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## Just To Please Him!

-- Anon

In these days in which we live, there is great need that we be more quiet before the Lord. Just to enter into, and abide in such sweet communion with Him that we may at all times feast on that fruit of the Spirit which is Love, Joy, Peace, etc. (Gal. 5:22, 23). These verses are just a picture of what our Lord Jesus Christ is, and what He wants to be to every one of His dear ones. This is very precious to the heart that has tasted that the Lord is Good. O, that we might enter more into the mind of God about the One whose infinite loveliness is His daily delight, who always pleased Him, who rejoiced always before Him (Matt. 17:5; Prov. 8:30).

When we are rejoicing in His love, do we ever stop to think whether He is happy? We sing, "That will be glory for me." How much more blessed to sing, "That will be glory for Him." O, that we might get so completely away from thinking of self and from seeking our own welfare, as to be able to live before Him just to minister to the needs of His own loving heart, just to make Him happy. No one was ever happy who was seeking happiness. Only those taste of real joy who are seeking to give joy to the heart of another. We come to Him many times to have our own needs met. Do we ever come just to satisfy the longings of His own heart of love?

He is seeking worshippers, those who will speak of His real worth, His beauty, His glory. Has He found them in us? Have we been seeking to give Him the joy that was before Him when He endured the cross, when He paid the awful price of our redemption? Will our only joy in the glory be that we are saved and made like Him? Will not the joy of knowing that He is satisfied, that He has been made to rejoice, far transcend all this? Ah, beloved, we are so prone to look at everything from our own standpoint, from the effect it will have on us instead of its relation to Him. We have wept with Him over cold stony hearts. Have we ever rejoiced with Him just because He found His sheep? We are often made to rejoice

by the joy of those dear to our hearts. Are we ever happy for no other reason than that we know He is happy? How often we sell our ointment -- that which should have been poured out upon Him -- under pretense of giving something to the poor (John 12:1-11). How often we deny Him the time that His loving heart craves under pretense of being too busy with service. One has said, "I grow very weary of the constant spurring of God's people to service, service, as if any father ever did care so much to have his children toiling for him as loving and trusting him."

O, that we might ask ourselves under every circumstance, "Will this bring joy to His loving heart?" We may be doing many things that are not positively evil, but do they contribute to His joy? How much we need to get better acquainted with Him. To know Him aright will lessen our care to know anything else, for He is the fullness of God. In Him is comprehended all that God has for us from the moment we are saved to the countless ages of eternity.

Yet a little while and we shall be forever with Him. Will we regret then that we spent much time alone with Him while in this wilderness scene? My heart longs for that time when I shall never again grieve Him. How patient, how gentle He has been with every one of us. How the lack of appreciation on the part of friends has sometimes grieved us. What, then, must it mean to Him-- who gave everything to purchase us from eternal death, to have us show no concern about His happiness, about His glory, to have us occupied with everything but Himself?

The Red Sea represents Christ dead and risen **for us**, the Jordan as our death and resurrection **with Him**. The grand point of the Red Sea is what Christ brings us **out of** and that of the Jordan what Christ brings us **into**.

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## "BUBBLE BELIEVERS"

R. E. Surgenor

Christians are sometimes told that they live in a little bubble, isolated and unaware of all that surrounds them. It is inferred that this position is not conducive to effective witnessing to the ungodly. Let us seek to clarify the actual position of a believer, using five positional aspects:

- (1) The World's position before God.
- (2) The Christian's position before God.
- (3) The Christian's position before the world.
- (4) The Christian's responsibility to the world.
- (5) The Christian's responsibility before God.

### THE WORLD'S POSITION BEFORE GOD

It matters little what man thinks of himself. What really is vital is, what is his actual position before a holy God. The Holy Scriptures provide the actual analysis in very plain terms. There are men that are immoral, and there are men that are highly moral. Some are more wicked than others, yet all fall into one category – they are "enemies" of God (Rom. 5:10).

