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What is His Name? "Adonai"

Joel Portman

Having looked at some of the names that God has employed, such as Elohim and El Shaddai, we now turn to another name that is commonly found in our Bible when referring to God. The Hebrew name "Adonai" or "Adon" is found over 400 times in the Old Testament and is usually written in the KJV Bible as "Lord" or "lord." In its singular form ("Adon"), it is used for both men and God; the plural form of the noun ("Adonai") is only used for God. This is a name that is as profound in its meaning as are all of God's names, and it is one that commands our obedience and reverence even as it encourages our confident trust in Him.

Since the Jews feared to use the name "Jehovah" (LORD) because of their reverence and concern about possibly committing blasphemy (through their interpretation of Lev. 24:16), they substituted this name in its place. The result was that the name "Adonai" became more common to use when speaking of God in place of "Jehovah."

Other names such as "Elohim," "Jehovah," and other names relate to the Person of God in His different aspects such as His power, holiness, sufficiency, etc. This name, "Adonai," "makes a definite claim upon man's obedience and service," (Nathan Stone, *Names of God*). "Thus the names "Elohim," "Jehovah," "El Shaddai," and "El Elyon," though they do not exclude the relationships which are in God Himself, and in which He likewise stands both to His fallen and unfallen creatures, rather reveal this or that perfection of His nature; while the names which follow . . . "Adonai," . . . speak more directly of His relationships, either to men or angels . . ." (Andrew Jukes, *The Names of God in Holy Scripture*).

Meaning of the Name

The basic meaning of "Adonai" and "Adon" is "master, lord, or owner," and is usually rendered as such in our Bibles. In

one instance it is "sir," (Gen. 43:20), and it indicates respect, responsibility, ownership and control. It signifies that "God is the owner of each member of the human family, and that He consequently claims the unrestricted obedience of all" (Girdlestone, *Old Testament Synonyms*). In this sense, it corresponds to the New Testament word "kurios," which is also translated "Lord" in our Bibles.

This meaning is best understood when we observe that in common usage, it referred to the relationship between a master and his slave, and between a husband and his wife. We find it used in Gen. 18:12, where Sarah, from within the tent and evidently in her heart, called Abraham "lord," and also in Gen. 24:9, 12, 35 when the steward of Abraham's house referred to Abraham as "master" and also to Isaac by the same word (24:65). In the days of the Bible, both the slave and wife were acknowledged to be under the authority and ownership of the master and husband, and they were responsible to respect and obey him. On the one hand, the slave was required to render absolute obedience to his master and the wife to recognize and be in subjection to her husband. In return, both with regard to the master-slave or husband-wife relationships, the master or husband had a responsibility to care for, guard, and supply the needs of the one in subjection to him. Andrew Jukes (*The Names of God*) says, "The slave or wife were 'not their own.' Both, voluntarily or involuntarily, belonged to, and were the property of their lord. . . In the case of the wife, though she too generally was given or sold by her father, there might be more of the element of free will. . . But, once a man's wife, she was his for life. . . slave or wife stood in a relation of subjection to their lord, where faithfulness received due honour and reward, while unfaithfulness would no less surely be visited with just judgment."

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The master stood in a personal relationship to his slave and likewise the husband to his wife so that the slave and wife both had the right of the master's protection, help and direction. We also see evidences that the relationship, even in that of a slave to his master, was not without affection for the master and the expectation of his receiving benefits from the master. Slave and wife could depend on the faithful care of their master or husband to have all their needs supplied and to be sustained and protected by his bounty and concern.

From these earthly meanings, we learn the significance of this title and relationship when we apply it to the spiritual relationship that all men owe to God, and especially that which we, as believers, are to render to our Lord. We also can experience the reality of His constant care and provision for us, something that we abundantly receive.

Spiritual Relationships

The first mention of this name in our Bibles is in Gen. 15:2, where Abram, having returned from his victory over the kings in chapter 14, is promised by God that He would be his shield and exceeding great reward. Here we see the promise of God's protection and blessing to His faithful servant. Abram responds, "*Lord (Adonai) GOD (Jehovah), what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?*" Again he responds to God in v. 8 with the same word, "*Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?*" This first instance of the use of Adonai indicates that Abram understood his relationship to the Lord as that of a slave to his master, rendering obedience but also expecting to receive needed recompense under the protection and provision of God's care. His concerns at that moment were met by the promise of God regarding His protection of His servant and the promised fulfillment of God regarding a son.

Moses protested to the "Lord" in Ex. 4:10,13 concerning his insufficiency and inability to go to Pharaoh and make the demands for Israel that God commanded him to make. He was failing to recognize God's authority to command him as his slave, but he also failed to recognize the enabling ability that he would receive from Him who had commanded him. What the Lord commands, He enables His servants to accomplish, and they can depend on Him to faithfully do so if they will only obey. This principle carries over into our lives and should encourage us to render our obedience to our Lord, knowing that He gives strength and ability to perform His will.

