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The Sanctuary

John Martin

The first mention of the sanctuary is in Ex. 25:8. It was to be the dwelling place of God in the midst of His redeemed people; and the place where they were to assemble to learn the mind of God, "of all things which the Lord gave Moses in commandment to the children of Israel." These commandments they were to keep and do, "for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of all the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is so great, who hath God so nigh unto them as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon Him for," Deut. 4:6.

It is important to understand the righteous basis on which the people stood so nigh, and were maintained in intercourse with Jehovah their God. It was by virtue of the sacrifices which were offered annually on the day of atonement. "For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the Lord," Lev. 16:30.

In the first four chapters of the book of Numbers we have a detailed account of the place the congregation was to occupy. The tabernacle was to be pitched in the midst, toward the east; and encamping before the tabernacle of the congregation east-ward "shall be Moses and Aaron and his sons, keeping the charge of the sanctuary," Num. 3:38. In this divine order the presence of God was to be sustained in their midst on the ground of the sacrifices offered by the priesthood, by which types God proclaimed His grace to them until the time when Christ, the anti-type, was to be manifested, (Heb. 9:9-10). Then this worldly sanctuary with all its ritualistic service was to be brought to a close, and Christ by His one sacrifice on Calvary for sins, in His resurrection and ascension glory became the center of assembly gathering as

He himself said, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst," Matt. 18:20.

In the book of Joshua we read, "The whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there, and the land was subdued before them," Joshua 18:1. And no wonder, seeing that they had the power and glory of God in their midst! It was the promise of this divine presence that quieted the heart of Moses in the wilderness. "My presence shall go with you, and I will give thee rest," Ex. 33:14. God, out of His infinite fullness, delights to meet the deepest needs of all His people, through His Son. "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell," Col. 1:19. Of His fullness have we all received, and grace for grace, or grace in its successive stages, to meet our need along life's journey. "He is able also to save them to the uttermost (unto the completion) that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them," Heb. 7:25.

David knew the value, and support, of the supply from the sanctuary. He had many trials in the cloudy days of his life, but he knew to whom He had recourse. "O God thou art my God, early (earnestly) will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is; to see thy power and thy Glory, so as I have seen them in the sanctuary. Because thy loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee," Ps. 63:1-8. What a resort the sanctuary must have been to David! Where God promised to meet with His people in grace with abundant supplies, power and glory in the sanctuary would indicate God's ability to sustain the

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thirsting soul. God's power in the material creation, as in a storm, might well cause the stoutest heart to tremble. (See Job 37:1-5). In the sanctuary, on the ground of redemption, we see His power or ability, actuated by loving kindness, to sustain and strengthen in the hour of trial and felt need. *"Strength and beauty are in the sanctuary,"* Ps. 91:6, strength imparted for testimony, and beauty conferred upon us, beauty of character so that we become like Christ, meek, lowly, and long suffering. It is well for us to draw grace to help in time of need from the sanctuary, Heb.4:16. Paul in his trial before king Agrippa testified, *"Having therefore obtained help from God, I continue until this day, witnessing both to small and great, that Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead and shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles,"* Acts 26:22-23.

If we allow our minds to be taken up with things on the earth, such as the prosperity of the ungodly, and to covet their wealth and ostentation of living, we will become very miserable and unhappy, like the writer of Ps. 73. He however regained his footing, *"I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castest them down into destruction."* When we look at things from the light of the sanctuary we see that the most favored unbelievers shall perish, that the wrath of God abides on them. We no longer envy the foolish who live without Christ, and without God in the world. The Psalmist realized the good of drawing nigh to God: when we draw nigh to God He draws nigh to us, Jms.4:8.

"They have seen thy goings O God, even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary," Ps. 68:24. This may refer to the triumphal procession of the ark, (Num. 10:35-36), with the presence of God in front, and all the tribes in order following with praise and prayer, *"O God thou art terrible out of thy holy places: the God of Israel is He that giveth strength and power unto His people. Blessed be God."* This would correspond with what we have in the Acts, giving the Church in its unity and order; and the great power which attended the ministry of the apostles. What a glorious triumph we see in the whole of Paul's life and testimony! The Lord Jesus Christ was honored: and Paul could say, *"Be ye followers of me, even as I am also of Christ."* Like those in the Psalm, he abounded in prayer and thanksgiving unto God. *"Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of His knowledge by us in every place,"* 2 Cor. 2:14.

In the material creation the powerful lightning is accompanied by thunder, so in a spiritual manner we may

see the power of God accompanying the preaching of the Gospel. *"Our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, even in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance, as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake,"* 1 Thess. 1:4. Let us pray much that power may accompany the preaching of the Gospel. The apostle by experience knew the value of the sanctuary, when he asked the prayers of the Assembly. *"Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified, even as it is with you,"* 2 Thess.3:1.