Every man in his natural state is a fallen and corrupt creature. He is "without strength" (Rom. 5:6) to better himself salvation-wise. Romans 5 classifies man as a sinner, and ungodly. He may be religious, moral, and a very amiable person, nevertheless, without the new birth he is ungodly, and an enemy of God.

Romans 3 announces numerous charges against the human race. From verse 10 to 12, God speaks as a Judge. In verses 13-15, He speaks as a Physician. Then from verses 16 to 18, he announces facts as a Historian. When the charges are complete, man stands helpless, hopeless, and guilty before God. Scripture reveals that man is spiritually dead, blind, and his understanding darkened. He is alienated from the life of God (Eph. 2:1; 4:18).

Not only this, the natural man has a carnal mind, that is "enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7). The word "enmity" indicates, "hostility; by implication, a reason for opposition." Thus we see that man is hostile to God, and will oppose God and His Word. One may doubt this about certain individuals that are moral, but just place that moral person into a certain environment, and the true colors of his fallen nature will manifest themselves.

We conclude that ALL are unprofitable; ALL are gone out of the way; ALL are guilty before God; and ALL have sinned (Rom. 3).

### THE CHRISTIAN'S POSITION BEFORE GOD

The Christian is one who has responded to the effec-

tive call of God. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Pet. 2:9). He has been placed into a holy and a royal priesthood. Thus he has the responsibility to function in that capacity. As a holy priest, he is to worship, and as a royal priest he is to witness. A reading of 1 Pet. 2 will clarify that. He has been made "a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). In 4:18 we see that such an one has new eyes, his outlook is different. In 5:7, he has new feet, his walk is different. In 5:15, he has a new heart, his way of life has changed. In 5:20 he has a new voice, his occupation has changed.

### THE CHRISTIAN'S POSITION BEFORE THE WORLD

The Christian is a pilgrim and a stranger, thus the world is a foreign land to him. He looks for a city whose founder and maker is God. His mind, his affections, are not set on things of this world, but rather on heavenly things. "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:2). "For our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20). "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (Jn. 15:19).

Thus we see, that the Christian's position before God, when manifested in his life, draws out the hatred of the natural man. The Lord carries this thought even farther, saying, "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets" (Luke 6:26). If the unsaved are comfortable in the presence of a child of God, then something is wrong with that Christian. He is failing to live up to the God-given standard. "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12). A carnal Christian does not suffer persecution, simply because his lifestyle does not condemn the lifestyle of those around him. Consider Noah. "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Heb. 11:7). Here we have a classic example of a person's lifestyle condemning others. Some even go so far as to "speak evil of saints, as of evildoers, falsely accusing one's good conversation (life style) in Christ (1 Pet. 3:16).

The Christian is exhorted to "walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind" (Eph. 4:17). The thought being, he is walk with a useful aim or goal. His life is not to be one of emptiness. He governs his activities in view of the judgment seat of Christ, knowing that he will give an account of every penny spent and every minute used in his lifetime here.

He is to walk in separation from the ungodly. The Lord sat and ate with sinners, certainly not enjoying their company, but rather to win them to Himself. He was "separate from sinners" in all of their ways (Heb. 7:26). It is not possible for a godly Christian to have fellowship with the ungodly. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Cor. 6:14). You may as well try to blend oil with water as to expect a godly Christian have a "good time" with an enemy of God. It is impossible. It was a sad day for Samson when his eyes turned from God and he became a companion with thirty Philistines, who were the enemies of God (Jud. 14:11). A carnal Christian may feel fairly comfortable in the company of the ungodly, but a spiritual Christian - never!

The world cannot comprehend the spiritual man. He is judged (discerned) of no man (1 Cor. 2:15). That means, that the natural man looks on the spiritual man as a weird person, a person that he cannot understand. Thus, Christ encourages the spiritual man. "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake" (Lk. 6:22).

