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By Him – In Him, John 1:3

Gaius Goff

Everything that has come into existence has been created by the Lord Jesus Christ, "The Word." He was "with" God in the sense of nearness, the closeness that the Father and Son share. "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do: for whatsoever He doeth, these things also doeth the Son likewise." It is difficult for us to imagine two unique Persons being in such close harmony and spiritual oneness that they act in perfect unison by their nature.

Some people can be trained to do the same thing in unison briefly and are limited to one or two tasks. Because of their shared human nature, identical twins may think and act similarly in response to the same stimulus. However, the closeness of the Father and Son means that in all things, they rely on each other. Not because either has any limitations, but because the divine nature of the Godhead ensures perfect unison, even if their roles in reaching a goal may differ.

In creation, the goal was to fulfill the purpose of God's revelation to intelligent beings, so that there could be full fellowship between the creature and the Creator. The perfect relationship of "The Word," the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God, is one of perpetual closeness. That closeness exists between Them through all activities of the Godhead throughout eternity. There was no coming and going between divine Persons. Instead, each Person continually serves as the Agent to do everything. "He made all things" means exactly that. There is nothing so vast that it defies human imagination that was not made entirely by Him. There is nothing so small that it can only be conceived by our thoughts; that He did not make.

The foolish reasoning of those who claim all creation happened by chance is basically an attempt to persuade themselves and others that we are in control of our lives. They say we control life, and that order comes from human effort—or "Mother Nature." There is no "Mother Nature." There is only one "Father God." The scriptures say, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." "He made everything beautiful in His time."

Not only did our Lord create all things by the word of His power, but "by Him, all things consist." He is responsible for the ongoing process and maintenance of creation. Every season displays its own unique features. The life cycle is sustained by Him, "The Word." Those who begin their existence at conception are given life and survive through Him. Millions are aborted from the womb by sinful people who believe a terrible act is their right. The One who grants life is also the Life-Sustainer. Nothing originally created came into being apart from Him. Even though seed life may remain dormant for hundreds of years, it can only emerge through Him. Our Lord alone holds the keys to life and death.

The impact of a clear understanding, though not complete, of Him—who is the One who made "all things"—moves us to worship, praise, and adoration. It also stirs a heartfelt desire to serve Him, who has called us frail, mortal men and women to be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Him of all that is His by creation's right. All angels and heavenly beings, all things visible and invisible, tangible and intangible, have their origin in Him, who made "all things" without exception. "How big is God; how great and wide His vast domain!" Every issue we may face in life is fully known to Him. He knows the cause, the course, and the final outcome of all. It is our great privilege to be objects of the divine affection of this Almighty Lord. We can trust ourselves completely to Him in every moment of hurt and suffering, as well as in every moment of blessing and comfort.

When there was nothing, something appeared. It wasn't just a collection of already existing matter. Some things were so small they couldn't be seen, while others were so large they could be seen from afar. How is this possible? What kind of intelligence is behind all of this that can create so much from nothing? The Word, the Revelation of God to us, came here as a man among men. He is the eternal Creator-God who existed before the beginning of

everything.

Whether material or men, everything comes from His hand because all power on earth and in heaven belongs to Him. There is no need to fully understand those things beyond our limits. By faith, I know He created all of this, and all power in heaven and on earth is His. He is the Source, the Power, the Great I AM. It is impossible for us to know much about anything, let alone everything. The amazing thing is that He, the Eternal God, the Creator, was here as a man.

None of this was frivolous. There was an important purpose: God in the flesh had to come here to reunite us with God, so we could choose to love and have fellowship with Him. He began in obscurity as a man of perfect purity, experiencing even death before His mission was complete. Nothing in His nature—spoken of in human terms—can be fully captured in our words. He was a real man on earth; no one can gauge His unmatched worth. In every way, He is the Supreme Lord.

We cannot fully define His grace, but we “know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.” He came and was visible in this small speck of space. God was here, walking on the ground He made. His time living on His own creation, which belongs to Him, exceeds our limited view, but a redemptive price was paid to buy back what He originally made. He created the earth with only a word, yet the good news of redemption must be heard. From His fullness, we receive the grace needed for redemption. Our faith is not in some vague idea but in a real person. In Jesus, the Eternal Word - I believe and pledge my loyalty!

Nothing is great enough to admire Him who is infinite in His majesty; nothing is small enough for Him to despise who is infinite in mercy and grace.

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Earnestly Contending For The Faith

Jim Brown

About thirty years ago, at a conference, I heard a man say, “It’s good to be right, but even better to be right... with a right spirit”. That principle has stayed with me. However, I will not proclaim to have always, unerringly adhered to that instruction. It’s doubtful that any of us have. Among many other portions of scripture that support this balanced principle, we will consider two of them as main pillars/cornerstones on which to build an understanding of how the Lord would want us to stand behind His Word. Jude 3 states that we are to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints”. This tells us what we are to do (defend the entire body of Bible truth), and also how we are to do it...earnestly (sincerely, seriously and with determination). On the other hand, in the spirit of winsomeness, we also need to be mindful of Hebrews 12:14a: “Follow peace with all men.”