The Law begins with commands and ends with blessings; but the blessings are fruit upon lofty branches, which fallen man can never reach: he cannot and will not climb the tree. The Gospel, on the contrary, begins with promises; and promises give birth to precepts. The Law demands justice; the Gospel delights in mercy through satisfied justice. Moses blesses the law-doer; Jesus pardons the guilty and saves the lost.

R. C. Chapman

The Lord's . . .

F. G. Watson
1 Corinthians 11:26

The Lord's Death 1 Corinthians 11:26

When speaking of the Lord's death we need to be very guarded in our language, lest in seeking to extol it we use language unworthy of it. Though His death was a real death, yet it was different to any other death. Death only claims our friends when, unsuccessfully, all has been done in human power to forestall it. At Calvary, death had to stand aside and respectfully wait till the Lord Jesus delivered up His spirit voluntarily; His death was a willing sacrifice for sin, for He said: *"No man taketh my life from me. I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again"* (John 10:18). Some say it was a martyr's death. Martyrs die when they can save their lives only by violating their conscience, and a full reward will be theirs. But our blessed Lord said, *"I could now pray my Father and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels"* (Matt. 26:53). He had the power to deliver Himself from His enemies but He went as a lamb to

the slaughter. His death was a voluntary offering of Himself for our sins.

The Lord's Table 1 Corinthians 10:21

The table speaks of feeding and communion. What a happy time it is in an orderly family, when after the varied experiences of the day, they are all gathered around the family table, and as they eat together they share with each other the joys and trials of the day! No table can be spread apart from death. Seed has fallen into the ground and died, or a life has been taken, in order to provide the meal, so the Lord's table is the result of His death; it is never called the Father's table. All who are saved began to feed at the Father's table the day they were saved, for that table is the Word of God on which every Christian feeds. It is his privilege to feed at that table every day since he became his Father's child. Many a child has been sent away from his father's table to get his hands and face washed; so for the lack of a visit to the laver we often fail to find food for our soul when we come to the Word. However, it is our privilege to feed there and it is to our shame if we are sent away empty.

The Lord's table is not our table. Every married man has a table of which he is the head, and is responsible for its providing and for the conduct at it. To that table he is free to invite whomsoever he likes with two exceptions. In 2 John 10 we read, "*If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house neither bid him God's speed*"—that would refer to those spreading evil doctrine that is destructive to the faith. In 1 Cor. 5:11, we read of certain persons "*with such an one no not to eat.*" These persons are any who have been put away from the assembly for sin. Some may say that that attitude savors of the Pharisee, for the Word says "*If thine enemy hunger, feed him.*" We could minister to his needs if hungry, but we cannot sit and eat with such an one lest our action hinder the desired effect of the discipline. Apart from these two exceptions, the head of a house may invite whom he chooses to his table. It would be very much out of place for a guest at that table to start asking others to it; in like manner, since we are guests at the Lord's table, His will should rule and all there should be in subjection to Him, and it is equally out of place for any to invite others to His table. Our responsibility is to bring the Word of our Lord and Master to bear upon others that they may see their responsibility to obey His command also.

The Lord's Supper 1 Corinthians 11:20

The Lord's supper is connected with the Lord's table. The

marginal rendering of this Scripture is "*Ye cannot eat the Lord's supper.*" That is, they were so far away from God and in such a state of soul, that God could not recognize it as the Lord's supper at all. The supper speaks of communion. How necessary that we be in a state of soul to commune with our blessed Lord at His table! Then we shall discern

The Lord's Body 1 Corinthians 11:29

This, in the first instance, speaks of that earthly body with which God prepared Him and in which He bore our sins on the tree. Alas, how often we go to the Lord's supper and keep the Lord's supper but fail to really get a sight of His body! However, 1 Cor. 10:17 would surely give us the thought of His mystical body as well. "*We being many are one bread and one body.*" This suggests that the bread on the table should remind us that we are one with every saint and that while there is no Scripture for them to be brought to the Lord's table while still in an unscriptural position, yet it is our duty to bring before them their responsibility to obey our common Lord.

The Lord's Day Revelation 1:10

This speaks of the day on which the Lord's supper should be observed. It is not the Sabbath and is never called 'the Christian Sabbath'. Nevertheless, being the Lord's Day it should be set apart for Him as much as possible; all duties which can be taken care of beforehand should be looked after, in order that the Lord's Day may be devoted as completely as possible to Him. It should not be turned into a day for picnics or visiting other than will be for His glory. This day is so misused today by the world, that God's people are in danger of being drawn into the same ways; God is robbed and we love the spiritual blessing that the day should bring to us. May we know more of what it is to be in the Spirit on the Lord's Day.

WIS Nov. 1943

If we act only because our path is clear of difficulty, this is not Faith. Faith acts upon God's Word whatever the difficulty; and to walk by faith brings highest glory to God; but it is a crucifying the flesh.