Thus we conclude, that the Christian's position is one of access to God, and one of aggravation to the ungodly. How true, that they who will "live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12). Today that persecution is not martyrdom, but reproach and hate. Are we living godly? I remember years ago a meat manager of a supermarket in a small community experiencing this. He was saved in July and began to witness. Every New Year's eve, the workers held a party. He was always a participant. However, after being saved, when the time of the big party drew near, he was not invited as always before. I told him to count that as a compliment, and to rejoice, for great would be his reward in heaven. You see, his new lifestyle so condemned his fellow workers to the extent that they felt that his presence would ruin their party. Let us all who profess ask ourselves, are the unsaved comfortable with us in their company? If so, something is lacking in our testimony.

Consider the words of Psalm 1: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful" (Ps. 1:1). Thus we have his position, "walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly." Then his purpose and pursuit. "Nor standeth in the way of sinners." Finally, his prosperity. "Nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." The rest of the quotation tells us his where his delights lie, and what occupies his time. "But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in His law doth he meditate day and night" (Ps. 1:2).

It is interesting to not only observe the mistreatment of the early Christians, contained in the Book of the Acts, but also to see the company that they desired to keep. Notice the action of Peter and John after being threatened by the authorities. "And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them" (Acts 4:23). Where did they go? "To their own company," to those of like faith. The gathering together of God's people, is a most blessed experience. In the Bible there is a question that contains an automatic answer. Let me quote it. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3). Of course, the automatic answer is, NO! You will find the same concept in the law. "Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together" Deut. 22:10). Why is that? Simply because an ox was a clean animal, and an ass was an unclean animal. God told His people, Don't you be linking the two together. Bringing this into the day of grace we find the same thing. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing" (2 Cor. 6:17). Whenever believers met in the early Church days, they always met with their own. That is natural, for they had something in common; they had Christ.

#### **THE CHRISTIAN'S RESPONSIBILITY TO THE WORLD**

As a warning, I have the following poem written on the flyleaf of my first wide margin Bible:

*"We are the only Bible the careless world will read.  
We are the sinner's gospel; We are the scoffer's creed.  
We are the Lord's last message, given in deed or word:  
What if the type is crooked? What if the print is blurred?"*

Do I, as a child of God have a responsibility to my fellow men. Absolutely yes! Paul exhorts us to "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Col. 4:5). Christ hath left us an example that we should follow His steps (1 Pet. 2:21). Was He not a faithful witness? (Rev. 1:5). Consider His way with Nicodemus, the woman at Jacob's well, and others. Notice His wisdom in dealing with people. Consider His compassion and love for them. Look at the inconveniences that He placed upon Himself in order to reach people. Here is our blueprint, here is our divine example. He is our Model, if I may so put it that way. As a professing Christian, are you following His steps in witnessing? A diligent businessman when mingling with people will invariably hand out his business cards, to promote his business. Do you hand out Christian business cards to promote the kingdom of God. That is, do you hand out gospel tracts when mingling with people? Do you look for openings to witness? Paul said that he was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. Or is the main thrust of our conversa-

tion with the ungodly of things temporal? True, we can draw people out by talking of things in which they are interested. I, as a Christian, am interested in many things. Then again, there are many things in which I am not interested, nor should be interested. Vaudeville, now why would my interests lie there? Or in sports, that is something in which I am not the least bit interested. It is something that is contrary to the principles of God. It is a direct denial of Phil. 2:3. "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." So when a man talks to me about sports, I am anxious to show him my total ignorance on the subject. He soon discovers that I am a happy and content man without such worldly entertainment. I well remember the time when the general manager of Republic Steel Corporation phoned my father with an invitation for him and my mother to join him and his wife to see the Cleveland Indians play. He had reserved a box seat in back of home plate. It was a very expensive reservation. My father was over the Open Hearth division on the "B Shift." My father thanked him for his thoughtfulness and his generosity, and then graciously told him that they wouldn't be going, that they were going to the assembly prayer meeting that night and would pray for him and his wife. My father was a Christian who lived the following truth; "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I Jn. 2:15).

