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## A Living Sacrifice

Rom. 12:1-2

John Bain

This is the beginning of the last section of the epistle. God's mercies run throughout this epistle: and because of these mercies extended to us the apostle beseeches us to present our bodies a living sacrifice. He does not here command; He beseeches, or exhorts. In chapter 6, it is "yield," which for the most part is another translation of the same word that occurs here. It is not a command to obey under pains and penalties, but comes from a fellow believer who has needed, and heeded, the exhortation as much as those he now exhorts.

The word sacrifice has for its root meaning "to kill," but what is presented here is a "living sacrifice." In that living sacrifice of the body, the old life that was lived must go. It is not upon any humanly constructed "altar" that the sacrifice must be placed; it is simply before Him, or to His face. The body is to be devoted to God, surrendered to Him. This surrender is not to be canceled. In conversation with a brother, some time since, I said, "The most of the lives of God's saints are made up of broken vows." He agreed, and then said, "Whatever is tacitly said, either in prayer or otherwise, God holds me to it." Jephthah said, "I have opened my mouth to Jehovah and I cannot go back." It is well for saints to hold this in remembrance. Are you where you once were; or have you "left" somewhat behind you? "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." God tests us by our preaching, and by our prayers.

The apostle was surrendered forever, else he would not have besought us as he did. "Acceptable," or well pleasing to God. Other things are spoken of as well pleasing to God.

(See Phil. 4:18. Rom. 14:18. Eph. 5:10.) And this, after all, is but "reasonable service." The word used for "service" is that which takes in the Old Testament ritual service and covers the whole; and we are wholly His, (see 1 Cor. 6:15-20), His by the purchase of redemption; so that it is but reasonable that God should have all.

Here I ask a question. Why should I not be like the people of this age? I meet with a quite sufficient answer—because Jesus died to deliver me from this present evil world, (Gal. 1:4). Or as we have it in 1 Pet. 1:4, "As obedient children not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts in your ignorance." We were all there once, (Eph. 2:3). There was no difference (Rom. 3:22). What we have we received for nothing; so it is but reasonable that we should surrender our all.

"But be ye transformed," or changed. We are to "put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him," (Col. 3:10). This takes place "By the renewing of the Holy Spirit," (Tit. 3:5). "But we all with unveiled face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are changed," (2 Cor. 3:18). To the surrendered will the doctrine be made known, (John 7:17). To such the will of God will be found to be good, well pleasing, and perfect. Amen.

## Mighty Men for David

2 Sam. 23

It is fitting that in the chapter that records the last words of David, the names and the exploits of the mighty men who served and suffered with him should be recorded by the

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Holy Ghost. Unknown and unhonored in the world, they were attached to his person when he was despised and rejected, and they were willing to bear his reproach through years of toil and strife. But the time came at last when their deeds, remembered all along, were publicly mentioned for the admiration of a powerful Kingdom, and they themselves were entered upon the roll of immortality, as if to illustrate Christ's loving remembrance of His faithful followers, and the reward that He will bestow upon His fearless soldiers.

First, we have the Tachmonite, meaning "wisdom," that sat in the seat, chief among the captains; *"the same was Adino the Eznite: he lifted up his spear against eight hundred whom he slew at one time."* Adino means "pleasure"; Eznite, "a spear," from a verb signifying "to be strong," and his pleasure was to lift up his spear for David's sake. It appears that he acted alone, not waiting for others to strike a blow, but ready, ready to do what in him lay for the master he loved so well without waiting for human assistance. Such men are greatly needed now, men who care not whether they go with the multitude, or against the multitude, men who struggle on alone, single-handed, under a controlling sense of personal privilege and individual obligation to do all, to dare all, to endure all for the Lord Jesus.

Second, *"After him was Eleazar (whom God helps), the son of Dodo (beloved of the Lord) one of the three mighty men with David, when they defied the Philistines that were there gathered together to battle, and the men of Israel were gone away; he arose and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto the sword; and the Lord wrought a great victory that day, and the people returned after him only to spoil."* Here the warrior had companions, and could assume the attitude of defiance, although there were few that stood with him against the enemy. But it is worthy of special mention that his hand clave unto the sword, and the Christian soldier who now would be used of the Lord, must have his hand cleave to *"the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God."* (Eph. 6:17). He will be most honored who honors the Word, and the people will return after him to reap the fruits of his victory.

Third, *"After him was Shammah (desolate, laid waste) the son of Agee (fugitive) the Hararite (mountaineer). And the Philistines were in a troop (for foraging), where was a piece of ground full of lentiles; and the people fled from the Philistines. But he stood in the midst of the ground and defended it, and slew the Philistines, and the Lord wrought a great victory."* The people of God were brought very low, when a piece of ground producing lentiles was their only stay, and when they turned their backs to their foes. But there was one man who could stand on the defensive, and the record is the same as when there was defiance of the uncircumcised, *"the Lord wrought a great victory."* It is He

who gives the increase, when His followers defend or defy, but He counts the fidelity and courage of His soldiers to win the battle.