Our initial reaction might be that these seemingly opposite aspects of defending the truth of God are offsetting, rather than complimentary. How can we “contend for the faith” and yet “follow peace with all men” at the same time? Great care must be taken in effort to maintain proper balance in this. “A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight” (Proverbs 11:1).

Before we can ever endeavor to earnestly contend for the entire body of truth once delivered to us in God's Word, it is imperative that we familiarize ourselves with its contents. To engage in a discussion that leads to a debate may, at times, find us defending a principle we may hold dear, yet it may be one that the scriptures do not support. If we're going to adamantly contend for the faith, we must first insist upon a personal Bible study that grants us a proper spiritual library to mentally draw from. And if we're new believers, there is certainly nothing wrong with repeating only what we *do* know, even if it is very little, as did the healed blind man in John 9:25 when he wisely stated, "Whether He be a sinner or no, I know not; one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." It's always best to stick to what we're sure of before taking a dogmatic stance on a matter.

If we are contending for the faith with the challenge coming from an unconverted person, it is always best to set God out in front rather than issues. The first four commandments of the original ten are noted to be God-ward. Without the Spirit of God indwelling a person, they cannot be obeyed. Hebrews 11:6 tells us that it is impossible to please God without faith. Note as well that the Bible begins with God in Genesis 1 as well as in the Lord's teaching about prayer in Matthew 6. The natural man wants to skip over God's interests and purposes and get to the earthly matters, which are easier to manipulate or muddy; those being the last six (man ward commandments), instead of the first four of Sinai's commandments. In John 4, the Samaritan woman steers the conversation toward where one ought to worship, whereas the Lord emphasizes how one ought to worship. Contending for the gospel message should always come around to presenting, "What think ye of Christ?" as opposed to, "What's your position on this or that current issue?" Trust the Bible and the Holy Spirit when contending for the faith.

If we are trying to help a professed believer who is minded to bring a challenge to the faith once delivered to the saints, the advice given in the paragraph above is just as meaningful. However, depending upon the exact nature of the matter contested or misunderstood, we need to draw upon scriptural guidance, particularly from the epistles. In such cases, we must depend upon the Spirit of God indwelling the person to "guide you (them) into all truth" (John 16:13). While it is sadly possible for a true believer to dishonor the Lord and resist what is being taught, our prayer should be for them that they not systematically continue in that mode indefinitely. Part of the instruction given to such persons ought to be, at some point, a warning about persisting in contrary thinking that produces contrary doctrine. Hopefully, the contention will not go this far, but if it should, such as that noted in 1 Timothy 1:20 with Hymenaeus and Alexander, who challenged proper teaching about the resurrection, the assembly would need to first warn,

then take action by putting that person out of the assembly fellowship where they would, by divine design, "learn not to blaspheme." All this is to be done in meekness.

The Greek word for "contend", in its general sense, is *agonizomai* which means to struggle, compete, or fight. But in Jude 3, the word *epagonizomai* is the Greek word that emphasizes the phrase "earnestly contend", showing a more intensified determination to ensure God's truth is upheld. Does this mean we should take the offensive with biblical truth so that our contentions with those we hope to help become like the bars of a castle (Proverbs 18:19) and thereby, accomplish nothing but alienation? Of course not! Nowhere in the New Testament do we find any divine exhortation to, or allowance for, going on the attack. The faith "contention" referred to above presumes that during Jude's time and the centuries to follow, the saints would come under attack from various naysayers, both from within and without, who seek to discredit every tenet of Christianity they could criticize and reject.

To contend for the faith may involve having to repel lies with truth, that is, to "overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21). Furthermore, we are told in Proverbs 3:30, "Strive not with a man without cause, if he hath done thee no harm." Refrain from igniting unpleasant confrontations. And one last tip is found in Proverbs 22:24, "Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go; Lest thou learn his ways and get a snare to thy soul." Here, we are to avoid walking into further unpleasant confrontations whenever a man has systematically proven himself to be combative. Some folks just don't seem to be content unless they're arguing vehemently about their favorite issue. More than one passage tells us to mark and avoid these individuals. They earnestly contend with saints (ultimately with God) as they're unwilling to allow discovery and adjustment to their own erroneous thoughts. So, the net result will always be a stalemate. No sense "beating a dead horse" or pushing "the law of diminishing returns" where further admonition is wasted on a disobedient ear. Argument for the sake of argument can quickly become very personal, therefore unprofitable, even damaging.

Now this does not mean that we quickly give up the first time someone challenges what we believe from the bible. Patience is needed. Much light is shed regarding a calm, level-headed approach with individuals who may be contentious while needing correction when we read 2 Timothy 2:23-26: "But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken

captive by him at his will.” Notice this portion is addressed to “servants of the Lord” but we could hardly say that this principle does not apply to the rest of us. Once again, we see words like gentle, patient, and meek (notable characteristics of our Lord as he suffered continuous reproach) and try to reconcile them with Jude 3’s “earnestly contending” as noted earlier, to intensely struggle, compete and fight. We are not to be fighting warriors or debate champions, yet, by the grace of God, He would have us to hear out all challenges and then provide guidance, staying close to the Word of God without accusatory or emotional responses. An old saint once advised me (and I needed it!) one time: “Stay low, go slow and don’t blow.”