When Paul entered Corinth, he was entering a city that was intellectual as well as sinful. They loved oratory and philosophy, but Paul refrained himself from such devices in seeking to win them. Now his statement is very interesting, and shows me that you do not need to be an expert in certain affairs to win souls. Notice his confession. "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). He manifested no knowledge of the politics, sports, or theaters of the day. He knew NOTHING among them except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. This to me is a most wonderful confession!

In the world there are the "works of darkness." What is the Christian's responsibility to this? Notice. "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11). The works are of no benefit to body or soul. The Christian's life should be a strong rebuke to a sinful world.

As the godly Christian goes down life's pathway, following the Lord, he is observed. He no longer walks according to the flesh, "wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you" (I Pet. 4:4). I have already stated, that the world cannot understand the spiritual man. He is a mystery to them. He is not interested in

Hollywood, nor is he interested sports, nor is he interested in money, fame, popularity, or political power. Neither is he interested in the fellowship of sinners. No, no! He is interested in Christ, and the furtherance of His kingdom. He is seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, knowing that God will take care of all his varied needs. The words of His Lord ring in his soul; "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Lk. 9:23). The world cannot understand such a person, nor will it ever.

### **THE CHRISTIAN'S RESPONSIBILITY TO GOD**

As the sons of God our responsibilities are manifold. Let me mention a few. "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen" (2 Pet. 3:18). Every human father delights in his son's growth. The same thing rings true in the family of God. Our Father delights to see us grow. When this takes place, then, and not until then, will we be able to bring glory to His Son, as the last half of the verse indicates. Growth comes through various ways. One is, a healthy atmosphere. Air pollution can hinder one's health. We are known by the company we keep. Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name" (Mal. 3:16). Christian fellowship is an essential to spiritual growth. "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Cor. 15:33). Let us be careful of the company we keep.

Another essential to spiritual growth, is spiritual food. That food is the Bible. "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (I Pet. 2:2). Many of God's people have spiritual anorexia. Lack of reading and meditating on the Scriptures daily, opens the door for spiritual disease, such as worldliness, lack of separation, pride, fleshly lusts, and the lack of love for divine things and the people of God. Most people spend approximately ninety minutes a day feeding their stomachs. If such time were spent reading the Holy Scriptures, one would be reading the Bible through once every forty days. The 119th Psalm gives us the psalmist's appreciation of the Holy Scriptures. Let us meditate upon them that our advancement might appear to all (1 Tim. 4:15).

As priests we have the responsibility to function as such. We are to offer up spiritual sacrifices. Such sacrifices are the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. We do this privately on a daily basis. We also have the responsibility to do this corporately. Such occasions are provided by the assembly, such as the prayer meeting and the breaking of bread meeting. All of the assembly meetings are valuable, but the gathering together of the Lord's people for the Lord's supper is

the only meeting that we have a command - "this do." This is not a request, but a very plain command, which if not given heed to, will cause hindrance in spiritual growth.

Another responsibility to God is to make Him and His Son known. This can be done two ways. One, by our lifestyle. Two, by our mouth. However, if one's life is not consistent with Christ's teaching, his words will not fall into their hearts, but they will fall into the ground, worthless.

So there we have it. Are we in "a little bubble?" Most certainly. At least, I hope so, for if not, my effectiveness for the kingdom of God will not amount to much.

## Order in God's House

1 Timothy

Joel Portman

The Spirit of God has given us two epistles of primary importance to teach the principles and practices of a local assembly. They are 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy. That is not to say that other epistles do not include teaching on the local assembly, but these seem centered especially on that theme. They approach this subject differently and are dealing with different issues, but together, they give us a scriptural portrayal of God's mind for His people's gatherings today. Some epistles, like 1 Corinthians, are combating manifest evil among saints whereas others give sound doctrine to counteract the entrance of wrong teaching that would cause disaster. 1 Timothy is such an epistle, only indirectly mentioning the problems that Timothy was to oppose, but to do so by sound (healthy or health-giving) teaching. This is always a necessity in any assembly.