Fourth, the principle that animated and sustained these three mighty men was personal love for David. They came to him *"in the harvest time unto the cave of Adullam"* when the sun was brightest, and the song of birds the sweetest, and the flowers of earth the fairest; and it is not said of them as it is of others, *"Every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him."* (1 Sam. 22:1, 2). *"David longed, and said, Oh, that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem which is by the gate."* He gave no command, he only longed, breathing out the wish of his heart, and the three mighty men broke through the ranks of the Philistines, fighting their way to the well, and fighting their way back, to minister in the least to the gratification of their King. David would not drink of the water purchased at so great a cost, but poured it out as a drink offering to minister to the of the Lord in view of such devotedness.

Fifth, *"And Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zerui-ah, was chief among the three; and he lifted up his spear against three hundred, and slew them, and had the name among the three. Was he not most honorable of the three? Therefore he was their Captain. Howbeit he attained not unto the first three."* There is nothing in the estimation of the Lord Jesus like love, and this will be the standard of reward at His coming. There men who have filled a continent, or Christendom with the noise of their fame who will not attain to the first rank, if mixed up with their brilliant achievements there has been self-seeking, or the lust of power, or the study of theology as science, or merely loyalty to the church. On the other hand there are those who are content to go forth unto Him without the camp, maligned, misrepresented, hated by their own brethren, or entirely neglected. But when their life's history is revealed by fire, they shall receive a reward.

Sixth, *"And Benaiah (built up of the Lord) the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man, of Kabzeel, who had done many acts. He slew two lion-like men of Moab (type of the flesh); he went down also and slew a lion (type of the devil) in the midst of the pit, in time of snow; and he slew an Egyptian (type of the world) a goodly man; and the Egyptian had a spear in his hand; but he went down to him with a staff, and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and slew him with his own spear."* A good lesson may be learned from his example by bold and weary soldiers of the cross. If a worldling comes at them with the oft-quoted, and misapplied text, *"a time to dance"* (Eccl. 3:4) let them reply, *"a time to kill,"* and snatching away

their spear, remind them from the Word that we have become dead to the world's pleasures, etc., by the cross of Christ.

*I never saw a useful Christian who was not a man of the Bible. If a man neglects his Bible, he may pray and ask God to help in His work, but God cannot make much use of him; for there is not much for the Spirit to work upon.*

## " ... and God divided the light from the darkness"

Genesis 1:4

"WHEN Satan unites what God separates, and separates what God unites, judgment is sure to follow." The first great calamity in this world's history was brought about by "the sons of God" (Seth's descendants) intermarrying with the descendants of Cain. Then *giants* were born. "The term in Hebrews implies, not so much the idea of great stature, as of reckless ferocity; impious and daring characters, who spread devastation and carnage far and wide." (Fausset). The unhappy result of this union was that "every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5).

But God was long suffering. The Spirit would not always strive, but there were 120 years of probation. Long before this, a warning was given to Enoch, the man who walked with God. He named his son "Methuselah," which seems to mean, "when he is dead it shall be sent," that is the Deluge; it was such a judgment that only one man and his family were thought worthy to escape. (See 1 Peter 3:18-20). "The spirits in prison are those, being disobedient, perished in the flood. To them the Spirit of Christ, in Noah, preached, when the longsuffering of God waited. Now they are reserved in prison for judgment."

Balaam, "from the top of the rocks" saw God's Israel as a separate people—"The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations" (Num. 23:19); "Israel then shall dwell in safety alone" (Deut. 33:27, 28). They were separated to God by **Election**, Deut. 7:6; by **Prediction**, Num. 23:9; by **Prohibition**, Judges 2:2; and by **Presence**, Ex. 33:16.

It has been said that Israel was never safer than when Balaam strove to turn God against them, but when, with the aid of false leaders, he sought to turn them against God, they were never in more danger. Again the sons of God saw the

daughters of men (the daughters of Moab) that they were "fair," and were attracted both to them and to their idols. The people, whom God meant to dwell alone, were deceived and defiled, and the judgment of God fell heavily on them, their leaders, and later on the false prophet. 24,000 people were carried off by the plague.

Turning to the New Testament, (Matthew 13) the Good Seed (the Word of God) was sown by the Son of Man, but the very next parable shows His enemy, the Devil, sowing tares (a kind of imitation wheat) in the field while men slept. As it grew, what appeared to be a splendid field of wheat, was mostly tares, choking and crowding out the real wheat, as the thorns choked the Word (v. 22). To His own the Lord revealed the awful judgment that awaits the unreal; angels gather out all things that offend, and those who do iniquity and cast them into a furnace of fire (v. 41).

What is seen in the world has a tendency to appear in the Church. As in Daniel's image, (Dan. 2) clay appears with the iron in the legs and feet. So today the clay answers to an unholy, destructive element, introduced into stable government, bringing weakness and disaster to the nations, led by the "giants" described above, so the enemy seeks to bring in false brethren with real;—"grievous wolves, not sparing the flock."

They entered in, Acts 20; they were brought in, Gal. 2:4; they crept in, Jude 4.