While at times, the tightrope walk, that is, the balancing of a patiently calm spirit with our zealously earnest “contending” can seem a very delicate one! May we allow ourselves to be made (by God) all things to all men, that we might save some (See 1 Corinthians 9:22) as was Paul’s desire. On the other hand, “And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet” (Matthew 10:14). The Lord both understands and even sanctions that response. The goal of believers is not to chase people away in defense of the truth. Just remember that when hearers refuse to have ears to hear, our responsibility toward them, apart from prayer, ends there. We have to allow God to do what we cannot do.

In all matter, go by the written Word of God. If you have no relish for God’s Word, you are a backslider.

Donald Ross

The Devil’s Schemes

C. Fariñas

“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”
Ephesians 6:11

The Apostle Paul’s statement in the aforementioned passage from his letter to the church at Ephesus is striking. This teaching, addressed to believers in Christ throughout the ages, assures us that God’s terrible enemy—called the devil and Satan—lies in wait for God’s children, seeking to prevent the Lord’s purposes for the church from being fully accomplished. We know that since the dawn of the human race, Satan has employed various means to lead mankind to act against its Creator—as seen in Genesis 2:16–17 and throughout chapter 3. This pattern has repeated itself time and

again throughout human history, often with little effort required for Satan to succeed; ever since Adam’s fall, the sin inherited by his descendants has plunged humanity into a state of enslavement to sin, making it an easy target for the devil.

Let us consider what happened to the Lord Jesus Christ and how He was tempted by the devil. Luke 4:1–13 describes the events that unfolded when the Spirit led the Lord into the wilderness specifically to be tempted—or tested—by the devil. The Lord remained in that inhospitable region for forty days and nights, fasting completely, and at the end of that time, He was hungry. Seizing upon the Lord’s physical need, the devil had the audacity to tempt Him three times; first, he challenged Him to use His power as the Son of God to turn stones into bread and satisfy His hunger. Then He showed Him all the kingdoms of the earth and offered them to the Lord in exchange for His bowing down in worship. Finally, He challenged Him to act independently of His Father. It is moving that our Lord quoted passages from the book of Deuteronomy to emerge victorious from that terrible struggle. It reminds us of the occasion when young David faced the giant Goliath; he took five stones from the brook but used only one to kill the giant. In the same way, out of the five books of the Pentateuch, a single one sufficed for the Lord to triumph. The account concludes by stating that when the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from Him for a time.

Believers must bear in mind that, similarly, the devil will always be ready to tempt God’s children in various ways—and not always through the lure of immoral or criminal acts. The aim of this cruel enemy is to draw us away from obedience to and communion with our God.

There are many references to these attacks by the enemy against the Lord’s people, but I wish to highlight three specific mentions that are well worth considering:

1. Ephesians 4:27; 6:11–17. In the first passage, we are exhorted not to give the devil a foothold or an opportunity. It is interesting that this recommendation is given primarily in the context of the consequences of allowing anger to control our emotions, and it calls for a radical change in how we treat our fellow human beings. The second, longer passage warns us that we are engaged in a constant war against spiritual forces of evil driven by the devil; yet, it also brings the good news that we can emerge victorious if we heed the counsel of God’s Word.

2. James 4:1–7. On this occasion, the Holy Spirit teaches us that one of the devil’s attacks—which leads us into conflict with our brethren—is to stir up our pride, prompting us to pursue the things the world offers and thereby making us enemies of God. We are taught that

if we obey God, we can resist the devil, and he will flee from us.

3. 1 Peter 5:8–9. Reinforcing the previous teaching, we are assured that we resist the devil by standing firm in the faith and casting all our anxiety, weakness, and fear upon our God, allowing Him to fight on our behalf. Therefore, beloved brothers and sisters, the devil may attack us in ways that are very subtle and almost imperceptible, but if we maintain close communion with our mighty Lord, we can be victorious.

The believer is safe now, though not as comfortable, as he will be in heaven. D. Ross

Deuteronomy (2)

The Preservation of the Saints

Joel Portman

To continue considering some of the themes in Deuteronomy, we notice that the book is marked by God's constant reminder to them of what is past in their experience. They, as well as we, surely gain much from some remembering, though there is much we should forget! They needed to remember these things so they might be preserved in the future.

Remember their Deliverance

Of the 14 times we find the word "remember," it is associated 5 times with the bondage of Egypt that they were not to forget. Sadly, we find that, as we, they forgot the bondage of that state and remembered the things God wanted them to forget (Exodus 16:3, Numbers 11:5). This caused them many great problems and were a hindrance to their progress.