Paul, writing by inspiration of the Holy Spirit to Timothy, gives instruction to the assembly in Ephesus (where he was located) of how godly order (order according to God) should be maintained in an assembly. We must always keep in mind that God's assemblies are not places where man's order prevails or where every man does that which is right in his own eyes, as at the close of Judges. Rather, it should display subjection to God's order and maintain godly conditions suitable to the presence of our glorious Lord who dwells in that house among His people.

When Paul went to Macedonia (1:3), Timothy had been left in Ephesus for definite reasons. We should be careful to avoid the ideas of others, who say that he was "the pastor" of the church in Ephesus; this is completely contrary to the teaching of the New Testament. There is no basis whatsoever in the epistles for the practice of having a singular pastor in a local

church. Neither was he, in reality, an 'apostolic delegate', "as if in some way apostolic powers could be passed on to another. There is no suggestion of this anywhere in the New Testament. Timothy exercised a special authority since he had been with Paul, as a fellow-worker, when the church was established at Ephesus and he enjoyed the confidence of the apostle and of the saints. 'Apostolic delegate' and 'apostolic succession' are terms that represent ideas foreign to the New Testament ..." (Jim Allen, 1 Timothy, *What the Bible Teaches*). He had specific responsibilities in Ephesus which we will mention shortly.

## Words Emphasized

Repeated words in an epistle indicate truths that the author is emphasizing. In 1 Timothy, we find "**Doctrine**" mentioned 9x. (1:3, 10; 4:1, 6, 13, 16; 5:17; 6:1, 3). Though doctrine (or teaching) sometimes refers to the act of teaching, in all these cases (except in 1:3), it is a noun, so it means the material being taught, believed and practiced. What believers believe and what an assembly believes is vital, it cannot be minimized, because it will always determine the principles upon which it acts and will result in practices. Movements in our religious world today are minimizing doctrine under the plea that it divides people. They would rather ignore doctrine and provide a place where all may come and feel welcome, no matter what they believe. True, there have been many arguments and some divisions over doctrine, but this only emphasizes how important it really is! If it were trivial and unessential, exercised men wouldn't argue or discuss it. Other groups are ignoring or setting aside the sound doctrine of the New Testament to accommodate practices that men desire to introduce, including welcoming and "ordaining" those who the Bible calls immoral. No, we must follow Paul's teaching to Timothy that men who teach "other doctrine" (doctrine that is different from that of the apostles) must be disciplined and rejected by the assembly (1:3). When practices are not clearly supported by Scriptural teaching, the door is wide open for the introduction of a wide variety of practices that are completely contrary to God's mind. We must always go "by the Book".

Along with doctrine, "**faith**" and "**faithful**" in various forms are encountered 23x. Again, sometimes "faith" is found with the article before it, indicating that it is what is believed, or "the doctrine". Other times it is the verb form, the act of believing, putting confidence in, or depending on something. "Faithful" would be the adjectival form, indicating the character of the individual as being dependable or reliable. We can see the importance of this word in the context of an assembly that is maintaining godly order. It is based on "the faith", and requires those who believe it and are dependable and competent to be trusted to carry it

out. There are many who know the truth and who recognize that it is right, but they are not concerned to practice it. Both are needed in assemblies in any day.

One could add to these words, "**truth**" found 5x, and we understand its relationship to the other words. Another emphasized word is "**charge**", or "**commandment**" which is found 8x (in both forms). Paul mentions this word in

- 1:3 Doctrine as Material
- 1:5 Love as the Object
- 1:18 Faithfulness to be Manifested
- 4:11 Truths to be taught
- 5:7 Lives of Believers Affected
- 5:21 No Partiality or Preference
- 6:13 In View of His Appearing
- 6:17 The Rich Exhorted

Another important word is "**godly**" or "**godliness**" which is mentioned 10x in various forms, all indicating a character and attitude that is according to God, that stands in relation to God and expresses reverence for God. It is the New Testament counterpart of "the fear of the Lord", found so many times in the Old Testament. It is an attribute of Christian character that is lacking in the world ("no fear of God before their eyes", Rom. 3:18). It is demonstrated by an attitude of reverence in any relationship to Divine matters and it affects our talk, our behavior, our dress, our interests. It is the emphasis of this epistle that dwells on the importance of knowing how one ought to behave in house of God (3:14). Sadly, it seems to be increasingly lacking among us today as indicated by careless language in prayer or speaking, careless dress when saints gather as an assembly, and lack of concern or interest in faithfulness regarding the assembly and its gatherings. We need to heed the warnings of Paul to this assembly and maintain an order that is according to God and suitable to His standard.