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God" (1 John 4:1). "If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as My mouth: let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them" (Jeremiah 15:19).

**"The work of Christ applies to my conscience; His person to my heart."** JND

## Stewardship, pt. 1

Albert Long

That the Christian life carries with it responsibilities of a high order, in the nature of stewardships, which may only be evaded to our sorrow and loss, as well as to that of others, is clearly apparent in the Word of God, as we shall presently hope to show. But responsibility conjoined with great privilege should not induce in us a cowardly "spirit of fear" (2 Tim. 1. 6, 7) to the evasion of the task (see Matt.

25. 25 and Luke 19:20, 21), but of confidence, in spite of our own weakness, in the enabling power of God to perform through us that which He has called us to do (see 2 Cor. 3: 5, 6), for truly God's "biddings" are virtually His "enablings."

### Stewardship in Gift

*"According as each hath received a gift, ministering it . . . as good stewards of the manifold grace of God"* (1 Pet. 4:10, R.V.) In relation to *"the church, which is His (Christ's) body"* (Eph. 1:22, 23), of which we are the "members" (Eph. 5:30), it is seen that no member, be it never so "feeble," "less honourable" or "uncomely" (1 Cor. 12:22, 23), is devoid of some gift. Hence it is that the suffering or honoring of but "one member" is reflected in the local assembly, as in the natural state, and the whole is impoverished or strengthened accordingly (1 Cor. 12:26). And also, as in the natural body *"all members have not the same office"* (function), (Rom. 12:4), so in the spiritual, the members have *"gifts differing according to the grace that is given"* (v. 6), all operated, however, by *"the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will,"* (1 Cor. 12:11). It therefore behooves us, as good stewards, to attend upon our particular service, for the well-being of the whole body. Then as in the physical realm the function of its members vary in importance, so with the "diversities of gifts" (1 Cor. 12:4) in the church some are with more prominent uses than others. Among them are certain special gifts, given to men who have been "set ....in the church" (1 Cor. 12:28), divinely disposed in the body, wherever represented by assemblies, according to their need, for *"he gave some (gifted men), apostles; and some, prophets ; and some, evangelists ; and some, pastors and teachers; .... for the edifying of the body of Christ .... unto a perfect (full-grown) man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"* (Eph. 4:11-13). To these were added lesser gifts, touching needs of a more practical nature, and of such were *"distributing to the necessity of saints," "hospitality" and "helps"* (Rom. 12:13 ; 1 Cor. 12:28).

In Paul's anxious exhortations to Timothy, *"Neglect not the gift that is in thee"* (1 Tim. 4:14) and *"stir up (as into flame) the gift of God which is in thee"* (2 Tim. 1. 6), it seems as though he feared lest Timothy's gift were languishing for want of use, and had need, like the embers of a dying fire, of urgent attention and refueling lest it become dead and useless. To Archippus also was the word deemed necessary *"Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord. that thou fulfill (complete) it,"* (Col. 4:17), reminding us of the possibility of an incomplete service if there is not that "patient continuance" to the end.

May the Lord graciously reveal to us all, that service upon which He would have us to wait, and strengthen us in its due performance.

*(continued)*

**In trouble God tries our faith, and then is the time to try His friendship. If we do, we shall find it real, permanent and profitable. This friend loveth at all times, but manifests His friendship most in trying times.**

### Young Men

When a baby is born into the world it is impossible to say whether that baby will grow up to be a blessing or a curse to mankind. They all pass through very similar experiences in developing from infancy into young manhood. One of the first lessons that they require to learn is to be quiet, for they know no better than to make all kinds of disagreeable noises, any time, any place. Later on they have to be repeatedly told that in company children should be seen and not heard. They require a schooling, and discipline that is very contrary to their natures, and that to them seems very harsh, and often unjust, even though it be the discipline of love. Many have to pass through hardships that require perseverance and self denial before they attain the success that they aim for in life: and only a very few ever attain anything like the success that they desire. Many fail in life because of the lack of that moral integrity that lies at the root of all truly useful lives. Apparent success without this is but success in evil, which after all is but a sham success.

***"Time has wings that fly upward to the Author of time to give account of their usage."***

When a young man is born into God's family it is just as impossible to say whether he is going to be a useful Christian, or a troubler of God's people. He begins his new-born life in comparative ignorance of God, and requires to *"grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,"* (2 Pet. 3:18). He requires to learn to be quiet in the presence of those of riper Christian experience and godliness. He is not to be reckoned amongst the overseers of an Assembly. *"Not a novice (one newly come to the faith), lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil,"* (1 Tim. 3:6). He needs a schooling, and a discipline that is very contrary to the flesh; and that he is apt to think altogether unnecessary, and, it may be, harsh. He may have to pass through business reverses, family troubles, persecution, and such like things to break his self-confidence. He may even have to be

plunged into the ditch, as Job was, or fall into some grievous sin to humble his pride, and break his self-confidence, as Peter did. Young men are apt to think that they know it all when they get a few doctrines crammed into their heads, just as young men fresh out of college think that wisdom will die with them, until experience takes them into her college and teaches them that they know nothing yet as they ought to know it.