Observing the Sabbath (5:15) was through remembering the bondage. They had entered into rest with God in contrast to the grinding toil of that former state, so they were to keep that day of rest. We do not have the Sabbath, nor is the Lord's Day the same, yet it only behooves us to set aside one day of the week in response to Him, so it can be used for the things of the Lord instead of the occupations of an Egyptian world. It seems to indicate a failing appreciation of salvation deliverance when every day is used for self.

Their brotherly relationships were controlled by the remembrance of their bondage (15:15). They were severely treated and oppressed in Egypt and were to remember it when showing kindness and mercy to brethren. Some realization of the evil bondage of our world

from which we have been delivered should move our hearts to show love toward others, even if undeserved.

Observing the Feasts (16:12) was with a backward glance to the days when they could not observe such festive occasions. God's deliverance was with a view to their holding a feast unto Him in the wilderness (Exodus 5:1), so their joy at those events was partially an acknowledgment that God's purpose had been realized. There was no true joy in Egypt for them nor us.

Remembering the unrighteousness of Pharaoh's oppression was also the basis for their administering righteous judgments in the land (24:17-18). Even in their treatment of strangers, the fatherless, or the widows (their condition in Egypt) they were to remember and do the right. God's assembly is likewise to be characterized by careful, wise justice and mercy, doing what is right according to the standard of God, not the world.

Also in that chapter (24:22), God reminds them to consider the poor in their harvests. It was to show mercy and display God's love in a similar way that He had shown mercy to them. Hardness and grasping in material things shows a poor appreciation for the grace of God and His delivering mercy.

Remember their Pathway

In many other ways, remembering their past was intended to direct their behavior. We cannot consider them all, but we can notice that they were to remember God's delivering power (7:18) and be encouraged to go forward. They were to remember all the way God led them (8:2) so they might realize Divine purposes in that pathway. To remember it is of God's power to give them wealth (8:18) would make them appreciate Him more than all else. Remembering God's judgment on Miriam (24:9) would cause them to realize the awful results of sin. Many more could be cited and can be considered (9:7, 9:27, 16:3, 25:17, 32:17) but we leave the subject of remembering, trusting that we will not forget the lessons God has sought to teach us as well as them so that we might be preserved in our pathway for Christ.

Condition of HEART Emphasized

More than any other book of the Pentateuch, God speaks of their hearts. He thus emphasizes what was lacking in their wilderness journey. They had the ark and the tabernacle in their midst and in its heart was the law, but they didn't have the law in their hearts nor did they "love the Lord ... with all their hearts" (6:5). This shows that unless Christ and His Word is "hid in my heart," (Psalm 199:11) the practice of the truth will never continue long in my life.

God was looking for more than outward conformity to truth. Even on the outward level, what He saw did not please Him. For this second generation, a generation of the Spirit who are about to enter the land, He sought that their hearts might be different from the previous generation who died in the wilderness. That previous

generation represents what is of the flesh; though redeemed out of Egyptian bondage, yet it cannot enter the land and must die in the wilderness. Those entering the land must and can only be those who have God's law in their hearts.

Men's hearts are mentioned 45 times in this book. Some hearts were made hard (or they hardened their hearts) against God while other hearts were made soft in His presence. Some hearts were discouraged by their brethren (1:28, 20:8) while other hearts, as Caleb and Joshua's, fully embraced God's promises. We learn that the things they said in their hearts influenced their actions as they always do. Unbelief expressed in their hearts in 7:17 would hinder their conquest of the land and possession of the inheritance. Pride in 8:17 would attribute the blessings of God to their own worth, something God makes clear was not the case, while in 18:21, a lack of knowledge of how to discern what was of God would cast them on God to know what was right. We must take heed in our hearts as the wise man says in Proverbs 4:23: "Keep thy heart with all diligence (with all keeping) for out of it are the issues of life."

Importance of our Hearts

When God speaks of our hearts, He is not referring primarily to a physical organ of our body. It is an expression that indicates what is of the deepest nature of the human personality, what is of vital importance and genuine reality in each one. God is looking on the hearts of all men (I Samuel 16:7, Proverbs 17:3), and He knows all hearts (I Thessalonians 2:4). He sought that they might think properly in their hearts (Deuteronomy 4:39, 8:5) and thus have right actions in their lives.

His primary desire for them was that they might love Him with all their hearts (6:5, 10:12, 11:13, 13:3, 30:6) and as a result that they might serve the Lord with joyfulness and with gladness of heart (28:47). Certainly His desire for us is the same today!

While some Christians are talking about work, others are doing it.

Donald Ross

The Burnt-Offering

C. E. Stuart

From patriarchal times, and from that memorable night in Egypt, the last that all Israel ever spent in it, as their home, we pass on to the laws about the offerings

and sacrifices given by God to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai. As yet we have only met with burnt-offerings, with sacrifices which had the character of peace-offerings, and with drink-offerings; now we are made acquainted, through the Mosaic ritual, with these and others as well; viz., meat-offerings, sin-offerings, and trespass-offerings. To these may be added heave-offerings and wave-offerings. But the burnt-offering, meat offering, peace-offering, sin-offering, and trespass-offering have this in common, that they all typify what is true only of the Lord Jesus Christ, whereas the heave-offering and wave-offering were not confined to that which is peculiar to Him, and the drink-offering did not typify Him at all, but testified of the joy of God, and of the offerer in Him.