It is of great interest to read in Ps. 110:1, 5, "*The LORD said unto my Lord (Adon), sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.*" Again in v.5, "*The Lord (Adonai) at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the*

day of his wrath." Quoted often in the New Testament (Mt. 22:44, Acts 2:34, 35, Heb. 1:13), we learn that this scripture clearly applies to our Lord Jesus. Remarkably, in v. 1, the singular form is used, not the plural, indicating that it is speaking to one Person, while in v. 5, the plural form is used when referring to the available power of God to vanquish all His foes.

In Isa. 6, we learn that in the same year that king Uzziah died (the lord or master of the nation of Israel who had led, controlled and guarded them during that prosperous period), Isaiah says, "*I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.*" The sovereign of the nation had died, and the sense of loss and darkness was evidently felt, but the Sovereign of the universe, who was the Lord of lords, was still on His throne. We see His provision for His servant Isaiah first, then His command to His servant in v. 8, where "Adonai" sends Isaiah on his mission to the wayward people of Israel. Recognizing his responsibility, Isaiah clearly and instantly responds, "*Here am I, send me.*" His response is an indication of what ours should be, when we see the Lord's will for us delineated in His precious Word.

Jeremiah responded to God's call (Jer. 1:6) by saying, "*Ah, Lord GOD (Adonai Jehovah)! Behold I cannot speak: for I am a child.*" The Lord's response to his protestations was that He would be with him to deliver and sustain him, and in obedience, Jeremiah responded in willingness to take His message to the backsliding people of Judah. Again, in Ezekiel, we find this title more than 200 times, often in application to prophecies directed to the nations of the world. This emphasizes that He is Lord of all men and expects their response and obedience to His word. "It is, Thus saith Jehovah who is Adonai, and again and again, Ye shall know, and They shall know that I am Adonai Jehovah (Ezek. 13:9; 23:49; 24:24; 28:24; 29:16)" (Nathan Stone, *Names of God*).

Through the entire Old Testament, there are those who recognized their relationship to the Lord as His slaves and they sought to render their obedience to Him. These included potentates, prophets, priests and people, and the Lord recognized them as such and encouraged them with His enabling power to accomplish His will and His work.

New Testament Significance

As already mentioned, the Greek word "kurios" in the New Testament is essentially equal to Adonai. We note the Lord's reprimand to the Jews, that they called Him "Lord, Lord," but did not the things that He said (Mt. 7:21-22, 25:11, Lk. 13:25). Their words could not erase their disobedience to His will, and neither will our words substitute for obeying that which He has told us. We notice

that the Lord told His disciples in the upper room (John 13:13-14), *“Ye call me Master (teacher) and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet.”* His lordship demands our obedience, and the order of the Lord’s words to the disciples indicates that to effectively learn from Him as Master, we must be willing to obey Him as Lord. He said in John 7:17, *“If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.”* Subjection to His will is essential, and is only reasonable, in view of our relationship to Him, which we acknowledge and which we professed, especially in baptism, when we expressed obedient subjection to His authority and identification with His Name.

Paul emphasizes this in 1 Cor. 6:20, 7:23, when he teaches the saints, *“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”* Rom. 12:1-2 is well-known as a passage where Paul entreats us to present (yield, offer) our bodies as a living sacrifice that is holy and acceptable unto God, emphasizing that this is our reasonable, or intelligent service that we render to Him. We have been purchased by a great price, the precious blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1:18), and are responsible above all others (who live in their disobedience and rebellion against God), to obey Him and to do His will. Obedience doesn’t allow one to deliberately or carelessly ignore or refuse to obey His Word. We are to be “children of obedience” (1 Pet. 1:14), doing whatever His Word directs us to, whether in our gatherings as assemblies unto Him, or in our daily lives individually before Him.

Recompense will be rendered by our Lord and Master in the day when our period of service ends, and this we see illustrated abundantly in the parables of our blessed Lord, such as in Luke 19:11-27 or in the teaching concerning the judgment seat of Christ in the epistles (2 Cor. 5:9-10). May He find us faithfully serving in dependence on Him to supply the ability that we need to accomplish His will and to bring delight to His heart.

Nothing is great without God; nothing is small with God.

Panin

Comparing Ourselves with the Model

Andrew Turkington

When God wanted His ancient people to make a tabernacle where He could dwell in the midst of them, He didn’t leave

the standard to the determination of any man. Moreover, so that Moses could give the details to the Israelites, God showed him a model of the tabernacle in the mount (Heb. 8:5). Thus, when the people of Israel brought the tabernacle to Moses, he could compare all the furniture, curtains, etc., with the model that the Lord had showed him. *“And Moses did look upon all the work, and, behold, they had done it as the LORD had commanded, even so had they done it: and Moses blessed them.”*

In the same way, God has shown us the model for His house in our day. This model is presently clearly in the New Testament. We also, as Moses, should see if our assembly is doing all the things conforming to the pattern. Although we have all the details given to us in the entire New Testament, in Acts 2:41, 42 we have a depiction of this spiritual house, where the seven columns of wisdom are emphasized as in Prov. 9:1. *“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”*

When the apostle Paul left Corinth, he left there an established assembly: *“the church of God which is at Corinth”* (1 Cor. 1:2), a temple of God, constructed in conformity to the Biblical model. Some time afterward, he writes a corrective letter to them in which we can see the spiritual condition of this assembly. It results in our benefit to compare the assembly in Corinth with Acts 2:41, 42, and it gives to us those aspects by which they had deviated from the Biblical model.