R. C. Chapman

One Cup

Larry Steers

The exercise in writing this article is to consider recent issues relative to the cup used at the Lord's supper. Concern has been expressed regarding the use of the common communion cup. Specifically, is it possible to contact contagion from the use of one cup? At times this discussion has reached an emotional level rather than a calm, quiet consideration and searching of the Word of God. We must set aside our prejudices and fears and accept what God says in His Word.

We are living in days when truths which have been taught since assemblies were first planted in North America are being questioned. New ideas quickly gain popularity and are embraced. When we begin to alter what our fathers in the faith have established it is essential to carefully and prayerfully search the scriptures. The Holy Spirit will guide us in this search and enlighten us but we must set aside personal intolerance and pre conceived ideas and submit to Divine enlightenment.

How precious and meaningful it is for saints in assembly fellowship when they gather around our unseen but present Lord to keep His word, *"This do in remembrance of me"* (1 Cor. 11:24). One bread and one cup set before them each first day of the week (Acts 20:7) directs their meditation in a powerful way to the person of the Lord and to His sufferings on the cross. Together and in a spirit of worship they individually break from the bread and drink from the cup.

These are priceless moments during our brief sojourn here. There is a deep spiritual significance relative to the one cup.

Let us first re-visit the Upper Room for a few brief moments.

Our Lord gave instructions to two of His disciples to prepare the Upper Room for the Passover. He expressed what was upon His heart *"With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer"* (Luke 22:15). This would be the last time He would sup with these men before the cross. The deep anguish of the garden and the shadows of Calvary's darkness were before Him. How little comprehension seemed to permeate their understanding of these words "Before I suffer".

Traditionally there are four cups associated with the Seder meal. Some suggest that these were introduced at a latter date. There was no cup used at the Passover in the land of Egypt. In scripture no Passover cup is referred to until Luke 22:17. The cup in this reference was a Passover

cup. The words of the Lord when passing this cup to His disciples are enlightening. Luke tells us "He took the cup" (v.17). Cup is a singular noun. He took one cup. Notice the Lord's instructions, *"Take this and divide it among yourselves"* v. 17. The singular pronoun "it" refers to the singular noun "cup." The disciples gathered with the Lord in the Upper Room had no hesitation sharing this Passover cup. A common cup would not be uncommon to them.

The Passover ends in Luke 22:18. The words "after supper" (Luke 22:20) refer to the Passover, and thus indicate that this Supper was instituted after the Passover had been observed.

The Lord knew in His own heart that these moments in the Upper Room would embrace far more than the Passover. After the Passover had been observed the Lord set bread and a cup before them. This represented a unique act, distinct from any previous Passover which they had ever witnessed. He took the bread and gave thanks saying *"This is my body which is given for you, this do in remembrance of Me"* (Luke 22:19). He then took the cup and gave thanks for it with the words *"This cup is the new testament in my blood which is shed for you"* (Luke 22:20).

While those men had little depth of discernment at that moment, we are surely allowed to appreciate the spirit of understanding and worship which would permeate the room the first time after His death, resurrection, and ascension when they sat together and contemplated the bread and the cup. Perhaps we are not remiss to suggest that tears would flow and the hearts were touched as intelligent worship arose to the ascended Lord in Heaven. While He was bodily present in that Upper Room at the institution of the supper, each succeeding first day of the week they would have a deep, precious sense of His unseen presence. It is the Lord's Supper and He is present when His people gather to remember Him..

During that Passover night in the land of Egypt the lamb was slain and the blood applied to the door posts and to the lintel (Exodus 12:22). There are eight recorded Passovers in the Bible where details of its observance are given. Never was the blood applied again as it had been in the land of Egypt. This would remind us that *"once in the end of the world (ages) hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself"* (Hebrews 9:26). His precious blood was shed once. One cup reminds us of that once for all shedding of blood as the foundation of communion with the Lord and with others as each partakes of the one cup. One cup is a clear statement of that which binds those together who partake of it.

There are eleven references in the scriptures referring to the cup relative to the Lord's Supper. They are listed here:

1. Matt. 26:27 where "cup" is singular. The Lord said "drink ye all of it." "It" is a singular pronoun referring to the one cup.
2. Mark 14:23 "cup" is singular. "they all drank of it" "It" is a singular pronoun referring to the cup. The disciples drank from a common cup. "It" appears twice in this verse.
3. Luke 22:20 "cup" is singular and is repeated twice.
4. 1Cor.10:16 "cup" is singular
5. 1Cor. 10:21 "cup of the Lord" Cup is singular
6. 1Cor. 11:25 "He took the cup" and "this cup is the new testament in my blood" Twice "cup" is singular
7. 1Cor. 11:26 "drink this cup" Again cup is singular.
8. 1Cor. 11:27 "cup" is singular
9. 1Cor. 11:28 "cup" is singular

These verses clearly teach that the Lord took one cup, gave thanks for one cup, commanded His disciples to drink from that one cup. They responded and drank from one cup.