Hitherto, in the history of sacrifice, we have met with no directions respecting the manner of sacrificing. Now we come to regulations minute and explicit, revealed to Moses. And the first to be described, though not always the first to be offered, where more than one kind of sacrifice was prescribed, is that called the burnt-offering, and so called, we are expressly informed, because it burned all night upon the altar (Leviticus 6:9) unto the morning. It was the only offering which was burning all night, and it formed the basis on which all other offerings were burned by day on the brazen altar in the court of the tabernacle, or of the temple. No wonder then it has priority over all the other offerings in the Mosaic ritual. It was the only one they could never do without. It was the only one that was never to be absent from God's eyes till the true sacrifice, its antitype, should be offered up, and animal sacrifices thenceforth cease, until preparations should be made for the Lord's return in power.

Further, this was the only sacrifice of which the whole went up to God, so, in whatever way one might classify the offerings, this one would always come first. For it speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ in a character especially important, and ever to be remembered, as it tells of His whole surrender to death to do God's will, without which, as we well know, no sacrifice on our behalf could ever have availed before God. Sinful man could not have offered himself to God on his own behalf, or on behalf of others, and earth could never have provided that sacrifice with which the Holy One could in righteousness have been satisfied. There was needed for the sacrifice not only an offering free from sin, but one who was holy in all his ways; his life, his energies all devoted to God, and who could also die. One only can answer to all these requirements; viz., the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy One of God.

But though earth could not provide the sacrifice, certain animals on the earth could be accepted as types of it. Israel could bring to the Lord Jehovah, and offer on His altar, that which in His eye was typical of the death of His Son. Of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl Noah offered his burnt-offerings to God. (~~Gen.~~

8:20.) Of clean beasts, and of clean fowls, Israel could offer burnt-offerings to Jehovah; but the occasions on which they were to be offered, the manner of offering them, and what animals were to be brought, they had to learn from the Mosaic ritual. On private and on public occasions burnt-offerings could be presented. For instructions about private occasions we turn to Leviticus 1; for directions for public or special occasions we must turn elsewhere. On private occasions God allowed the offerer a choice. On public, and at times on special occasions also He prescribed what should be brought.

If anyone in Israel was moved in his heart to present a burnt-offering to God, it might be either of the herd, of the flock, or of fowls. In the case of no other offering was there such a choice. The wealthiest and the poorest could meet on common ground at the altar of burnt-offering; and whilst the rich man could bring his bullock, which required the services of more than one priest to sprinkle the blood and to place the parts of the animal on the altar, the poor man, who for his bird needed only the ministry of one priest, could return from the altar with the assurance of his God, that his turtle-dove or young pigeon was equally with the bullock "an offering made by fire of a sweet savour. unto the Lord." (Leviticus 1:17). How gracious was this! The Lord accepted the offering, not according to its intrinsic value, as man would have appraised it, but according to His own estimate of that of which each was a type - the self-surrender to death of His well-beloved Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

Where the sacrifice was of the herd or of the flock, the offerer's identification with it was openly declared by placing his hand on its head. In the case of the bird this significant action is not mentioned. When a bullock, or sheep, or goat was brought, the offerer killed it, and the priests sprinkled the blood round about the brazen altar; then the offerer skinned the animal, washed the inward parts with water, and, having dismembered it, presented the parts to the priests or the priest to be placed in order upon the altar. When the sacrifice was a bird, the priest nipped off its head and burnt it on the altar, and squeezed out its blood at the side of the altar; then the offerer plucked away its crop with its filth (not its feathers), which was cast on the east part by the place of the ashes. Then, cleaving it with the wings thereof, he presented it a whole carcase to be burnt upon the altar. In every case the head was treated separately from the body; but in the case of the bird the body was burnt as a whole. Further, in every case the sacrifice was to be clean, and to be a male without blemish if, it came from the herd or from the flock.

Thus far we have detailed to us the part the offerer had in the service. He had to provide the offering, and to bring it, and to prepare its body for the sacrifice; whilst the priest's part was to deal with the blood, and to burn the carcase upon the altar. Hence, in the case of a quadruped the priest had no place at all in the matter, till

the blood had to be sprinkled on the altar round about. In other words, death took place before the priestly service at the altar was called into requisition. The priest's place was at the altar; he ministered there, but, till death had taken place, in the ordinary way he had nothing to do. The death of the sacrifice must be an accomplished fact, and acknowledged to be such ere the priest's work could begin. The exception to this in the case of the bird arose probably from the physical difference between it and the beast. From the latter the blood readily poured forth; from the former it had to be squeezed out (Leviticus 1:15).