Paul emphasizes the need for "**pure**," or "**purity**" to Timothy (5x); this would accompany truth that establishes proper conduct for the saints in the assembly. We see that he is to have a pure heart (1:5), deacons must hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience (3:9), he was to be an example in purity of conduct (4:12), relate to younger sisters with all purity (5:2), and maintain himself uncontaminated, or pure in relation to association with others (5:22). This is a vital principle for our conduct in local assemblies, and it displays the reality of the sound doctrine being seen in the lives of believers who compose such assemblies.

Other words are also notable in the epistle, but these are enough to give us an indication of the direction of

Paul's teaching in this epistle. The primary theme of the epistle is expressed in the close of chapter 3, where, having given qualifications for those who are responsible to maintain Divine order in the house, Paul emphasizes the Unique Nature of the local assembly, the Purpose of the assembly, and our Conduct in the assembly, especially as it relates to the perfect manifestation of "piety" or godliness demonstrated in Christ and so pleasing to God. Every aspect of truth in this epistle touches on that order, and one cannot ignore or set aside any portion of it and still uphold the spiritual character of an assembly.

We expect to continue to examine the truths of this important epistle which are essential to our faithful continuation for the Lord today.

(continued next issue)

## THE ESSENTIAL DEITY OF CHRIST

by J. B. Hewitt

(from Assembly Testimony, May/June 1980)

The two titles "Son of God" and "The Word" ensure that we understand that the Lord Jesus was a manifestation of the Godhead in Person, and not merely an impersonal influence, and that He is in an equality with the Father of Whose Person and glory He is an accurate expression. In Col. 2.9, we have a concise and profound statement: "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." Christ possessed the very nature, essence and being of God. He is "Our Great God and Saviour" (Tit. 2.13 R.V.; Isa. 7.14; 9.6 R.V.; Micah 5.2; Rom. 9.5).

### DEITY DECLARED

In His Birth and His Name (Isa. 7.14, with Matt. 1.21). His Titles (Isa. 9.6 with Acts 10.36; Prov. 8.22.30 with John 1.1-2; 16.27, 28).

Note the tremendous facts in John 1.1-4. **His Eternal Existence** "In the beginning was the Word." This is eternity, transcending time. Not "came" but "was" already in existence before creation.

**His Distinct Personality** "Was WITH God." Face to face with God, or at home with God. He partook of the Divine nature, distinct from the Father and equal to the Father.

**His Essential Deity** "was God." Not became but was God (Col. 1.15). As the Word He was the expression of God. "Who is" (Col. 1.15); "Who being" (Phil. 2.6); declare the Personality of the Son as distinct from the Father; the Pre-existence of the Son from all eternity; the full and proper Deity of the Son. "Is" the eternal present (Heb. 13.8).

**His Eternal Personality** "The same was in the beginning with God" (v. 2). He is not merely a manifestation of the Deity in time. Christ is God, without beginning, supreme and transcendent. These verses 1 and 2 stress the Absolute Eternity of Christ, possessing all the attributes and essence of God. In Christ God becomes visible, and all things else become intelligible.

Verse one informs us of His precedence, position and personality. Verse two of His parity with God, not a manifestation of God. Verse three denotes the pre-existence of the Word before Creation. His Creational Ability (v. 3). He is the originator of all things (Col. 1.16). Nothing came into being apart from His presence and power (Prov. 8.22-30). He is the uncreated and eternal Son of God. He is in a class by Himself. He is prior to, distinct from, and highly exalted above every creature (Psa. 89.27; Col. 1.16, 17).