1st Column (“they that gladly received his word”)

Paul reminds them that when he preached the gospel, they had received it and were saved (15:1,2), even when he hadn’t used excellency of words or human wisdom (2:1). But this initial acceptance of the Word of God is that which should characterize all the believer’s life. *“He that is of God heareth God’s words”* (Jn. 8:47). **The first column of a Biblical assembly is complete submission to the authority of the Holy Scriptures.** The great Creator approves of all who are *“of a poor and contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word”* (Isa. 66:2); that is to say those over which the Word has absolute control.

But, what had happened in Corinth? It seems that there were some who didn’t recognize that the teachings of the apostle had divine authority. *“If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord,”* (14:37). He wrote to them *“that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things.”* (2 Cor. 2:9). There are many places today that don’t pass this test, but in an assembly that conforms itself to the Biblical model, there is room for ALL the Word of God.

2nd Column: (“were baptized”)

Although Paul himself hadn't baptized many in the Corinthian assembly (1:14-17), all the members of the assembly had been baptized. By this means, they were identified with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection, confessing that they had died to sin and the world. **The second column of a Biblical assembly is its complete separation from this world**, called in the Bible, *“this present evil world”* (Gal. 1:4). The believers in Corinth were *“sanctified in Christ Jesus, called (to be) saints”* (1:2).

But, in Corinth, this separation was being undermined. They were tolerating a case of fornication in the assembly, and the apostle has to exhort them to cleanse themselves from the old leaven (ch. 5). According to the Biblical model, *“the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are”* (3:17). Neither should we tolerate (5:11) the covetous, extortioners, railers, drunkards, or idolaters or other serious sin (as found in 6:9-10). He has to warn them to flee from fornication and from idolatry (6:18; 10:14). He reminds them that the people of Israel were baptized in the cloud and in the sea, *“but with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.”* (10:1-5).

3rd Column (“were added”)

After being baptized, the believers in Corinth had come to form a part of the church, or assembly. They didn't belong to the Jews or to the Gentiles, but to the church of God (10:32). As is indicated by the same term “church,” they had been called outside of this world to gather themselves in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. **The third column of a Biblical assembly is the complete involvement of everyone of its members**, not in an organization, but in a living organism. *“Now ye are (the) body of Christ and members in particular”* (12:27). Every member has his importance and his function to fulfill in that body.

But it seems that in the Corinthian assembly they were allowing different evils that negated this blessed reality. Was there a spirit of inferiority in some members (12:15)? Were others manifesting a spirit of rivalry (12:16)? Did some have a spirit of superiority (12:21)? They had forgotten that *“the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal,”* and that the same Spirit had divided to every one of them individually as He would (12:7, 11). By this means *“the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body”* (12:12).

4th Column (“continued in the apostles' doctrine”)

The new believers in Christ, now being baptized and added to the assembly, had been confirmed in the apostolic doctrine. The apostle Paul, *“continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them”* (Acts 18:11). He, as a wise masterbuilder, had laid the doctrinal foundation (3:10). **The fourth column of a Biblical**

assembly is complete conformity to right doctrine. As in Ephesus, the apostle hadn't shunned to declare unto them all the counsel of God (Acts 20:27). All the Word of God to all the People of God! If all the believers in the world were completely conformed to right doctrine, there would not be sects or denominations, only assemblies gathered in the Name of the Lord Jesus.

But now there were some in Corinth that were saying that there wasn't a resurrection of the dead (15:12). As all false doctrine, these bad conversations were corrupting good practices (15:33), because *“what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die.”* (or it would be that we can live just as we like, 15:32). We can compliment the assembly in Corinth, though, because with all its faults, it appears that at least they were retaining the instructions of the apostle (11:2) with respect to the head covering and the uncut hair of the sisters. Nevertheless, he has to command that the women should be silent in the assembly (14:34-35).

5th Column (“fellowship one with the others”)

When they formed a part of one body and practiced the same doctrine, the Corinthians had rejoiced in this precious fellowship one with the others. The Biblical principle is still in effect: *“If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another”* (1 Jn. 1:7).

But, *“can two walk together, except they be agreed?”* (Amos 3:3). **The fifth column of a Biblical assembly is the complete fellowship between its members.** *“Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”* (Ps. 133:1). This is how it was among those believers in the first church. *“And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul”* (Acts 4:32).

But the assembly in Corinth had gone far from this model. They had been *“called unto the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord”* (1:9), but now the apostle has to entreat them, by the same name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they would all speak the same thing and that there wouldn't be divisions among them, but that they would be perfectly united in the same mind and in the same judgment (1:10). Sadly, there were contentions among them, and the apostle takes the first four chapters to deal with this problem.