This principle is an important one. It puts the offerer in his place, and the priest in his. The priest did nothing till the offerer killed his offering, after identifying himself with it. So the Lord offered Himself, and only after His death entered on his priesthood, as Hebrews 8:4 clearly states. The priest was required for all that went on at the altar, but only after the death of the victim has taken place beside it, or in front of it, as the case might be. Accurate as the type was in this respect, it came short, as each must do of the full delineation of that of which it was but a type. Here we read of the offerer, of the offering, and of the priest, all three distinct; but the offerer, on whose behalf the sacrifice was brought, here killed the beast; whereas the antitype, the true sacrifice, offered up himself. (Hebrews 7:27). In reality the offerer, the offering, and the priest are one and the same person seen in three different characters. Christ offered Himself, being the Lamb of God, and the high priest, who has entered into heaven by his own blood. Everything, then, that had to be done in connection with sacrifice He has done, and done once for all (Hebrews 10:14), leaving to man the only part he can take in it; viz., identification with the sacrifice, so as to share in the rich results which flow from it, by owning it to be the offering on his behalf, according to the value of which he stands accepted before God.

Under the law the offerer presented the sacrifice for his acceptance (not "of his own voluntary will," as our version has translated the Hebrew word *lirzono*), owning thereby the ground on which he stood before God. But we do not present the sacrifice, since that has been already done. Christ offered Himself without spot to God (Hebrews 9:14), and offered up Himself as well. For though men crucified Him, He nevertheless laid down His life of Himself (John 10:18). None could have taken it from Him. Thus both actions, the presenting the sacrifice and the offering it up, indicated by the Greek words *prophero* and *anathero*, were carried out by Him in His grace.

But more. The burnt-offering offered up for the man's acceptance, he learnt that it made atonement for him. Now this mention of atonement is instructive, since it shows that, apart from the aspect of sacrifice typified by the burnt-offering, atonement could not have been accomplished. There was needed for that, not only a

substitute for the sinner - One who could bear the sins of the guilty one in His own body on the tree - but One who would surrender Himself wholly to do God's will by dying, on whom death could in no way have a claim. One essential element then in atonement was the sacrifice of One who could surrender Himself to die, apart from, though of course closely connected with, His position as the sinner's substitute. And the offerer in Israel, when he brought his burnt-offering, moved probably by the sense of Jehovah's goodness to him, but without reference to any sin that he had committed in the past, learnt his need of atonement through the provision Jehovah thus made to effect it.

Precious was this sacrifice to God. All of it went up to Him, the skin only excepted, which was to be the priest's who offered it. For the priest at the altar being always typical of Christ Himself, the skin, symbolical of the circumstances through which the Lord passed, would rightly belong to him; for who but the Lord can know what those circumstances were? And here the reader should be reminded that only one priest officiated at the altar to burn the sacrifice. When the animal was of the herd several priests were required to sprinkle the blood, and to lay the pieces on the altar on the wood, but one priest (v. 9) it was who burnt all on the altar. Precious indeed was all that was consumed thereon; for whatever the sacrifice might be in itself, all that was burnt on the altar was a sweet savour to God, and went up to Him, as it were, as incense; for all thereon burnt spoke of what the Lord Jesus Christ was in Himself to God, and not of what He was made for us. All that typified Him as a sacrifice was holy. What typified that which He was in Himself was, when burnt, as sweet incense to God. Precious was the burnt-offering to God, so it never was to be out of His sight, and all night long it burnt on the altar - ever in God's remembrance, ever under His eye. What a thought that gives us of its preciousness to Him. He could always, as it were, be looking on it, the witness to Him of that self-surrender to death of His Son, then future, but now past; then a secret known only to Him, but now shared in through grace by us who believe on Him whilst still the world is asleep, and the night has not passed away.

Precious was this offering. So at all their feasts, and on stated occasions provided by the law, as well as on special occasions as they arose in after years, this offering was always in season. Each morning and each evening it was offered up on the altar - the first sacrifice in the morning, the last in the evening. This was a standing ordinance in Israel, ever to be remembered and observed. At the close of each week, on the Sabbath, a special burnt-sacrifice was appointed in addition. At the commencement of each month a burnt-offering of the flock and of the herd was enjoined. At each of the feasts, and on each day of the feasts, special burnt-offerings were commanded; and so on the day of atonement. At Aaron's consecration, too, this sacrifice had its

place, and again at the setting apart of the Levites. No mother in Israel would rejoice over the birth of her child, whether male or female, without bringing for her purification the appointed sacrifice for a burnt-offering. Each leper, too, that was cleansed was reminded of his need of it ere he could re-enter his tent in the camp, and be at home there again; and every one, whether man or woman, made unclean by an issue was taught the importance, in his or her case, of bringing a burnt-offering to God. So on special occasions Samuel at Mizpeh (1 Samuel 7), David on mount Moriah (2 Samuel 24), Elijah at Carmel (1 Kings 19), offered burnt-offerings to the Lord. And on that day when the Lord, under the symbol of the ark, first took up His Abode in Jerusalem, David sacrificed burnt offerings after they had carried it into the tent prepared for it on mount Zion (2 Samuel 6).