It is interesting and instructive to notice how, in every age, God has had to break in those that He purposed to do special service for Him. Jacob had to have years of training under the grinding, covetous hand of Laban. Joseph had to be hated by his brethren; sold into Egypt; slandered by a designing woman; thrown into a prison, and forgotten before he was placed upon the throne. Moses had to be rejected by his brethren; to have forty years at the back side of the desert, before he was ready for his life work of leading God's people through the wilderness. David had to be hunted like a partridge upon the mountains before he was made King: he had to have many reverse experiences before he could give others the Psalms, or become the sweet singer of Israel. Jeremiah's experiences enabled him to weep out his Lamentations. And so it was with all the prophets and men of God, and preeminently with the Lord Jesus Christ, who though infinite in wisdom, and perfect in all His ways, yet *"learned He obedience by the things which He suffered,"* (Heb. 5:8). The apostles followed in His footsteps and learned obedience in the path of suffering. We neither know God, nor ourselves, until we have been tested by the daily trials and have found ourselves wanting; and have tested God in the trials and have found Him unfailing. So God leads His children through the wilderness to prove them; and that they may prove Him.

Timothy was a young man, brought up in a godly home, and converted through the instrumentality of the apostle Paul. When Paul came to Derbe, *"A certain disciple was there, named Timotheus . . . well reported of by the brethren that were of Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him,"* (Acts 16:1-3). He is spoken of as one that "ministered" unto Paul. He was ready to serve the apostle, and to go or come at his command. In writing to the Corinthians Paul said, *"Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear, for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do. Let no man therefore despise him; but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren,"* (1 Cor. 16:10-11). He is spoken of as preaching the Gospel, (2 Cor. 1:19). Again we have *"Paul and Timotheus the servants of Jesus*

**Go and ask believers now, and I think many will tell you: "Oh that I could live my young days over again!" He will most likely say, "Oh that I had spent the beginning of my life in a better way! Oh that I had not laid the foundation of evil habits so strongly in the springtime of my journey!"**

*Christ."* Again he is called, *"our brother and minister of God, (God's minister, R. V.) and our fellow laborer,"* (1 Thess. 3:2). Then we read, *"Know ye not that our brother Timothy is set at liberty,"* (Heb. 13:23). The things which he had learned from the apostle he was to *"commit to faithful men who would be able to teach others also,"* (2 Tim. 2:2).

From these Scriptures we can form a very good estimate of young Timothy's godliness, and of ways in which godliness will manifest itself in other young men. Every young man ought to be well reported of by the brethren, but these cannot give a good report until they have seen godliness manifested, which of course requires some time. Every godly young man will be willing to minister to, or serve those whom God has called out into His work, for while all are servants of God, yet those whom God has called to go forth ministering His word are spoken of as in a special way servants of God. Young Timothy was ready to care for the apostle, and to go or come at his word. He not only is spoken of as ministering to the apostle, he is also spoken of as *"our brother and minister of God,"* (God's minister, R. V.).

Every godly young man ought to be ready to serve God in every way possible, taking a real interest in the things of God. In this way they become known as "the servants of Jesus Christ." And not only so but also win a place as "fellow-laborers," with other servants of the Lord Jesus. This was no smooth path for young Timothy; it required continued self-denial and suffering, even to the prison. When young men get saved they often have bright day-dreams of what they are going to do for their new Master, but upon finding that serving the Lord means self-sacrifice they draw back. To spend hard-earned money for tracts: to go forth using the time that others use for ease and worldly pleasure in distributing these tracts, and to keep at it year after year; to stand by those who preach the Gospel on the street corner; to attend all the meetings; to visit the sick; to minister to the poor; to deny self for Christ's sake—how few are ready for this path? How many a young man has started out full of zeal, but soon the heart goes out to some young woman, they marry, and then the energies that were used for Christ become absorbed in home cares, business cares, and the work of God languishes in their hands. In the early days of the work we are connected with, how many denied themselves for years lest home cares should interfere with the work of Christ? Things right in themselves easily become weights, and hinder in the race. Timothy was a tried young man, and the apostle would have

all appreciate his worth. *“See that he may be with you without fear, for he worketh the work of the Lord as I also do. Let no man therefore despise him; but conduct him forth in peace.”* God will have a controversy with all who despise or hinder such in their service.

## The Church as the Body of Christ, and its Local Aspect

D. McGeachy

The Church which is His body, *“the fullness of Him that filleth all in all”* (Eph. 1:22-23) embraces all the saints of this dispensation—from the day of Pentecost until the Lord comes. It is first mentioned by the Lord Himself in Caesarea Phillipi, away from Jerusalem and Judea, in answer to the question *“Whom say ye that I am?”* The natural man’s thoughts were, John the Baptist, Elias, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. Peter answered, *“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.”* This can only be known by direct revelation from the Father to the heart of the sinner. Our Lord then made known for the first time what had been hidden in the heart of God from a past eternity, (Eph. 3:9), *“On this rock I will build my church.”* Christ is the Rock of ages (Petra), and Peter, a stone (petras) built upon that Rock, as are also all believers of this dispensation *“living stones.”* (1 Pet. 2:5.)