6th Column (“the breaking of bread”)

This fellowship that they enjoyed at the beginning had been expressed visibly when they participated from one bread in the Lord's Supper. *“For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread”* (10:17). **The sixth column of a Biblical assembly is the complete exaltation of the Person of Christ in the Lord's Supper.** By means of this solemn, yet simple act, the memory of Him who gave His body and shed His blood for

us is honored. Really it is the Lordly Supper, or it is to say, it takes its character from the person who we honor: the Lord.

But Paul has to say to the Corinthians, that what they were doing when they came together was not the Lord's Supper (11:20). Their egotism and carnality had so seriously degraded this solemn occasion so that now it couldn't be called the Lord's Supper. Later he reminds them of that which he had received and had taught them concerning the institution of this memorial of the same Lord in the night in which He was being betrayed. Therefore they should see how serious it is to eat of this bread and drink of this cup of the Lord unworthily.

7th Column ("the prayers")

Even though it is the last item mentioned, we shouldn't think that it has less importance. The seventh column of a Biblical assembly is its total dependence on the Lord in prayer. One of the secrets of power and prosperity of the first church was its exercise in prayer (Acts 1:14; 2:42; 3:1; 4:24, 31; 6:4, etc.). We cannot doubt that, at the beginning, the assembly in Corinth was conformed to this same pattern.

But it seems that now they had more interest in praying in tongues, which didn't have any benefit to the rest of the brethren who couldn't say "Amen" at their giving of thanks (14:14-17). And what would the prayer meeting in Corinth be like if they didn't feel any need, now being satisfied, now being rich (4:8)? Are we depending entirely in the Lord in every exercise of the assembly? Or are we depending more in our organization, our methods, our capabilities, etc.?

We see the way in which the Corinthian assembly had been departing from the Biblical model with relation to every one of the seven columns. And what of ourselves?

"If you are not obedient to the revealed will of God you cannot expect to know the hidden will of God." J. Allen

The Church as the Body of Christ, and its Local Aspect Pt. 2

D. McGeachy

Since the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands (Acts 7:48). The woman at Sychar's well said, "*Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship*"; but the Lord replied, "*The hour cometh when ye shall neither*

in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father . . . the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him," (see John 4:20-24). True worship must be not in spirit only, but also in truth: and He who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life said, "*Where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst of them,*" Matt. 18:20. Such a gathering was seen for the first time in Acts 2:36. The Spirit of God testifies, "*Jesus also that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate,*" (Heb. 13:12). The obedience of faith says, "*Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach; by Him let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His Name,*" (Heb. 13:15).

"*God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints,*" (1 Cor. 14:33). Here we have more than one church, each composed of a smaller or larger number of God's people at any given time. Of this aspect of the church the apostle said, "*I, as a wise master builder, have laid the foundation . . . which is Jesus Christ,*" (1 Cor. 3:10-11). The history of the beginning of the church at Corinth is given in Acts 18. When the apostle went to Corinth he found two who were in the church, the body of Christ, while as yet there was no church of God at Corinth in its local aspect. Of this local church the apostle could say truthfully, "*I have laid the foundation.*" Through the preaching of the Gospel, souls were saved; and then baptized: and when persecution arose, the apostle separated the disciples into the house of one Justus; and he continued there a year and six months teaching them the word of God, and thus the foundation of the church of God at Corinth was laid.

After a time, Paul, accompanied by Aquila and Priscilla, came to Ephesus where Paul left them. They, hearing Apollos, a man of Alexandria, eloquent, and mighty in the Scriptures, but knowing only the baptism of John, took him to their home, and expounded to him the way of the Lord more perfectly. He, obtaining a letter of commendation from the brethren at Ephesus, went to Corinth, and helped them much who had believed through grace, convincing the Jews "*I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase,*" (1 Cor. 3:6). Thank God for men who water God's assemblies instead of distracting them by drawing away disciples after themselves!

After the apostle declared the fact that he had laid the foundation of the church at Corinth he gives a word of caution, "*Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.*" Man has nothing to do with putting into the Church which is His body, there Christ is the builder; but in the local Church, man is the builder, and is responsible for

what kind of material he builds in. Six different kinds of material are mentioned—gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble. The first three abide, beautifying and enriching the building; the last three soon perish, fit emblem of the natural man. Many a fine specimen of the natural man has been added to an assembly causing grief and trouble to God's people. Absalom was a beautiful man, but he had neither the honor of the king, nor the welfare of the people at heart. Such men steal the hearts of the people and wreck God's assemblies. "*I am of Paul; I am of Apollos, I of Cephas,*" thus the lordship of Christ was set aside in Corinth; and flagrant sin tolerated and gloried in. What need of great care in regard to those who are received into an assembly! There are those who object to such care, saying, "It is the Father's table, and all the children have a right there." Not so. The Father's table is seen in Luke 15:20-24. The feast of remembrance is the Lord's table, where the Lordship of Christ is to be owned. (1 Cor. 10:20.)

