground on which
God can justify a guilty sinner. God acts rightly,
in perfect consistency with His nature in so
doing. How very simple therefore, yet withal
profound, is this Pauline expression, "The righ-
teousness of God," when divested of the num-
erous theological meanings ascribed to it. As
used by St. Paul in Chapter 3. of the Romans—
for he alone of the sacred writers of the New
Testament employs the term—it is the sure
repose of the soul. We may remark that the
phrase "the righteousness of Christ" is not once
met with in the Holy Scriptures. The substitu-
tion of this latter for the scriptural term " the
righteousness of God" has done much to mys-
tify the subject in the minds of many of God's
dear people. "The righteousness which is of
God" (Phil. 3) shows a verbal difference from
that in Rom. 1:16 and 3:21, 22. But the differ-
ence is not in words merely. In Phil. 3, the
apostle is contrasting two kinds of righteous-
ness; that which is of or from the law he would
not have; whereas that which is of or from God
he desired to possess.

Righteousness imputed (Rom. 4)

In this chapter we have righteousness reck-
oned or Counted to one who in himself is
destitute of merit. Abraham is the great illus-
tration of it (verses 3, 18-22), and David de-
scribes its blessedness (verses 6-8). It would
be an immoral action for king or magistrate to
declare a man right who was wrong. In point of
fact man cannot justify or declare judicially
right a proved offender; he can pardon, but he
cannot justify. God alone can justify a sinner.
He alone can impute righteousness to one who
has it not. It is not putting a quantity of righ-
teousness in the man. It is simply regarding
him as a righteous or just person—one who,
again we repeat, is not so either in nature or
practice. How God can do this chap. iii. has fully
informed us. Righteousness imputed to one
supposes he is destitute of it. There is not the
slightest thought in the chapter of Conferred
inward righteousness. It is simply a man who
is wrong being counted right. Christ bearing
the Judgment of God, and God believed on who

raised Him up from the dead, explains it all. The reader will observe that "righteousness" occurs eight times in the chapter, and further that the words "of God," are not added in a single instance. "The righteousness of God" is nowhere said to be reckoned or imputed; but "righteousness" simply, is put to the account of a guilty person believing in God. God is just as righteous in justifying as in punishing, as consistent with the claims of His nature in the one as in the other, hence the imputation of God's righteousness is a moral impossibility. It is God's righteousness, is, and ever will be. "Imputed righteousness" is not accurate thought or language. Righteousness in itself has not the character of imputation, as the foregoing expression would imply; but righteousness imputed or reckoned is another thing. We may also observe that the righteousness of one cannot be put to another's account. If you could transfer one person's righteousness to another, then one is left destitute of it. If my being right in my relations to God or man, as the case may be, could by any possibility be put to another's account, then clearly I would be found positively wrong. What then of the common theological phrase "the imputed righteousness of Christ" Will it stand the rigid test of Scripture? This affects both the person and work of Christ. If "the righteousness of Christ" be put to our account, then it leaves Him without it, or unrighteous; on the other hand, if by the vicarious obedience of Christ to the law we are declared righteous, then clearly His death is in vain (Gal. 2:21). Thus both the Person and work of the Savior (unconsciously, no doubt) are in question in the unscriptural expression "the imputed righteousness of Christ." How important therefore to "hold fast the form of sound words."

We.. . . The Righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21)

Christ on the cross was made sin for us; now on the throne He is the righteousness of God. The grandest, fullest witness of right on the part of God is expressed in setting Christ at His own right hand—crowned and glorified. What a marvelous exhibition of the righteousness of God is witnessed yonder! But that is not all, for we too as "in him" are practical, living witnesses of it. He for the moment was made sin for us, that

we might become, continuously, the righteousness of God in Him; see Revised Version, 2 Cor. 5: 21. We confess we are amazed at the greatness of the grace; too much for us to receive, but not too much for God to give. We cannot point to the exalted place of angels as illustration of God's righteousness, we must look at the yet more exalted place of saints as "in him."

Righteousness in Everyday Life (Titus 2:12).