In the Old Testament we get types and figures of what the Lord by the Spirit makes clear to us in the New. *“Whatever things were written aforetime were written for our learning,”* (Rom. 15:4). In Lev. 23:9, when they began to reap their harvest, before they ate of the new harvest, bread, green ears, parched corn, or dry, they had to wave a sheaf of the first fruits before the Lord. Our Lord said, *“Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit.”* The Lord Jesus was God’s *“corn of wheat.”* At Calvary He died; but upon the first day of the week God raised Him from the dead—the first fruits of the new harvest; *“the first fruits of them that slept.”* *“Touch me not,”* He said, *“I am not yet ascended unto my Father.”* There must be neither bread, green ears, parched corn or dry eaten by man until God got His portion.

Fifty days after the sheaf of the first fruits was waved before the Lord, a new meat offering of fine flour baked with leaven, two wave loaves, were offered, the first fruits unto the Lord. The fine flour was the same material that was in the wave sheaf; the working of the leaven was stopped by the fire fifty days after the resurrection of our Lord the Holy Spirit was sent into the world. He testified that God had made that same Jesus who **was** crucified by

the Jews, fifty-three days previously, both Lord and Christ. The Jews on hearing this were convicted of sin. Peter here uses a key—the word of God—and opens to the Jews the kingdom of heaven. On believing the word they were loosed from their sins, becoming one of the two wave loaves, a part of the first fruits of the new harvest of which the Lord Jesus had been the wave sheaf.

The commission of the risen Lord to His disciples (Acts 1:8) was *“Ye shall be witnesses to me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”* Cornelius, a Gentile, was being dealt with by the Spirit of God: yet with all his devotion, prayer saying, and alms giving he was not saved. He was instructed to send for Peter who would *“tell him words whereby he and all his house would be saved.”* Peter again uses the keys of the kingdom, the word of God concerning the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, and the Holy Spirit took possession of Cornelius and those with him who believed the word. Thus the door was opened to the Gentiles: and the second loaf of fine flour, baked with leaven, is waved before the Lord. The Gentiles are fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of the promises in Christ, by the Gospel, *“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles.”* (See John 10:16; Eph. 2:14-15; 3:6; 1 Cor. 12:13.)

The Church in this aspect embraces every child of God from Pentecost until our Lord comes: and it was concerning it the Lord said, *“I will build my Church.”* It is the body of which Christ is the Head. Eph. 1:22-23.

*“Gather my saints together unto me, those who have made a covenant with me by sacrifice,”* (Ps. 50:5). God has not saved His people to remain isolated units: nor to do every one that which is right in his own eyes. Of Shiloh, the Lord Jesus, it was said *“Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be,”* Gen. 49:10. Again, *“Unto the place where the Lord shall choose, out of all your tribes, to put His Name there, to His habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come.”* Deut. 12:5.

The tabernacle, built by Moses, was brought into Canaan and pitched at Shiloh; this was the place where the presence, and Name of the Lord was. Because of the sins of the people of God, the presence of the Lord left the tabernacle. A child was born which was called *“Ichabod,”*—the glory is departed. (1 Sam. 4:21; Jer. 7:12.)

Later, David numbered the children of Israel, contrary to the mind of God (1 Chron. 21), with the result that the plague broke out and seventy thousand of Israel died. Only when David offered an offering at the threshing floor

of Ornan the Jebusite, was the plague stayed. When God answered him there by fire he said, *“This is the house of the Lord God, this is the altar of burnt offering for Israel,”* 1 Chron. 21:14-29; 22:1. As yet all that was there was a heap of ashes; but God revealed this to David as the place where He chose to place His Name.

The kingdom passed to Solomon who built the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared unto his father David, the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, (2 Chron. 3:1). (See also Gen. 22:2; 1 Chron. 21:26-28.)

When all the work that Solomon made for the house of the Lord was finished, Jehovah so filled the house with His presence that the priests could not stand in the house to minister. Thus was fulfilled the word of the Lord in Deut. 12:10. The house was built and Jehovah dwelt among His people.

But the sad history of man’s failure in all that was committed to his hand is written. (See Ezek. 9:11.) In Ezekiel’s day, although loth to do so, the glory departed: and what was before proof against the enemy became an easy prey to Nebuchadnezzar’s army. Israel was carried captive to Babylon, to fulfil the word spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, *“until the land enjoyed her sabbath for seventy years.”* (2 Chron. 36:1 7-21).

At the end of seventy years the Lord gave His people a little reviving in their bondage, as recorded in Ezra and Nehemiah, and the house and wall were again built, but not in their former glory: nor did the glory fill the house until our Lord Jesus entered it, (Matt. 21:12-13), fulfilling Hagai 2:9. *“The glory of the latter house shall be greater than the glory of the former.”*

What should have been a house of prayer for all nations, was a den of thieves, (Matt. 21:13). Again the glory of the Lord leaves the house when the Lord Jesus went out for the last time, until His earthly people shall say, *“Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.”* (See Matt. 23:34-39; 24:1.)