For a place in the assembly it is necessary, not only to be a child of God, but also to have a readiness to give Jesus His place as Lord. In 1 Cor. 14:23-24 we have two classes sitting back, the unbelievers and the unlearned. The unbelievers are the unsaved, and the unlearned are the children of God who have not known the truth as to God's order. When the child of God learns that "this is the thing that the Lord has commanded," and is clean morally and doctrinally, then he can be received to the glory of God, and not before.

After reception there is the "*continuing steadfastly in the apostles doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and of prayers,*" (Acts 2:42). How often the prayer meeting is lightly esteemed, and trifles are allowed to keep some away from it! It is not only a privilege, but also a responsibility to be at the prayer meeting, just the same as at the breaking of bread.

For the breaking of the bread it is necessary to be in a proper spiritual condition, if one is to eat worthily. What does it mean to eat and drink unworthily? If Aaron's sons had gone into the tabernacle in the wilderness without washing the defilement from their hands and feet at the laver, they would have gone in unworthily—unworthy of the One who had His dwelling in the tabernacle. The One whose name is Holy dwelt there, and it was death to the person who disregarded this and went in with defilement on his body. (Ex. 30:17-20.) Our blessed Lord is in the midst of His gathered people, and to assume to keep the feast in remembrance of Him, with unconfessed sin, is despising His holy presence. The word of God reveals us to ourselves, showing us all that is contrary to the mind of God; and provision is made for our cleansing, "*If we*

confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The Lord said to His disciples, "*Now are ye clean through the word which I have spoken to you,*" (John 15:3).

There are three things that characterize a house, ownership, presence, and rule. The local assembly is spoken of as the church of God (1 Cor. 1:2), God's building (1 Cor. 3:9), temple of God (1 Cor. 3:16), and our Lord Jesus Christ as Son over God's house bears rule over the assembly (Heb. 3:6). "*The time has come that judgment must begin at the house of God,*" (1 Pet. 4:17). There are various phases of judgment and discipline in the house of God, the object being that we may be partakers of His holiness (Heb. 12:10). There is self-judgment: if we would judge ourselves we should not be judged; but failing in this God chastens His own that they should not be condemned with the world, (1 Cor. 11:32). If self-judgment is not exercised presumptuous sins will follow; it may be the disorderly walk that calls for rebuke, or those who are seeking to go on with God to withdraw from the disorderly person, (2 Thess. 3:6). If repentance is not wrought, the more serious discipline spoken of in Matt. 18:15-20 may have to be applied by the assembly. In the Old Testament, if a man were suspected of leprosy, the priest examined him, and, if uncertain, he shut the man up for seven days, and then examined him again, and if still undecided he shut the man up for seven days more, but when it was decided that it was leprosy the man's place was to dwell alone outside the camp. There is a striking similarity between this and Matt. 18. A brother has trespassed; his trespass is brought before him by his brother; if he will not hear, one or two more are taken along to bring before the man his trespass. There is no undue haste, but during the time of waiting verse 19 is given heed to, then after due time has been given and waiting upon God, if there is no repentance the case is to be told to the church, and if still no repentance he is to be treated as a heathen man and a publican; his place is outside the assembly. When the assembly carries out the word of God, thus, in discipline their act is bound in heaven, "*For where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst of them.*"

In 1 Cor. 5, the order of procedure is different because the character of the sins mentioned is such as cannot be tolerated in any assembly where Christ is owned as Lord. "*I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner: with such an one no not to eat.*" The discipline here is to extend even to a social meal. "*Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.*" It does not say, that dear brother, but, that wicked person. Discipline has also to be carried out on those who imbibe false doctrine. They are to

be delivered unto Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme, (1 Tim. 1:28). Discipline is to be carried out in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Wherever the Lord is found "in the midst," He is always the focus of attention. JNP

Stewardship

Albert Long

2. Stewardship in the Gospel

"We were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel" (1 Thess. 2:4). Paul's words clearly reveal responsibility in regard to a stewardship received in the gospel, which is in evidence elsewhere in his epistles (cf. 2 Cor. 3:6; 4:7; 5:18-20). Nothing else can explain his uncompromising attitude towards error, of whatever kind, which threatened, whether by precept or practice, to violate that "revelation of Jesus Christ" entrusted to him (Gal. 1:12). Of necessity therefore, such a charge demanded in him, as in his companions, a corresponding consistency of doctrine and life, otherwise was their stewardship betrayed. Accordingly, he reminds the Thessalonians that the message addressed to them had not been such as to please men, but God, nor had it been couched in flattering words or designed to exalt its hearers (1 Thess. 2:4-6), because the dignity of that trust would not permit of devices framed to make it attractive to men at the loss of its power and indictment, for had he done so, he would have ceased to be "the servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10). To please men must have meant that the gospel would have needed drastic excision to have avoided offending the idolatrous practices of the Thessalonians. or in the case of the Galatians, that admixture of law and grace termed "*another gospel*" and rightly anathematized by Paul (ch. 1:6-9).