Very prominent then was this class of sacrifice in Israel's worship, whether national or individual. The brightest day could not pass without it; the darkest was a fitting season for it; and we understand the reason of it, whatever those of old could have told about it. It spoke to God, and, we can add, it speaks to us too, of that self-surrender of His Son, even to death, the death of the cross, to whom in a marked way the Father's love flows out (John 10), and whom in consequence God hath highly exalted, and has "given Him a name which is above every name." (Philippians 2:11).

The Joy of the Lord in Psalm 16 (Part 2 of 3)

Walter Gustafson

His Joy in Obedience (v. 4)

"Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god: their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips" (v. 4).

The Lord Jesus was a man truly separated unto His God in obedience to the Word of God. Since He is finding His joy in God and in God's people, He cannot and will not enter into what the unsaved are worshipping to try to find satisfaction in this life. There cannot be any true joy in the false worship of Christ rejecters. Anything that displaces the Lord Jesus in the heart is truly an idol (1 John 5:21). How sad when any of us allow anything to take the place in the heart that Christ should have. There is no real lasting joy in anything apart from God Himself. When the Lord Jesus says that He will not take up their names into His lips, He is referring to the names of their gods.

Here is a verse crucial to the recognition of the difference between separation and isolation. It is good for a believer to befriend an unbeliever, a schoolmate, a neighbor or a fellow worker with a view to seeing that

person saved. But if that friendship begins to take us away from the enjoyment of God, we had better stop immediately. The Lord Jesus was a “friend of publicans and sinners,” but He was always the master of every situation, and He would never allow Himself to get into any position of condoning or participating in their wrongdoing.

His obedience to the Word of God made Him truly separated unto God. In John 15:10-11 He encourages us to all have His joy of obedience, “If ye keep My commandments ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.” Also in John 13:17 He says, “If ye know these things, happy (or blessed) are ye, if ye do them.” James 1:25 is also a similar encouragement, “But who-so looketh into the perfect law of liberty and continueth therein, being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”

The Lord Jesus demonstrated His love for the Father by His obedience, but his greatest manifestation of His love for the Father is in John 14:30-31, ‘The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do. Arise let us go hence’. Philippians 2:8 reads, “And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

His Joy in Contentment (vv. 5, 6)

“The Lord is the portion of Mine inheritance and of My cup: Thou maintainest My lot” v5). In v. 5 our Lord Jesus has joy in the Lord as His portion and His cup. Since “portion” is linked with “cup” in v. 5, and a cup holds liquids, portion could refer to food. The first part of v. 5 is literally, “Jehovah is the measure of My portion and My cup”; so, Jehovah was all that Christ needed to satisfy both hunger and thirst. Similarly, our Lord Jesus is all we need to satisfy us, “Jesus said unto them, I am the Bread of Life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst” (John 6:35). In John 7:37,38 we read, “If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”

“Portion” is what belongs to a person, whether he enjoys it or not. “Cup” indicates actual enjoyment. With Christ His portion and His cup were one and Jehovah was the measure of them both. What a contrast to the two evils of Jeremiah 2:13, ‘For My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.’

The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage. (v6). “Inheritance, “lot”,

and “lines”: these three words all refer to the allotment of land by lot whereby the Levites received no inheritance (unlike the other tribes), for the Lord was to be their inheritance (Numbers 18:20; 26:62; Deuteronomy 10:9; 18:1-2). The inheritance was to be a permanent possession, “Thou maintainest My lot” (v. 5b), and a pleasant possession, “The lines are fallen unto Me in pleasant places” (v.6).

The Lord Jesus Christ was satisfied in all the circumstances of His life. Though brought up in poverty in the despised city of Nazareth, and though despised and rejected of men, having God’s approval was complete contentment for the Lord. And this was true despite saying, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head” (Luke 9:58). He could also continue to say, “the lines are fallen unto Me in pleasant places” (v 6), even in Gethsemane, Gabbatha, and Golgotha. This is high truth, lived out in perfection by the Lord Jesus Christ. R. C Chapman said: “as wonderful as it is to see souls saved, there is something more wonderful still: to be consciously in the will of God.” The Lord Jesus trod the path of sorrow and rejection down here, but He had joy in that very path, and He wants us to have His joy.

Paul could say in Philippians 4:11, “I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content.” Paul had to learn it and we should learn it too. Paul could adapt himself to an abased condition of poverty, without anxiety, without fretfulness, without carefulness. Paul also had learned even in an abounding condition of prosperity to enjoy it without carelessness, without indifference, without pride. He could say this because the Lord Jesus Christ provided the strength needed for the varied circumstances of his life. In verse 6b David says, “yea, I have a goodly heritage.” Paul exhorts us: “Godliness with contentment is great gain” (1 Timothy 6:6).

Evil speaking is an unmixed evil: It defiles the inventor of it, the hearer of it, and the repeater of it.