*(continued)*

**Many a man has been able to dispute for the truth who could not suffer for it; and many of God's people have had the grace to suffer for it, who never had ability to dispute for it. A gracious heart is of more value than a powerful intellect.**

## Slavery Today

*Robert Surgenor*

In Ancient Rome, forty percent of the population were slaves, secured by Roman conquests in the Mediterranean. Many were given privileges and worked on farms, in business, and in public buildings. Slaves were the legal property of their owner, and servants for life.

In 1619, a Dutch ship in need of repairs and food, docked in Jamestown, Virginia. Its cargo of twenty black slaves were traded for its needs. Thus the first slaves were introduced to the USA. By 1860, four million slaves were in this country. Many were sold to plantation owners to be used for the benefit of their master. A slave had no will of his own, but was totally subject to his master, having been purchased at a slave-auction. Runaway slaves when captured usually were flogged (30 stripes), branded on the cheek with the letter R, and bound in shackles for one year. Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation (the 13th amendment to the Constitution) and the close of the Civil War (1865) began to free all slaves in this land. Slavery had lasted in the USA for over 240 years.

However, did you know that there is another type of slavery connected with the whole human race? It is very interesting to notice that the word “servant” in our Bible, is often the word “slave.” That word is “doulos, a man of servile condition. One who has given up himself to another’s will. A person devoted to another to the disregard of his own will.” In the KJV it is found 119 times.

## Two Great Masters

Now this is very interesting to me, for I discover that the human race has two great masters. One is sin and the other is Christ. Basically this is the subject of Romans chapter six, and Paul’s writing on this subject is very challenging to us today. The unsaved are slaves to sin. They are under its dominion, control, and power. They cannot help themselves. Notice Romans 3:9. *“We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin. “That cannot cease from sin”* (2 Peter 2:14). How wonderful, that we who are saved have been delivered from the “strong man’s palace,” (Lk.11:21) wherein we were held. We have been called out of darkness into God’s marvelous light (1 Pet. 2:9). However, are you aware of the sobering fact that even though you escaped the slavery of Satan and sin, that you are still a slave, and expected to live a self-abandoned life? You are to be totally obedient to your new Master, who has purchased you with His precious blood.

## Godly Slavery

This is a bold statement, but here is the proof. *“Know ye not that ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price:*

*therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's* (1 Cor. 6:19,20).

Notice, God owns your body and spirit. Let us be careful what we ingest into our body and how we adorn it. Do all to the glory of God. Eat healthy food and clothe yourself modestly. Christ died for us, *“that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again”* (2 Cor. 5:15). This is godly slavery! Have you accepted that position, are you living it? Yes, we stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, but at the same time we seek to present our bodies to God as a living sacrifice (Gal. 5:1; Rom. 12:1). We are SLAVES of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul constantly considered himself a slave of Jesus Christ - do you?

### Satanic Slavery

Satan, as a master, holds his captives various ways. He is the “strong man.” He is armed with various methods in which he holds his captives. He affords his subjects the pleasures of sin, they little realizing that it is only for a season. He grants them worldly prosperity, which in the end is only vanity. He keeps them in peace, so that they have no uneasiness about sin, no sense of their eternal danger, no thoughts of hell, and no consideration concerning salvation. He effectively poisons their brain, blinds their mind, and deadens their conscience, until finally they come to the precipice of eternity and make their fearful and final plunge into hell.

### The Stronger Man

Oh brethren, how thankful we ought to be that the Stronger Man came and delivered us from such slavery to be His slave. His slavery overshadows me with divine love, and instills within me a blessed hope of a home in heaven. In light of such love, in view of such a mighty deliverance, how can I be anything but a slave unto Him Who loved me and gave Himself for me! Christ was the perfect Servant and said to His Father, *“Not My will, but Thine, be done”* (Luke 22:42). Let us who are His slaves emulate Him and truthfully say the same. He has left us an example that we should follow His steps (1 Pet. 2:21). The love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5), and that love enables us to be obedient and faithful slaves, keeping His words. Notice what our Master said. *“If a man love Me, he will keep My words”* (Jn 14:23).

After giving the invitation to come unto Him for rest, He gives those who do come this command and assurance – *“Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.”* (Matt. 11:29-30). The statement is very interesting. Why does He tell us to take His yoke upon ourselves? The thought of

taking on His yoke is, possessing a willing subjection to our new Master, the Lord Jesus. But why take it on? His next words supply the answer. *“And learn of (from) Me.”* Those are very important words! He is telling us, that unless we bow in absolute subjection to Him, He will not teach us.

There are Christians that call him *“Master and Lord,”* but the Lord reverses and corrects that by telling them to call Him *“Lord and Master”* (Jn. 11:13-14). The word *“Master”* is *“Teacher,”* and for them to be taught by Him, He is indicating that they must first acknowledge Him as *“Lord.”* The word *“Lord”* indicating their complete subjection to Him and His commandments, as revealed in His Word.