For such was a negation of Christ's work (chap. 2:21; 5:1-4, 6). Had he preached an excised gospel "*the offence of the cross*" would have ceased, and hence the continuance of opposition was but witness to his faithfulness in his charge (chap. 5:11). Then their manner of life needed to be such as would "*be worthy of the gospel of Christ*" (Phil. 1:27 R.V.), and would insure them the respect of their listeners. How convincing, therefore, are Paul's words when he appeals to the Thessalonian converts; once enmeshed in idolatry with its attendant uncleanness, "*Ye are witnesses . . . how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you*" (2:10), for only by reason of lives lived very near to their Lord could they claim that the Thessalonians became "*imitators of us, and of the Lord*" (1:6 R.V.), a statement

otherwise reprehensible. Small wonder that the reception of their Word was "*not as the word of men but as the word of God*" (2:13).

Such exhortations as are given by Paul to Timothy could only rightly come from one who, in his own stewardship, had proved himself faithful, for he writes "*O Timothy, guard the deposit* (i.e., the gospel) *which is committed unto thee*" (1 Tim. 6:20 R.V. marg.), translated by Moffat, "keep the securities of the faith intact." And again, "*the good deposit which was committed unto thee guard through the Holy Spirit which dwelleth in us*" (2 Tim. 1:14, R.V. marg.), as though he realized the force of the psalmist's words, "*except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain*" (Ps. 127:1). For the safe custody of such securities, "*treasure in earthen vessels*" (2 Cor. 4:7), demanded more than human vigilance and care, were they to be preserved intact against depredation. And this too, would seem to be the meaning of Paul's declaration concerning his own stewardship-- "*I am persuaded that He is able to guard the deposit which He hath committed unto me against that day*" (2 Tim. 1:12, R.V. marg.). For who else could be "*sufficient for these things*"?

The feat of Eleazar, who defended a patch of barley against the Philistines, until "*his hand was weary and . . . clave unto the sword,*" to the working of a great deliverance under God (2 Sam. 23:9,10; 1 Chron. 11:12-14), well anecdotes the words of Paul in his valedictory message to Timothy, "*I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith*" (chap. 4:7), surely the words of one who, like the doughty Eleazar in type, had in the midst of enemies, "*earnestly contended for the faith*" (Jude 1:3), and was only to be deterred in its defence by death (2 Tim. 4:6).

As those who, although maybe in a far less degree than Paul, are "*ambassadors for Christ,*" with a message of peace to a world at enmity with our Lord (2 Cor. 5:18-20), shall we not also regard our stewardship in the gospel as something sacred, to be kept inviolate, at all costs, until "*that day*" (2 Tim. 4. 8). (To be continued)

One of the ancient philosophers said: "When men speak evil of thee, live so that no one will believe them."

When we are by ourselves, we have to watch our thought; when in the family, our tempers; when in company, our tongues.

Slavery, pt. 2

Robert Surgenor

Spiritual Myopia

Peter informs us of some of the things that the scholar-slave learns in Christ's school, and gives diligence to those things taught. Notice what he says; *"Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins"* (2 Pet. 1:5-9). You can see by the passage, that if the teachings are not taken into the heart, that the slave loses sight of Calvary and the wondrous fact of his own salvation. He has *"forgotten that he was purged from his old sins."* Not only this, he loses his farsightedness and becomes nearsighted. He develops spiritual myopia! This affects even his conscience, and he becomes self-centered. There seems to be no disturbing voice from within his soul telling him of his errors, and he goes on in his erring ways undisturbed. Any correction from without vexes him and may even produce anger. He has become a "runaway slave."

A Tailor-Made Yoke

The word "aval," among the Jews, which is translated "yoke, signified not only that sort of neck-harness by which bullocks wore in pulling wagons, carts, or plows; but also any kind of bond, or obligation, to do some particular thing, or to do some particular work, such as; obedience to the revealed will of God.

The yoke Christ's listeners were under had made them weary: He beckons them to shake that yoke off and to try on His, for His yoke was "easy." The word "easy" is very interesting. It means "tailor-made." Standard yokes were made for animals employed in pulling things, such as carts and plows. The buyer took his pick of yokes, either small, medium, or large. However, a rich man, regarding the life and comfort of his beast would say, "Those are not good enough for some of my oxen would be chafed by those yokes. I will have my team of oxen measured, and the yoke tailor-made to their exact shape, so that they will hardly feel the yoke upon them." That is the kind of a yoke the Lord places upon those who come unto Him for salvation and rest. Matthew Henry speaks of Christ's yoke as being "gracious, sweet, pleasant and lined with love." The nature of all Christ's commands, are very reasonable in themselves, and profitable to us. With His commands, He gives us assistance and encouragement, making His yoke one of pleasantness. His yoke is easy to the new nature, for He has given His

Spirit to us, who empowers us to keep His commandments joyfully. Some of His burdens may seem a little hard at first, but they become easy afterwards; because of the love of God and the hope of heaven in our soul. "We are yoked to work, and therefore must be diligent; we are yoked to submit, and therefore must be humble and patient: we are yoked together with our fellow-servants, and therefore must keep up the communion of saints: and 'the words of the wise are as goads,' to those who are thus yoked" (Matthew Henry).