This is a large subject, and covers every relationship and position in life. Do what is right to God and to your fellows. Faithfully and minutely fulfill every obligation of life, whether as a saint, servant, and worshiper to God; as a man, master, and servant in the world; as a husband, father, and wife in the circle of social relationship; and in the use of all that which God has entrusted you with, as health, time, talent, money, power, gift, etc. To be righteous is simply to be right and do right towards God and towards man. But where are we to learn practical righteousness? Where are we to learn the full extent of our obligations to God and to each other? How are we to be supplied with motive and power to act rightly in all things and in all relationships? For all this we must turn to the Word of God. It is there only we find life's duty fully unfolded. Not only so, but we are also directed to Christ as the grand and constraining motive, and to the Holy Spirit as the power by which practical righteousness is effected. We would press upon one and all the necessity of being consistent in every relation of life. Action in keeping with each respective relation gives us the practical righteousness demanded from one and all. Where this is lacking the soul is exposed to the attacks of Satan—our determined, wily, and ever watchful foe (Eph. 5:14), and leaves one weak, powerless, and unfruitful in service. If we are to be filled with the fruits of righteousness (Phil.1:11), and wait through the Spirit for its hope which is glory (Gal. 5:5), we must be prepared to follow righteousness" (2 Tim. 2:22) in all things and in all relations, and never sanction evil on any plea whatever. Of two evils choose the least" is an utterly false principle. A holy path to tread, a clean place to dwell, a good conscience in exercise there must

be unless you believe the nature of God, and sacrifice at the shrine of expediency, of numbers, of supposed usefulness, of an ecclesiastical unity, the practical righteousness demanded from every saint and servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, from which may the Lord deliver His beloved people.

A soul estranged from God will seek diversion in anything yet find satisfaction in nothing save the Fountain of living waters which he hath forsaken.

Never seek to find out if some forbidden thing is sin or not, and whether it may not in some way be reconciled to conscience. Let it be enough that God has forbidden it.

Allurements of Satan.

WE are living in an evil day, in which the love of many towards Christ is waxing cold. Worldly friendships, society aspirations, love of pleasures, popular recreations, and costly extravagance: these are eating up the very life of Christian testimony, besides destroying the pilgrim character; so that in very many instances there is a surprising lack of those things which should distinguish the professed child of God from the children of this world. "How is the fine gold become dim!" may well be remarked (Lam. 4:1).

Let us remember, when allured by the bait of what is called "good society" with its assumed advantages of social position, that there is between Christ and the world nothing in common. His Cross is a permanent barrier whereby "the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14). No society is better than that of the "household of faith," described as the excellent of the earth (Psa. 16: 3, R.V.), and no position is comparable with the believer's standing in Christ.

What a craving thirst there is for pleasure, that leading evil mark of the "last days"! (2 Tim.

3:4). Everything now must be seasoned with pleasure to suit the popular taste, otherwise things are rejected, even by Christians. Sobriety is out of fashion, and we must not take matters too seriously! Even the preaching of the Gospel must be "bright" and the Services "attractive"; albeit the Holy Spirit has come to convict men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment (John 16:8). Our Christian gatherings also must have a spice of "entertainment," and the speakers "witty" and amusingly "anecdotal," to suit the downgrade that has set in. Religious Babylon is permeated with this spirit of amusement. Let us beware of novelties from that quarter, so grieving to the Holy Spirit. The realized presence and power of God, so needful, is not associated with entertainment and lightness.

Be careful of recreation, which is going mad these days. A pleasant walk, a little gardening, fishing, some home hobby, etc., were once the recreations—good for body and mind alike. Now it is the tennis party, the golf links, the cricket and football field, the bowling green—mixing of saved and unsaved together. In the evening, the social party, the popular music, the entertaining lecture, and last and worst, the "pictures." These are not God's provision for the recreation of His redeemed ones, purchased by the blood of His crucified Son; but they are pleasures this world provides for its own. Pleasure, rightly understood, is of God and is good; but it is pleasure in fellowship with Christ and in the simple things His own hand provides.

What unrestrained extravagance is taking possession of the people, and the children of God are being caught in its grip. Things that are plain, neat, simple, and inexpensive, are being exchanged for the up-to-date, fashionable and costly things; as in modern houses and furnishings, latest model in cars, stylish clothing (some not decent), golden ornaments, etc. This copying of a doomed world ill befits a heavenly pilgrim and stranger. What an amount of money is wasted on costly extravagant things, that could be used for God and laid up as treasures in Heaven.

Oh, for a return to a simpler and Christ-like manner of life, becoming the followers of the One who was meek and lowly in heart (Matt. 11:29)! — Franklin Ferguson.