Notice again that in 1 Cor. 10:16, the cup is singular. Here it is called by the Holy Spirit "*the cup of blessing.*" This speaks to the believer's heart of all the rich blessings of redemption possessed because of the death of Christ. How unmeasurably vast is the love, grace and mercy of God in providing blessings which believers possess eternally through the shedding of the precious blood of Christ (1 John 1:7).

In 1 Cor. 10 the cup is mentioned first but in chapter 11 the bread is considered by the Holy Spirit before the cup. Chapter 11 is the historical order of introduction in the Upper Room. The order is reversed in chapter 10 as the emphasis there is the basis of our fellowship with God and with each believer present at the Lord's Supper. To "bless" (eulogeo) (1 Cor.10:16) the cup is to speak well of, with appreciation and worship for its significance.

Wondrous words are recorded "*is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?*" (1 Cor. 10:16). Communion (koinonos) means "having in common." This word indicates the vast fullness of the common redemption which is the possession of each of the gathered Saints. Our association together is firmly founded on what the cup clearly reminds us of. It is a memorial of "*the new testament in My blood*" (1 Cor.11:25).

All believers partaking of the one cup makes a clear statement that all share in the one shedding of our Lord's

precious blood. Multiple cups set aside this great doctrinal significance of fellowship and communion. A. G. Clarke writes in "Church Practice and Doctrine" on page 137, "the modern practice of individual cups however quite destroys the significance of the supper as a communion." The unity and oneness of the Assembly is clearly taught by all partaking of the common cup.

Some believers have concerns about the use of a common cup. They feel that there is a possibility of contracting disease when a cup is shared. We do understand their concerns. To these saints we would suggest the following: firstly, that they consider prayerfully the scriptures and their meaning as indicated above. The Word of God must have priority over our thoughts and feelings. Also, many studies have been done on the use of a common cup. The results of these studies varies both for and against, depending much on the bias and religious background of the authors. One study concluded, "It happens that the common communion cup is the most germ free thing available to us". A UK study in 1989 stated "one episode of disease attributed to the shared communion cup has never been reported".

The prestigious "American Journal of Infection Control" stated "the risk of infectious disease by a common cup is very low" (Oct. 1998, Vol. 26 #5) and again in the same article "no documented transmission of any infectious disease has been traced to the use of a common communion cup".

During the years when certain diseases like polio and TB were prevalent and were contacted by many, the brethren still used one cup. In one assembly known to us, a brother had HIV. The brethren carefully arranged for him to receive the cup last. In other cases one would consider their fellow believers and if they had the flu perhaps bed rest would be best, or if they had a cold sore they might consider abstaining from the cup. However alert brethren would notice this and take the cup to them last.

There is a far greater possibility of contacting disease by simply touching a door knob, shaking hands, toileting and not washing your hands, from air borne virus and bacteria, from a kiss or from improper handling of food. The Lord's work often demands one to visit saint and sinner in hospitals or those who are at home with serious illness. There is inherent danger in all of these activities. But we trust the Lord to preserve us so that the visit would be a blessing to those laid aside.

Faith places confidence in the Word of God. David wrote "*How excellent is thy loving kindness O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the*

shadow of thy wings” (Psa.36:7). To be “*under the shadow of thy wings*” implies nearness, contemplation, worship and protection. When saints gather in response to His command “*this do ye as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me*” (1 Cor. 11:24), faith embraces the preservation of His omnipotent power. The cup speaks loudly of our oneness with each believer present manifest by all drinking from the one cup.

As we sit “*down under his shadow with great delight*” (Song 2:3), contemplating the significance of the bread and the one cup we rejoice that “*his fruit was sweet to my taste*” (Song 2:3) .

Edward Denny would remind us:

Though unseen, be ever near us
With the still small voice of love,
Whispering words of peace to cheer us,
Every doubt and fear remove.

*The years have taught me many things,
But none so sure as this:
That shelter, solace, joy and strength,
Are always where God is.*

Comparisons, pt. 2

Robert Surgenor

Haggai and Zechariah

In the second year of Darius’ reign the Lord stirred up two mighty men, Haggai and Zechariah. Men with a challenging message from God. Zechariah, being the younger man, had a message of hope. He spoke of the coming of Messiah, and the reign that was to be His on earth, when the Millennial Temple would be built and all nations would come to acknowledge Him as King of kings and Lord of lords. A glorious time, when Israel would be the head of the nations and not the tail.

Needless to say, Haggai’s message was far different. His ministry lasted only about four months. He was an older man, and seemed to come on the scene out of nowhere. His message was one of a very challenging nature. He was exceedingly blunt. There was no “political correctness” about this man whatsoever! He told it as it was.