Not only this, His burden is light. There are afflictions that befall us because we are Christians. I am not referring to the afflictions of poor health and disease, for such befall all men, whether they are saved or not saved. The afflictions I am referring to are afflictions that come our way from the powers of darkness, because we are the children of God. These afflictions are allowed by God for various reasons, as we see in Job's case. The natural man could hardly speak of Paul's afflictions as light. Notice some of them. *"In stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness"* (2 Cor. 11:23-27). Yet Paul speaks of these unpleasant experiences as "our light affliction"! (2 Cor. 4:17). Scourged, his back made into ribbons of bloody flesh, his feet fast in stocks, and lying in muck and mud in a hole beneath a prison in Philippi, what does he do? Why he prays and joyfully sings praises to God! (Acts 16:25). Amazing! Unreal! Unnatural! Is he out of his mind? Has he gone mentally insane? Has dementia overtaken him, so that he doesn't know his right hand from his left? Not at all! What has happened is this, he has found that this affliction, this suffering, this burden, is merely light, it is easy. How could this be? Well, he had farsightedness, and here is what he saw beyond the confines of those dark and muddy prison walls. *"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal"* (2 Cor. 4:17-18). There it is! That is how the Lord made Paul's burden light. He gave him a new set of eyes. Like Abraham and Moses, he saw things afar off. How nearsighted the world is. They cannot see afar off. They are groping around in Satanic darkness and are totally ignorant of anything of a spiritual nature. Paul had 20/20 spiritual vision! He saw the end result of all the

burdens that the Lord had allowed him to bear. I hope that you too, like Paul, have 20/20 farsightedness, for if you do, your burdens will be light, no matter how heavy the burden may seem to be to a spiritually blinded person. Our Lord has established a wonderful school, and has invited us to be His scholars. We must enter, listen carefully, and seriously, for our spiritual welfare depends on our subjection to His teaching. His school is called "The Word of God."

After His words, "*And learn of Me,*" He says, "*For I am meek and lowly in heart.*" Could this be the first lesson we learn in His school? Possibly so. Those who have learned this primary lesson you will find to be Christ-like. They have mortified their pride and passion; they are not self-important; they are not loud-mouthed; they are not full of self confidence; they are not belligerent; and if they are recognized as an elder in an assembly, they certainly are not dictatorial.

The next thing Christ mentions is; "*Ye shall find rest unto your souls.*" Rest from what? To those who would initially come to Him He promised rest (v.28). They were heavy laden with burdens grievous to be borne. Those burdens are spoken of in Matthew 23:4. "*For they (the scribes and Pharisees) bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.*" Those burdens were unscriptural and unnecessary religious rules and regulations. Christ promised that those who trusted in Him would find relief from these burdens. The coming one would also find rest from a condemning conscience, rest from the dread of meeting an angry God, and rest from the guilt of their sin. He would have peace with God, as a result of being justified by faith (Rom. 5:1).

However, the Lord promises "rest" again to those who have entered His school. "*Ye shall find rest unto your souls*" (v. 29). However, this rest is different than the "rest" promised from religious rites and burdens. This "rest" is most precious to the scholars of His school, who are His slaves of obedience. He gives His scholar-slaves rest from anxiety and fear. The ungodly are living in fear today. The economic situation is desperate. People with money are afraid of losing it through another depression like people witnessed in the early 1920's. Ads abound, "Buy gold! By all means, buy gold!" Ah yes, buy gold! Yet Peter said, "*Silver and gold have I none*" (Acts 3:6). He had forsaken all to follow Christ (Matt. 19:27). He was not anxiously taking thought of the morrow, and worrying about the near future. Why no, he was simply trusting that the Lord would take care of any dark situation, and provide for him. For after all, didn't the Master say, "*Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?*" (Matt. 6:31). Peter had divine rest.

The Great Master also gives His scholar-slaves rest when they are reproached for His name's sake. They count it a privilege to suffer reproach, and are able to rejoice. Isn't that what the Scriptures teach? Notice: "*Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven*" (Matt. 5:11-12). "*And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name*" (Acts 5:41). Tormented, and abused, yet they had rest! The rest that only their Master could give. What happy slaves they were!

Coming back to Romans 6 we notice this pertinent question. "*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid.*" (Rom.6:1). "*What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid*" (Rom. 6:15). One might say, "Just what does Paul mean by these two alarming statements, that seem to divide this chapter into two segments?" Well, the fact of the matter is, it would seem that Paul's preaching was misunderstood. He had preached that the sinner is saved by grace and that once saved he was always saved. Seemingly, there were those who formed the idea that Paul was saying that since one was saved, a Christian could continue his sinful life and not lose his salvation. Furthermore they were saying that Paul's preaching encouraged such conduct, for the more one sinned, the more they magnified the grace of God. Any right-minded Christian knows that nothing could be farther from the truth than these accusations. To refute such ideas, we consequently have Paul writing out his defense in Romans chapter six. "God forbid," he replies to his accusers, and then goes on to expound to us the great truth of the servitude of saint and sinner. Both are virtual slaves!