**His Essential Vitality** (v.4) The profound mystery of life which in its very nature must remain unsolved to the creature. He is the source of all natural life, intellectual life and spiritual perception. It is His life which is imparted to all living creatures.

John speaks of His Dignity and priority (1.15, 27). The superlative is used, "before me and first of all." He is the Reservoir of Divine fullness and the Revealer of the Godhead (v. 18).

### DEITY DISPLAYED

The activities of God are ascribed to the Son and displayed by Him. His omnipotence as Creator (John 1.3; 2.19, 21; 10.18). His Omniscience—all knowledge (John 2.24, 25; 4.18, 25, 26, 29; 16.33; 21.17). His omnipresence (John 3.13; 14.23).

The signs of John's gospel demonstrate His Deity (20.30, 31). The mighty works of the Father in creation and redemption, He claimed to be able to do (5.19). The validity of His claims cannot be denied, the "I AM" is the Divine Name of Jehovah. "I am the light of the World" (8.12);

"The Door" (10.9); "the Good Shepherd" (10.11); "the Resurrection and the Life" (11.25); "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" (14.6); "I am the true Vine" (15.1). To His enemies He states His Deity emphatically (8.24, 58). John 5 adds to these claims. Equality with the Father in activity (v. 19); in knowledge (v. 20); in raising the dead (v. 21, 28, 29); in judging (v. 22); in honor (v. 23); in regenerating souls (v. 24) and as the Self-Existing One (v. 26).

### DEITY DEFENDED

He openly claimed to be the Messiah (John 4.25, 26); His words are life (6.63); He knew His betrayer (6.64, 70). John gives seven distinct testimonies to Him —

Himself (5.31; 8.14); the Baptist (5.33); His miracles (5.36); the Father (5.37); Scripture (5.39-47); the Holy Spirit (15.26); and Believers (15.27). Others can be added, the authority of His teaching (3.11; 7.28-34, 45, 46; 9.4-7).

John identifies His glory with Jehovah of Hosts (John 12.41; Isa. 6.1-3). His holiness and resurrection prove His Deity (8.46; 2.19, 22; 10.17, 18).

### DEITY DELIGHTED IN

By the Apostles (John 1.14; 20.28); the Baptist (1.27-35);

Nathaniel (1.49); honored by the people (12.13); Martha (11.27); and Thomas who cheered the heart of His Master by his adoration (20.28).

We have mainly looked at John's record of Christ. Study the Witness of Paul, Peter and John in their epistles and the clear revelation of His Deity in Hebrews and Revelation.

Our response is, "He is Thy Lord, and worship thou Him" (Psa. 45.11).

"And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus and disputed against the Grecians." Acts 17 : 29.

"Let the Spirit be lacking, and there may be wisdom of words, but not the wisdom of God; the powers of oratory, but not the power of God; the demonstration of argument and the logic of the schools, but not the demonstration of the Holy Spirit, the all-convincing logic of His lightning flash, such as convinced Saul before the Damascus gate. When the Spirit was out-poured the disciples were all filled with power from on high; the most unlettered tongue could silence gainsayers, and with its new fire burn its way through obstacles as flames fanned by mighty winds sweep through forests." —Arthur T. Pierson

### THE CALF AND THE CAPTAIN

H. J. B.

It has been observed that Israel's first outstanding sin in the wilderness was a return to Egypt's religion, in setting up the Golden Calf, their next in appointing a Captain to return to Egypt.

#### THE CALF

Viewed broadly, Moses went up the mountain and a cloud received him out of their sight, Exo. 24:15. (Compare Acts 1:9). There a habitation for God was planned, (see Exo. 25:8). The second time (Exo. 34:29) Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses, when he came down from the mount, for the glory of

his countenance (2 Cor. 3:7). This surely points to Another, who ascended a mountain and a cloud received Him out of their sight. While the habitation for God--the Church is being formed, He is hidden from sight, but soon He will return the second time in a glory that will never fade away, and as Moses found Israel in idolatry so it will be when the Lord appears—"their last state will be worse than the first" Matt. 12:43-45.