Haggai was exceedingly disturbed over the complacency of the people, and their manifested indifference to the house of God. Ezra 5:1 records that they prophesied in the name of the God of Israel. That term, “the God of Israel” is only found once in the NT. (Matt. 15:31), but is found at least 87 times in the OT. You will find that expression seven times in the Book of Ezra, and it seems to me to be connected with the testimony of the nation. The testimony in Ezra is being revived after 70 years of desolation. Thus, these two mighty men prophesied in regards to the divine testimony.

When Haggai confronts the nation, he does it with a number of proclamations.

He exposes their excuse for not working on the temple (Hag. 1:2).

He exposes their wayward ways (Hag. 1:4).

He exposes why they were poor (Hag. 1:5, 6, 9).

He exhorts them to work (Hag. 1:8).

He encourages them that the Lord was with them (1:13).

He exhorts them to be strong (Hag 2:4).

He enlightens them that the Spirit remained among them (Hag.2:5).

He tells of the future judgments and glories of Messiah (Hag.2:6-9).

This man's ministry was tremendous. I wonder how many of us today could survive ministry of such nature. We are living in a day of pride, thus, as they say in West Virginia, we wear our feelings on our cuffs. In other words, we are very touchy, and easily offended. Haggai's ministry was VERY offensive! Let's examine some of his points.

In Haggai 1:1, we read, “*In the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the governor of Judah, and to Joshua the high priest saying, “Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord’s house should be built. ”*”

Notice that Haggai challenged the two most responsible men of that day, the governor and the high priest. Thus, both the governmental and the religious side of the nation were addressed. Haggai informs these two leaders of the weak excuse of the people for not building God’s house, “the time is not come.” Well, when did they think that the time would ever come? Their excuse was weak. Oh yes, they had much time to fancy up their own homes, but no time to work on God's house. They were very good at putting necessary things off. There used to be a popular saying in Venezuela, “Never do today what you can do tomorrow.”

I wonder what their excuses were, to say that it was

not the time to build? It may be conjecture, but could I suggest a few things that may have served as an excuse? Allow me. "Well you know, we are impoverished, and the temple materials are costly, so let's wait until we are a little richer," Or could it have been this? "We are few in number, so let's wait until some of the children grow up to help us." Or, "You know that the neighbors are very much opposed, and to start the work at this point will only stir them up as in former days."

When the Lord examined the Church of Ephesus, He rebuked them because they had left their first love (Rev. 2:4), and it would seem that we have the same situation here. They had lost heart through a cooling of their affections to the Lord. They had become a self-pleasing, and self-seeking people. How dangerous are the cooling of the affections to the Lord and to His testimony. May the Lord preserve us from this, and keep us near His precious, wounded side.

Haggai continues. *"Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?"* (vs.4). Ah, let's enjoy ourselves, let's take life easy. Let's sit in the recliner and enjoy the work we have accomplished on our fancy homes. Ah yes, and there lies the house of God in a disgraceful condition. Sixteen years ago the foundation was laid, and then the brush and the weeds took over. What a disgrace! What a lowering of the testimony. How happy this attitude must have made their adversaries.

However, even though their homes were fancy, yet beneath the surface things were not as prosperous as one may have believed. God's frown was upon them, and there had been crop failures, and food was not as plentiful as in former days. Clothing had become more scarce. What was the problem? Haggai gave them the answer. *"Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of Mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands"* (Hag. 1:9-11). *"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap"* (Gal. 6:7).

Giving God First Place

Now this same principle carries over to our day. If we do not give God first place in our lives, we cannot expect to prosper. I have never yet met a godly saint who has,

throughout their Christian life, sought first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, being void of peace and joy unspeakable. I have never yet met such an one who has had difficulties that they could not conquer. The words of our Lord are true; *"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you"* (Matt. 6:33). Now what are, "these things" referring to? Why they are the things previously mentioned in Matthew 6, namely, food and raiment.

Coming to the world, what are their priorities? Well, the Lord has them listed for us. They lay up for themselves treasures upon earth (Matt. 6:19). Money! Money! They believe that with money, one can buy whatever they want. They believe that money is power! Those who have money can manipulate others. They even erroneously believe that money can buy them happiness.

The world also has other priorities. He tells His own; *"Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?"* (Matt. 6:25). He is telling them just what the world seeks. Those things are the big things in life for the unsaved. Look at the millions in this present world and to them the paramount thing in this life is, what am I going to eat, and what am I going to wear? This is their concern, this is their whole life.

A lady may have a wardrobe full of dresses, but at the department store she sees one that catches her eye. It appeals very strongly to her and she thinks that it will make an impression on her friends. She has dozens of dresses and only one body, yet her mind has no rest until she purchases that particular dress. Does she need it? Not at all, but she craves it. It is like an opium driving her to despair unless she buys it. That is her life.