Paul's teaching is very clear, that the sinner is a slave to sin - he serves it (v. 6). However Paul says, "You Christians too are slaves, but you have a far better Master, — Christ your Lord." In opening his defense he reveals that we are so inseparably linked to Christ that everything that happened to Christ, happened to us! Christ died - we died! Christ was buried - we are buried! Christ was raised - we were raised! He commences by stating. "*Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?*" (v.3). Notice the little word "into." You were placed into Christ and made "members of His body" (Eph.5:30). This took place immediately at conversion.

Christ came into the realm of sin and death, but upon His resurrection it no longer had dominion over Him (v. 9). Being under its realm He was a Man of sorrows, and "*in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin*" (Heb. 4:15). By identifying Himself with us, He took our sins upon Him.

Thus placing Himself under law, He bore its awful curse (Gal.4:4) *“For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God.”* (v.10). *“He died UNTO sin.”* Meaning, He died in His relationship to it. He now has no more to do with it, as requiring to be atoned for. He now lives unto God, His life is now lived in a new sphere. He lives in the realm of God, a contrast to the realm of sin and death. Now comes the turning point in this epistle from doctrine to application. Paul presses the point of our link with Him in His death, burial, and resurrection. *“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in (through) Jesus Christ our Lord”* (v. 11). “Reckon,” in other words, keep this ever before you, what is true of Him is true of us, we died UNTO sin, but we are alive unto God through our union with Him. This is not something to be attained to, but rather an established fact! Sin has no more dominion over us - we are dead to it. We are in a new sphere, we are alive unto God. Sin may be a nuisance to us, but it no longer is our master. When we were the servants of sin we were free from righteousness as being our master (v. 20). *“Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness,”* or, *“being enslaved to righteousness”* (v. 18). *“But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life”* (v. 22).

Christians are slaves to Christ, slaves to righteousness and cannot live a continual life of sin. *“We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not”* (1 John 5:18). Peter states, *“He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin. That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God”* (1 Peter 4:1, 2).

Thus we conclude, that anyone who continues in sin is not a slave of Christ at all, but rather a slave of sin. Such have never been born again. May we, as slaves, daily seek His grace to live entirely for Him, so that at the Judgment Seat of Christ we may hear those words from our Master and Lord; “Well done thou good and faithful slave.”

I cannot work to save my soul,
That work has all been done!
But I would work like any slave,
In love to God’s dear Son.

He is righteous in all His ways and holy in all His works. It is the rule of all His acts, and the source of all His punishments. If every attribute of the Deity were a distinct member, purity (Holiness) would be the form, the soul, the spirit to animate them.

S. Charnock "Existence and Attributes of God"

“BE COURTEOUS”

1 Peter 3:8

In these days of hurry and nervous strain, and of many demands upon time and strength, one is apt to lose sight of the necessity for cultivating those graces which may be regarded as the “lily work” of the Christian character. In the apostolic injunction, “Be courteous,” we see that the grace of courtesy is a necessary part of the equipment of every child of God. And yet how very often among even the most devoted Christians, this grace is practically absent. The lack of it is very often not even recognized and if it be too obvious to be disregarded, it is the custom to describe discourtesy as merely “manner,” or to find other excuses for its absence, which are equally futile.

Courtesy plays a large and very important part in the economy of the Christian life, and its influence cannot be over-estimated. The little courtesies of life, including courteous manner, courteous speech, courteous habits, all of which are merely personal translations of the Golden Rule, have a greater effect upon one’s fellows, and do more to recommend one’s Christianity, than is generally realized. An earnest follower of our Lord, with a burning desire to win souls for Him, or a Christian greatly desirous of glorifying Him by life and by lip, may hinder, or even spoil, his or her work by the discourteous word or action, and may create an adverse impression which can never be dispelled. The hasty reply, the abrupt word, the curt greeting, the impatient manner, the unanswered letter, the broken engagement, the grudging interest, are all trifles perhaps in the life of a busy man or woman whose days are filled with service for God, but they are trifles which tell, they are the spoiled “lily-work” in the “temple” of a fragrant Christian life. We must ever take time to be holy, and should we not also take time to be courteous, for one should be the complement of the other. The excuse is sometimes made that good manners are a natural gift, and cannot be cultivated. But is it not true that good manners spring from heart culture, and being so, is it not in the power of every Christian to claim the help of the Holy Spirit to overcome natural deficiencies in this direction, and to cultivate that sweet courtesy which should flow naturally from the spring of the love which has its source in the love of God Himself?

“Be courteous” is the inspired command, and failure to manifest this Christian grace is disobedience to the Divine will.
—Extract.