Why are some Christians so ignorant of divine truths? There are many reasons, but one of them could be that they have never submitted themselves to the Lordship of Christ. You can't escape these words – notice; *“If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine”* (Jn. 7:17). I wonder if that is why some sisters trim their hair, wear slacks, jewelry, and immodest apparel? I wonder if that is why some brethren feel no guilt in watching, or attending, sporting events? The Lord has never taught them because they have never taken His yoke. The unsaved are spoken of as having a *seared* conscience, and a *defiled* conscience. Paul speaks of himself as having a *“good conscience,”* a conscience *“void of offense toward God and toward men,”* and a pure conscience. What is *“conscience”*? Let me describe it in simple terms. Here is how conscience works. Your inner voice says;

- (1) “I have sinned.”
- (2) “I know that I have sinned.”
- (3) “God knows that I have sinned.”
- (4) “I know God knows I have sinned.”
- (5) “God knows that I know He knows I have sinned.”

*(continued)*

**No man understands or lives upon the doctrines of the Gospel, who does not prize and practice its precepts. The doctrines rightly understood lead into fellowship with God; and the man who enjoys fellowship with God is concerned to by the precepts of the Word of God. It cannot be otherwise.**

### “With Reverence and Godly Fear” Part 3

Steve Walvatne

Having briefly looked at “Our Reverence with Regard to God” and “Our Reverence with Regard to God's Word,” we come to our final consideration,

### Our Reverence with Regard to God's House

To think that God would dwell among men is astounding, yet such has been the case throughout human history. In the Old Testament, there was Bethel ("House of God"), the Tabernacle, and the Temples. Today, however, God dwells with His people, "the church" (*ekklesia*). This dwelling has a dual aspect in Scripture. First, there is what we call the "universal" (or "dispensational") aspect composed of every believer or "living stone" from Pentecost to the Rapture. Verses like the following refer to that:

*"And having a High Priest over the house of God"* (Hebrews 10:21).

*"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God..."* (1 Peter 4:17).

*"In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit"* (Ephesians 2:22).

Then there is a second aspect commonly referred to as the "local" church or assembly. These companies of present-day believers meet regularly in various communities across the globe. "No particular individual local assembly will claim to be either "the" house of God, nor "a" house of God, but each will so arrange its affairs according to the Word of God so as to make that assembly a place where He may reside and rule and rest" (J. Flanigan: *What the Bible Teaches*: Hebrews). We find this in 1 Timothy 3:15: *"But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."* Human behavior and responsibility are factors here, because in every place that the Lord records His Name (Ex. 20:24; Matt. 18:20), submission to divine order and rule is expected. Individuals cannot do as they please.

It therefore follows, that "reverence and godly fear" will characterize saints that meet in "house of God" character. How could it be otherwise? When Jacob realized the Lord's presence at Bethel, he called it a "dreadful" place – one requiring reverence (Gen. 28:17). That spirit is proper wherever the "holy and reverend" One dwells (Ps. 111:9). Yet, how prone we are to forget! Vigilance is vital to avoiding this. Things to watch include:

### Our Deportment

This embraces our overall bearing in God's house. Ecclesiastes warns, *"Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God..."* (5:1). Even in going, we should "watch our step" lest we stumble and prove unready for service in God's house. A similar sentiment occurs in 1 Corinthians 11 regarding participation at the Lord's Supper: *"But let a man examine himself and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation ('condemnation') to himself, not discerning the Lord's body"* (vv.28-29). A sober

assessment of our thoughts and attitudes prior to assembly meetings will safeguard against a careless or casual spirit once we have arrived. It will repress a light, loud, or lofty demeanor as well. "The priest moving in the holy place," writes Brian Currie, "would be an example of everything done with dignity, reverence, and in accordance with the dictates of God... To come into the gatherings of the Lord's people is to come where the Lord Jesus is (Matt. 18:20) and this demands a holy decorum and saintly solemnity. It is not like coming into a worldly club" (*What the Bible Teaches*: Ecclesiastes).

### Our Dress

Outward appearance is important in many realms, and God's house is no exception. Saints should be appropriately dressed and maintained for the Lord's presence. The "come as you are" mentality in much of modern Christendom is a telltale sign of how far their apprehension of God has plummeted. To borrow from the writer James – *"My brethren, these things ought not so to be"* (3:10). "Dressing down" at assembly meetings to attract sinners might be well meaning, but it runs counter to the majesty of God. Queen Esther appeared before an earthly Monarch in "royal apparel" (Es. 5:1) and surely the One who is "King of kings and Lord of lords" deserves as much (Php. 2:9; 1 Tim. 6:15). "There is a terrible flaw," writes Norman Crawford, "in modern reasoning that says, 'I can do as I like, I can dress as I please, or act in any way I want, for the external thing is unimportant, it is only the inner reality that counts.' This is nonsense... Let us make sure that the external order is according to the Word of God..." (*Gathering Unto His Name*).