Now the Christian is to be different. Naturally they desire to be well clothed and also to eat well, but these are not obsessions in their life. They seek more important things. They seek the interests of God, and in doing so, God graciously supplies them with all the necessary things of life. A godly saint does not fret and worry about money. He does not worry from where his next meal is coming, nor does he worry if he will have enough clothing through life. His priorities are not on temporal things.

These folks in Zerubbabel's day were acting like the Gentiles. They were all concerned about their houses, their food, and their clothing, while the house of God lay waste.

It is the nature of Sin to obtain great power by little beginnings.

The People Revived

Consequently, the things that had become priorities in their life, God began to remove them. Food and clothing became scarce, and Haggai made them all aware just why they had come into such dire straits, they had forsaken the house of their God.

He challenges them to consider their ways (Hag.1:5,7). He mentions "The Lord of hosts," four times, indicating the almighty power of God to control and accomplish all things in whatsoever He pleased.

The result of Haggai's message was tremendous. *"Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him, and the people did fear before the LORD. Then spake Haggai the LORD'S messenger in the LORD'S message unto the people, saying, I am with you, saith the LORD. And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the LORD of hosts, their God, in the four and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king"* (Hag.1:12-15).

Isn't that tremendous? What an awakening! What a change! They *"obeyed the voice of the LORD their God."* They recognized the fact that God had sent Haggai with a message just for them, and they favorably responded. He had told them that they were running here and running there, seeking their own interests, but that now was the time for them to get out of their houses and go up to the mountain and harvest wood for the house of God, and bring it and get busy and build! He was also careful to mention that if they obeyed, then the LORD would take pleasure in it and be glorified (Hag.1:8).

One month and twenty-one days later, Haggai prophesied again. *"In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month, came the word of the LORD by the prophet Haggai, saying, Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying, 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? Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work: for I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts: According to the word that I covenanted*

with you when ye came out of Egypt, so My Spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not. For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts. The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine, saith the LORD of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts" (Hag. 2:1-9).

This article was written because of the verse in bold letters that you have just read. Haggai is referring to an incident recorded in Ezra 3:10-13. *"And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, after the ordinance of David king of Israel. And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid. But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy: So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off."*

Notice, the ancient men wept, but others shouted for joy. Why the difference? Well, you see, those older men had seen the splendor and greatness of Solomon's Temple, and the younger men hadn't. Just consider Solomon's Temple for a moment.

The temple of Solomon required 7½ years to construct and the efforts of about 180,000 laborers, (1 Ki. 6:37-38; 5:13-15; 2 Chron. 2:17-18). Most or all of the holy vessels of gold and silver from the tabernacle were with the Ark when it was brought from the city of David to the first temple by Solomon (1 Kings 8:4). The Tabernacle had 3333 ¾ pounds of gold, valued at \$90,678,000, and 11,460 pounds of silver, valued at \$5,867,520.

The plans of Solomon's Temple were those of David, and he contributed from his own private fortune 112 tons of gold and 262 tons of silver toward its construction. The king's officers also gave 188 tons of gold, 365 tons of silver, 3,750 tons of iron, and 685 tons of bronze.

Can you imagine the worth today of 9,600,000 ounces of gold at \$1,700 an ounce? It would come to 16

billion, 320 million dollars! (\$16,320,000,000). Consider silver at \$32 per ounce, 365 tons of silver would be valued at \$373,760,000. That was the donation from David and the king's officers. If it is accurate (as some writers claim) the total amass of gold was 3750 tons, and 37,500 tons of silver. Thus we have, at today's values, \$204,000,000,000 in gold, and \$38,400,000,000 in silver, which totals \$242,400,000,000.

True, much wealth had been taken from the Temple throughout Israel's kingly-reign history, nevertheless there was a tremendous amount of splendor still left, and that is what the older men had seen in their younger days. Now that the second temple was commencing, they looked upon it in comparison as nothing, thus they wept. However, the young men thought that this was a great event and they shouted for joy.

"The good old days" will always have a tendency to discourage us, not encourage us.

Haggai had the solution to the older men's problem. Instead of them comparing the second temple with the first temple, he pointed them on to the future glory of the nation, and encouraged them to be strong, that the Lord was with them, and that His Spirit remained among them (Hag. 2:4-5). Then he goes on to inform them that the Lord, in a coming day, will shake the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the dry land. Also, He will shake all nations, so much so, that they will have a desire to come to the city of God and to the house of God, and that the glory of the millennial temple shall be greater than the former (Hag. 2:6-9).

So let us encourage ourselves in the Lord and look up. Let us be like Abraham, who looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God (Heb.11:10). Brethren, the Lord is coming, and it is better on before. Let us not always be moaning how wonderful it used to be, but rather let us be constantly "*Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God*" (Heb. 12:2). Let us "*be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die*" (Rev.3:2). Remember, "*Every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure*" (1 Jn. 3:3).