"The leaders of the people caused them to err," Isa. 9:16--Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and forty of the elders of Israel caused them to err. Those who lately stood on the mountain with Moses and "saw the God of Israel, and there was under His feet, as it were, a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were, the body of heaven in his clearness" Exo. 24:10. These were unanimous in leading Israel astray. There were those in the camp who "were for the Lord," and no doubt they abhorred this great sin, but the majority ruled and those who lately sang the songs of redemption from Egypt, now sang around the Golden Calf.

"And Moses took the Tabernacle and pitched it afar off from the camp" Exo. 33:7. God was not in the camp, so there was separation from the camp and judgment of the evil. When the leaven is such that it cannot be purged, the saint's place is outside. In the case of Achan the leaven was purged out.

"If Thy presence go not with me carry us not up hence" Exo. 33:15. Till sin is judged, God's people must call a halt till they are assured of God's *presence*, God's *way* and are able to act for God's *glory* (See ch. 33:14, 13 and 18).

### THE CAPTAIN

Time passed and the end of Israel's wilderness journey seemed in sight, but unbelief would peer into the future instead of trusting God—"And ye came near unto me every one of you, and said, we will send men before us and they shall search us out the land, and bring us word again by what way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come," Deut. 1:22.

"Lord, don't let me send on before to know my path and my foes;

Let me trust Thee as I meet them day by day."

"Not a glimpse into the future, Father would I ask to see;"

"Only let me walk each moment, with a child-like trust in Thee."

Their planning and spying was all a failure—Once they despised the *Heavenly food*, Num. 11; then they despised the *Heavenly rule*, Num. 12; and now they despised the *Pleasant Land*, Psa. 106:24.

Now it is not a change of religion but it is Apostasy, a turning away from God altogether and exalting a MAN—"And they said one to another, "Let us make a

CAPTAIN and let us return to Egypt" Num. 14:4. Two men stood for God against the ten, in truth against the thousands of Israel; a small minority one would say, but with God, a powerful majority, the plague swept the ten off the earth and those who failed to enter in because of unbelief, perished in the wilderness. But the two faithful ones, though they suffered the privations of the desert, were brought safely into the Pleasant Land.

Let us repeat, the CALF speaks of departure from the true religion but the CAPTAIN speaks of departure from God and the exaltation of MAN. Now turn to 1 Tim. 4:1 "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the LATTER DAYS some shall depart from the Faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils." A real departure from the Faith, "All Asia be turned away from me."

But in 2 Tim. 3:1 we have the LAST DAYS, "This know that in the last days perilous times shall come (grievous times R. V., difficult times N. T.) for MEN shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, ... fierce, despisers of those that are good, etc." If Timothy needed to be saved from such in his day, how much more do we in these Last Days, and that which was a safe-guard for Timothy is available for us. "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned . . . All Scripture . . . is profitable 'for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" 2 Tim. 3:14-17: "I commend you to God and the Word of His grace" Acts 20, (see also 1 Tim. 4:16).

The signs of the times would assure us that we are indeed in the LAST DAYS. Dictators and would-be Dictators have arisen, whose description corresponds to that given above. Some are almost accepting worship, the spirit that soon will be manifested in the Man of Sin, who will combine both false religion and apostasy and will exalt himself as an abject of worship above . all that is called God or that is worshipped.

The evils that obtain in the world are always liable to get into the Church, and men are found who seek to exalt themselves and rule.

May the Lord enable us to be true followers of the Meek and Lowly One and forbid that the spirit of the age should creep into our hearts, or into our Assemblies.

*Goldsmiths make exquisite forms from precious material; they fashion the bracelet and the ring from gold. God makes His precious things out of base material; and from the black pebbles of the defiling brooks He has taken up stones, which He has set in the golden ring of His immutable love, to make them gems to sparkle on His finger forever.*