Donald Ross

Need to Watch and Pray

G.V. Wigram

Heresy is not departing from the figure of truth, but from the Spirit of truth, and it is the spirit of the heretic we are called upon to judge as a work of the flesh more than the fruit in the form of doctrine. The Scriptures

are given to us by God as "a complete depository and standard of truth;" they contain all we need to know as Christians, and by them every error may be detected. But who is the interpreter of Scripture? I answer, "The Holy Ghost." As the Lord Jesus Christ is more or less directly the subject of all Scripture testimony, so is the Holy Ghost the only authorized and infallible interpreter of it.

As heresy begins with the natural mind playing with truth, so its mode and means of success are the getting the saints upon hard points and questions and thinking instead of praying. Paul communicated his gospel privately to them of reputation ([Galatians 2:2](#)); the heretic does it privately also, but to the weak, and especially to women ([2 Timothy 3:6](#)), and so in a twenty years' experience have I always found it, and this is obvious, because the simple, on the one hand, are often puzzled about conceits, for pressing which heretics have been excommunicated, and yet these are not heretics; they mourn over their own perplexities in secret, and trouble no one with them. On the other hand, they would oft, through ignorance, deny what the heretic would deny through wickedness. I press this because such is the only safe and sure test, and every Christian may use it; no other test, indeed, can apply, because while few have so large a knowledge of history as to know in what forms of error as to doctrine heresy has been displayed, none can know the forms which it may hereafter take; and, besides, "error does not constitute heresy;" and again (as we shall see) the worst heresies grow out of truths misapplied.

As every man in sound mind intuitively feels it to be his duty to take care of human life, so every Christian is responsible to guard against heresy. Of course, in doing this great watchfulness must be kept over our own spirit. A man may be very positive in holding, and heady in pressing, fancies; such, for instance, as that "the world" in John 3 means "the elect world," or that all men are pardoned, though believers only are saved; or that the temple in Revelation 11 means the literal temple; or the overweening bias, the crotchet, might be devotedness; the great tribulation,* the sudden rapture, &c. *I conceive saints in our days should mark and discountenance the way in which many, who hold opposite views on the subject, hold and press the point. Where will the Church be in the great tribulation? So far as man goes this way marks real mental disease, and to the spiritual mind it is heretical in tendency at least. And what is the effect of their dragging everyone after the same point, and giving it an undue place as though (all important as it is in connection with our hope) it formed part of our foundation? The Lord will neither hasten, nor delay, nor change His movements because of our thoughts; neither will He teach concerning His movements those who will argue and think out truth, instead of praying it out as they were wont to do. When truth becomes a matter of argumentation, naughty arguments are sure to be had recourse to, inferences and consequences, and tradition,

and threats perhaps used. They that do such ([Romans 16:17-18](#)), one has well said, "to the man who will systematize it, the Bible says, 'I am none of your sort.'" Canons of interpretation and human standards are poor things in sanctuary light. His manner of holding and pressing his views might be as bad as his doctrine was defective, and yet grace might see that there was no sanction of evil- bitter herbs are not leaven- and the things after all may be kept in a subordinate place.

Some heresies have been formed upon the denial of foundation doctrines, as Arianism, and some upon points of superstructure, as Anabaptism. But of all kinds of heresy, I conceive the worst is that which is so formed upon truth as to make truth appear to be on one side, and the Holy Ghost opposed to it on the other. If God saw me (for example) separating myself in spirit, affection, thought, or action, from the members of Christ now on the earth, to a section of it which was characterized either by knowledge of truth, or by supposed freedom from error, or if He saw me trying to form such a party, He would, I judge, see marks of incipient heresy. In both cases I should be opposing truth to the Holy Ghost; in the former case I set the Holy Ghost in life in the members, below knowledge or freedom from error; in the latter case, I, in practice, oppose knowledge, &c., to the Holy Ghost in His mode of working; for His aim is not to form schools well taught, or free from defect and error, but to build up the living members of God's household in separation to God and in brotherly love. If such a thing worked out into a sect it would be preeminently evil.

And it is to be observed, that not only is a sect which takes a truth for its basis, and opposes it to the Holy Ghost, the worst form of heresy; but also that the intensity of the evil increases directly as the purity of the truth; for example, a sect built upon a correct view of an ordinance would be bad; but a sect built upon a correct view of resurrection and glory, or any points about them, would be worse; yea, worst of all would be a sect built upon such a truth as the power of the Holy Ghost, through the blood of Christ, to give present peace with God, and this might easily be the case; it might result thus, because I hold assurance to be of the essence of faith, I might refuse to accredit as Christians those who had not assurance, and might form a sect on that most blessed and precious truth, rending an inflamed limb from the sickly and enfeebled body, because I mistook the feverish state for the warmth and glow every member of the body when in health should possess, whereas the Holy Ghost has united in one all who know the blood of Jesus as salvation.

Heresy is, in principle, the playing of the flesh with truth and is the sending into parties those who should be one. May the Lord keep His saints WATCHING AND PRAYING.