***Let Christ have true place—give Him the throne—
and He will the heart, that all else
should be counted as dross compared with the
excellency of knowing Him.***

Perils of Assemblies, pt. 2

William Bunting,

(Excerpted from "Spiritual Balance")

The Peril of Local Disputes

Local disputes should be confined to as narrow a circle as possible. In many cases these have their origin in petty misunderstandings and personal grievances. If not nipped in the bud they blossom out in open quarrels and broken friendships, of which we have many sad examples in Scripture. The fly in the ointment at Philippi was a difference between two sisters (Philippians 4.2.). At Corinth "jealousy and strife" (1st Corinthians 3.3) were rampant. Even Paul and Barnabas, beloved and devoted fellow-labourers, contended so sharply on one occasion that they "parted asunder one from the other" (Acts 15:39).

Disputes amongst any of God's people are much to be regretted. When, however, they involve elders, or ministering brethren who were wont to share the same platform, and especially when they end in open separation, as was the case in Acts 15, the issues may be very serious and far-reaching. No time should be lost, therefore, by either side in doing all possible to have fellowship restored. "A stitch in time saves nine". "*Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift*" (Matthew 5:23, 24). No utterance of Christ perhaps requires to be more underlined today than this. We suggest that the verses should be framed and hung in every Gospel Hall.

It will be noted that in this passage it is the person addressed who has committed the trespass. In chapter 18.15, where the other person is at fault, the same course is to be pursued—"go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone". If there be willing minds, a true desire to understand each other, honesty in "confessing our faults one to another" (usually there are wrongs on both sides), and a bowing in humility to the claims of Christ, it is wonderful how quickly reconciliation can in most cases be effected. Should reconciliation seem to be impossible (though with Christians this should never be), see to it that so far as you are concerned you have done all that is humanly possible along the lines of Matthew 18.15-17 to gain your brother that no one who knows the full facts can say that you left any avenue towards a happy, peaceful settlement unexplored. Much, of course, depends upon the consciences of those at variance. Where the conscience is tender, one will readily confess one's fault. Where it is not, however,

there will be reluctance to admit anything, self-justification, the spirit of independence, and condemnation of opponents.

It is regrettable to have to relate that the pages of church history reveal many cases in which brethren have not done so much as even lift a little finger to remove estrangements. Grudges, instead of being judged in God's presence and put away, have been nurtured and brooded over. Charges have been made against old friends of things of which they were both ignorant and innocent, and the plain teaching of Matthew 5:23, 24 overlooked. Brethren have been ignored, their feelings trampled upon, and bitterness towards them nursed and carried down to the very grave. What weight can our public ministry have, be we ever so well taught, if in practice we be lacking of the elementary traits of civility, fair play, and consideration of others?

Emerson well said that "what you are speaks so loudly I cannot hear what you say". It is surely a sad day when the fear of God and the common courtesies of life depart from a Christian community. The more serious aspect of the matter, however, is that the parable of the unmerciful servant (Matthew 18) teaches us that a man who is so lacking in love that he cannot forgive his fellow-servant thereby proves that he himself has never experienced Divine forgiveness.

Perils in the Intercommunion of Assemblies

Regarding the fellowship of assemblies, forget not that every assembly is directly responsible to, and dependent upon, the Lord, for all its actions. Each one has scriptural authority to judge its own matters, but not the matters of other meetings, as is seen in Revelation 2 and 3. Yet mark that where evil is rebuked in one, all other churches are there called upon to give heed to the Spirit's warning. Scripture knows nothing of federating assemblies, as we have already seen, but it does teach that we should foster a close intercommunion of assemblies.

Hence as far as it is at all consistent with righteousness, let each company respect and abide by the decisions of other companies, in all matters of reception, commendation and discipline. "The words of Ephesians 4:1-3," says John Bloor, "express the Spirit's pleasing that we maintain every link that can be maintained, in face of difficulty, opposition and distress." How grieved the Lord must be therefore when some force their way in introducing things about which all are not happy, knowing full well that this will mean the forfeiture of peace and fellowship amongst God's people!

Local disputes, which was the subject of the

preceding section, should never be permitted to spread and involve other assemblies. This has been one of the great weaknesses in the Exclusive system. When a division between two companies occurs there, all other assemblies in the confederacy must 'judge the question' and decide upon which side they stand. Thus division becomes world-wide; for assembly A not only 'cuts off' assembly B, from which it has differed, but every company that agrees with assembly B; and every preacher who dares to visit assembly B, or any meeting which has sided with it, is also automatically 'cut off'. The result is that a new circle of fellowship is thereby formed. This they say must be as a matter of 'principle'. What concerns us, however, is that it is not the teaching of Scripture. "It would be well," says H. I. Barker, "if all of us were to talk less of 'observing divine principles', and give more thought, as Paul did, to the 'keeping of the commandments of God' (1 Corinthians 7:19). . . Principles may be very nebulous; commandments are definite." Much as we value oneness of mind (1 Corinthians 1:10) our fellowship with other assemblies does not at all depend upon our seeing eye to eye with them in every particular when difficulties and disputes arise. This tendency towards Exclusivism is the parent of division, and in some quarters has wrought havoc of the intercommunion of assemblies. Guard against it.