### Our Diction

What we say in the local assembly, and how we say it, lends additional insight into the way we view God's house. Ecclesiastes 5 not only speaks to our *walk* (or deportment), but to the *words* (or diction) we use in God's dwelling. *"Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few..."* (vv. 2-3). From this, we learn that (1) God's house is not the place for "rash" speech – for words that are hurried or bold. We must CONTROL what comes from the mouth. (2) Also, God's house is not a place for "hasty" or impetuous utterances. We should CONTEMPLATE what issues from the heart (inner man), lest we speak unwisely and offer the "sacrifice of fools" (v.1). Lastly (3), our words in God's house should be "few" – we need to CONDENSE our speech. Nothing damages a meeting more than an undisciplined speaker. Wordy persons do well to *winnow* their words, remembering the greatness of God and their own limitations. Yet sadly, many *"know not that they do evil"* (v.1, JND).

### Our Diligence

The spiritual labor and energy we put towards God's house is another mark of our reverence for it. The Psalmist declared, *"The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up"* (or 'consumed me,' 69:9). This described our Lord in John 2:17. Sluggishness in spiritual exercises is deplorable. Titus was to rebuke Cretian saints that were guilty of this (Titus 1:12, 13). Timothy was encouraged to *"study"* or *"give diligence"* in approving himself unto God and to *"neglect not"* the spiritual gift that was in him (2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Tim. 4:14). Said Paul, *"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver"* (2 Cor. 9:7). The word *"cheerful"* (*hilaros*) denotes *"promptness,"* a readiness to give. Divine service should not come *"grudgingly"* (*"like pulling teeth,"* Robertson). If tempted to exclaim, *"I didn't get much from the meeting today,"* we should ponder first, *"What did I give?"* Paul urged the Corinthians to consider (1) what God gave – *"His unspeakable gift"* (9:15); (2) what the Lord Jesus gave – *"...Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor"* (8:9); (3) what fellow saints in Macedonia gave – *"...A flood of rich generosity... contributing to the support of the saints..."* (8:2-4, Moffatt); and (4) what he himself had given (chapters 10-12). Now *they* were to give (8:24). Whatever form that giving takes – whether manually, mentally, or materially – it should flow readily from every saint.

### Our Deference

Deference or reverent submission should be manifest in God's house. Anything less is disrespectful. God's Word, with its pattern and principles, and precepts, demands full regard because that is the final authority in a local assembly. We dare not act outside it. Moses did not determine the fixtures of the Tabernacle and their placement; God's word decided that. Neither did the Levites move as they willed while transporting the Tabernacle; God's word decided that. The same held true with the Temple. And, it is no different now. Yet, we are seeing a strong self will or independent attitude develop among us today, where deference is giving way to disobedience. Some, like Peter, are saying, *"Not so, Lord"* (Acts 10:14; 11:8) to His commandments and they show no sign of backing down. Others respond in kind, fearful of their peers, when *"they ought to obey God rather than men"* (Acts 5:29). Whichever way we interpret Psalm 89:7, the maxim holds true, that *"God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him."* *"We should behave ourselves with that inward honor and respect of Him, as if He were present to our bodily eyes; the higher apprehensions we have of His majesty, the greater awe will be upon our hearts in His presence, and the greater spirituality in our acts"* (Stephen Charnock: *The Existence and Attributes of God*, v.1).

### Our Devotion

Though listed last, this might have been first. How devoted are we to God's house? Are we loyal to the *"called out"* gathering or do we mix with other groups in Christendom? The Lord Jesus suffered outside the camp of religious Judaism (Heb. 13:13). His walk was a repudiation of its current practices. Our devotion to the local assembly that meets *"outside"* Christendom, should likewise declare our disdain for all that is foreign to the Scriptural pattern. Compromise only weakens that testimony. In addition, a reverent devotion for God's house will affect our attendance at assembly meetings. Are we filling our place or do we seek any excuse to be absent? The writer of Hebrews observed this dishonoring tendency in his day and wrote: *"Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching"* (10:25). Those words like all in Scripture are inspired, leaving no question as to God's mind. Loyalty is lacking throughout modern society. How sad if it permeates God's house! May the hymn writer's thought be ours:

*Sweet it is to sit before Thee,  
Sweet to hear Thy blessed voice,  
Sweet to worship and adore Thee,  
For our hearts in Thee rejoice.*

T.H. Reynolds

We conclude our meditation on *"Reverence and Godly Fear"* by quoting Richard Baxter from 1650:

There is no trifling in holy things...Labor, therefore, to have the deepest apprehensions of the presence of God and His incomprehensible greatness...Thou art going to converse with Him, before whom earth will quake and devils do tremble, and at whose bar thou and all the world must shortly stand and be finally judged. O think! *"I shall then have lively apprehensions of His majesty. My drowsy spirits will then be awakened, and my irreverence be laid aside: and why should I not now be roused with the sense of His greatness and the dread of His Name possess my soul?"* (*The Saints' Everlasting Rest*)

**They are never disappointed who have  
learned to wait only on God, and  
to expect nothing from man.**