The Preciousness of an Assembly

Even a brief consideration of the preciousness of a scripturally constituted assembly to God will impress us with the need of watchfulness against these many perils. It is called a "church of God" (Acts 20:28, etc.), having been planted by Him. It is gathered unto the Name of Christ (Matthew 18:20). The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit dwell in it (2 Corinthians 6:16; Matthew 18:20; 1 Corinthians 3:16). Its purchase price was the Lord's own blood, and it is the special care of the Divine Spirit (Acts 20:28). Holy angels behold with interest its order (1 Corinthians 11:10). It is God's witness in the world—"the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15), and is comparable to a vessel of the choicest metal, gold (Revelation 1:20). How great then is the sin of disowning an assembly, unless it has been incontrovertibly proven that it wilfully condones immorality or false doctrine, that it was begun in schism (Romans 16:17), or that there is clear evidence that the lampstand has been removed (Revelation 2:5)! How great too is the sin of causing trouble in, or in any way marring the peace and simple beauty of, an assembly! Not only so, but how great should be the care exercised by responsible brethren in the matter of reception

to an assembly! For an assembly is just what the sum of its individual saints make it. We must therefore guard against all laxity in reception. It is to be feared that under A. N. Groves' dictum that "life and not light is the basis of fellowship", almost anyone professing Christianity can in some quarters break bread as occasion suits. Such laxity is fraught with peril. Others go to the opposite extreme and become legal in reception.

We have known of godly, commended servants of Christ—men of sterling character and sound in the faith, who had for years given of their best to the gospel—being refused a seat at the Lord's Supper, and being made to sit back with the ungodly, because of having had fellowship—not in an unscriptural sect or mission—but in another assembly gathered to the Lord's Name, which was not approved of.

How unfair it is that beloved missionary brethren who have been away for years, and who consequently are not conversant with assembly difficulties and divisions which have arisen in the homeland during their absence, should be so severely penalised for paying a temporary visit to a meeting not upon what is at best a humanly accredited assembly list!

It is suggested, dear people of God, that if we possessed more of the fear of the Lord in our hearts, and a deeper knowledge of His Word and ways, we should tread more softly, and with more grace and wisdom, in His assemblies. High-handed, overbearing, arbitrary actions do not pass unnoticed by our God. He who smote Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:2), Uzzah, (2nd Samuel 6:7), and Uzziah (2nd Chronicles 26:20) in vindication of His awful holiness, still lives; and even in modern times examples of His manifested displeasure are not wanting.

In closing this chapter, I beg to ask: "What right has any man, or men, to divide the assemblies of God's beloved people, or to assume a kind of lordship over them?" In view of the brevity of time, the imminence of our Lord's return, and the solemnity of His Judgment Seat, may God burden us to pray for the unity, holiness, and peace of His dear children everywhere. I appeal to you, beloved in Christ, "*Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all that ye do be done in love*" (1st Corinthians 16:13). Oh that our God would raise up more men with "*the care of ALL the churches*" (2nd Corinthians 11:28) upon their hearts, as had the beloved Paul, men of balance, wisdom, maturity, and vision, who, discerning the perils of unscriptural extremes, whether in the one direction or the other, will by life and lip point to God's path, saying, "*This is the way, walk ye in it.*"

Be Still, And Know That I am God

Walter Scott

It is hard to be still when all is turmoil and commotion around —when dangers thicken and troubles multiply on every hand. There is at least a moral heroism in battling single-handed with opposing hosts even if you fall in the struggle. Controversy has its uses as well as its dangers, and never let us forget that the Judah-remnants who returned to Jerusalem from their forced exile of 70 years were men who could wield the sword as well as handle the trowel. "*For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded*" (Nehemiah 4:18). There are times and seasons, when the advances of our wily foe on the citadel of our most holy faith, must be resisted in spiritual energy — foot to foot, and inch by inch. The sword must not be sheathed, must ever be sharpened and burnished for ready use. The armor is needed for conflict with Satan and wicked spirits in heavenly places (Ephesians 6:11-13).

There are, however, times when God seems to hide Himself, when our only safety is in doing nothing. The voice of our Savior-God is heard beside many a Red Sea difficulty,—"*Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD.*" It is a hard lesson to "stand still" in the presence of opposing foes. Jehovah is the Living God. Cloud and storm are beneath His feet and His throne remains unmoved. Can't you, won't you let Him act for you? Be still and see the wonder-working arm of Jehovah clearing a path for your feet. Once more the seas divide and Jehovah has triumphed, and then we sing.

The Series of appreciated articles on Jonah by brother Steve Walvatne will be continued in the next issue.