

Light Brings Salt

Volume 6, Issue 17

April 27, 2007



Iron Range Bible Church

Dedicated to the Systematic Exposition of the Word of God
"Sanctify them in the truth: Your word is truth."



Truth from the Past

An excerpt from the writings of
C. H. Mackintosh (c. 1879)

"Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I am teaching you to perform, so that you may live and go in and take possession of the land which the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you. Deut. 4:1

Here we have, very prominently before us, the special characteristic of the entire book of Deuteronomy. "listen," and "perform;" that ye may "live" and "possess." This is a universal and abiding principle.

It was true for Israel, and it is true for us. The pathway of life and the true secret of possession is simple obedience to the holy commandments of God. We see this all through the inspired volume, from cover to cover. God has given us His word, not to speculate upon it, or discuss it; but that we may obey it.

And it is as we, through grace, yield a hearty and happy obedience to our Father's statutes and judgments, that we tread the bright pathway of life, and enter into the reality of all that God has treasured up for us in Christ.

"He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him." John 14:21

How Precious is this! Indeed it is unspeakable. It is something quite peculiar. It would be a very serious mistake to suppose that the privilege here spoken of is enjoyed by all believers. It is not. It is only enjoyed by such as; yield a loving obedience to the commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It lies within the reach of all, but all do not enjoy it, because all are not obedient. It is one thing to be a child, and quite another to be an obedient child. It is one thing to be saved, and quite another thing to love the Savior, and delight in all His most precious precepts.

We may see this continually illustrated in our family circles. There, for example, are two sons, and one of them only thinks of pleasing himself, doing his will, gratifying his own desires. He takes no pleasure in his father's life; does not take any pains to carry out his father's wishes; knows hardly anything of his mind, and what he does know he utterly neglects or despises.

He is ready enough to avail himself of all the benefits which accrue to him from the relationship in which he stands to his father; ready enough to accept clothes, books, money — all, in short, that the father gives; but he never seeks to gratify the father's heart by a loving attention to his will, even in the smallest matters.

The other son is the direct opposite to all this. He delights in being with his father; he loves his life, loves his ways, loves his words; he is constantly taking occasion to carry out his father's wishes, to get him something that he knows will be agreeable to him. He loves his father, not for his gifts, but for himself; and he finds his richest enjoyment in being in his father's company, and in doing his will.

Now, can we have any difficulty in seeing how very differently the father will feel towards those two sons? True, they are both his sons, and he loves them both, with a love grounded upon the relationship in which they stand to him.

But, beside the love of relationship common to both, there is the love of complacency peculiar to

the obedient child. It is impossible that a father can find pleasure in the society of a willful, self-indulgent, careless son: such a son may occupy much of his thoughts; he may spend many a sleepless night thinking about him, and praying for him; he would gladly spend and be spent for him: but he is not agreeable to him; does not possess his confidence; cannot be the depository of his thoughts.

All this demands the serious consideration of those who really desire to be acceptable or agreeable to the heart of our heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. We may rest assured of this, that obedience is grateful to God; and " His commandments are not grievous;" nay, they are the sweet and precious expression of His love, and the fruit and evidence of the relationship, in which He stands to us.

And not only so, but He graciously rewards our obedience by a fuller manifestation of Himself to our souls, and His dwelling with us. This comes out, with great fullness and beauty, in our Lord's reply to Judas not Iscariot, for whose question we may be thankful, Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?" Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him." (John 14:23-24.)

Here we are taught that it is not a question of the difference between "the world" and "us," inasmuch as the world knows nothing either of relationship or obedience, and is therefore, in no way, contemplated in our Lord's words. The world hates Christ, because it does not know Him. Its language is, "Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." "We will not have this man to reign over us."

Such is the world, even when polished by civilization, and gilded with the profession of Christianity. There is, underneath all the gilding, all the polish, a deep-seated hatred of the Person and authority of Christ. His sacred, peerless Name is tacked on to the world's religion, at least throughout baptized Christendom; but behind the drapery of religious profession, there lurks a heart at enmity with God and His Christ.

But our Lord is not speaking of the world in John 14. He is shut in with "his own," and it is of them He is speaking were He to manifest Himself to the world, it could only be for judgment and eternal destruction.

But, blessed be His Name, He does manifest Himself to His own obedient children, to those who have His commandments, and keep them, to those who love Him and keep His words.

And, let the reader thoroughly understand that when our Lord speaks of His commandments, His words, and His sayings, He does not mean the ten commandments, or law of Moses. No doubt, those ten commandments form a part of the whole canon of scripture, the inspired word of God; but, to confound the law of Moses with the commandments of Christ, would be simply turning things upside down; it would be to confound Judaism with Christianity, law and grace.

The two things are as distinct as any two things can be; and must be so maintained by all who would be found in the current of the mind of God.

We are sometimes led astray by the mere sound of words; and hence, when we meet with the word "commandments," we instantly conclude that it must needs refer to the law of Moses. But this is a very great and mischievous mistake. If the reader is not clear and established as to this, let him close this volume, and turn to the first eight chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, and the whole of the Epistle to the Galatians, and read them calmly and prayerfully, as in the very presence of God, with a mind freed from all theological bias and the influence of all previous religious training. There he will learn, in the fullest and clearest manner, that the Christian is not under law in any way, or for any object whatsoever, either for life, for righteousness, for holiness, for walk, or for anything else.

In short, the teaching of the entire New Testament goes to establish, beyond all question, that the Christian is not under law, not of the world, not in the flesh, not in his sins. The solid ground of all this is the accomplished redemption which we have in Christ Jesus, in virtue of which we are sealed by the Holy Spirit, and thus indissolubly united to, and inseparably identified with a risen

and glorified Christ; so that the apostle John can say of all believers, all God's dear children, "As he [Christ] is so are we in this world." (1 John 4:17 This settles the whole question, for all who are content to be governed by holy scripture. And as to all beside, discussion is worse than useless.

Wisdom in Hiding

1 Corinthians 2:7

But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

You don't have to watch a drama very long, or read too far into a book, before you find what is hidden being revealed. The Bible often talks about truths that are hidden because of unbelief.

A scientist was recently studying insect-eating birds in an oak tree that was in bloom. He was surrounded by male flowers called catkins. Suddenly, one of the catkins began walking away. The surprise that he had discovered was a species of caterpillar that feeds on catkins, and ends up looking just like a catkin even having fake pollen sacks. In this way, it escapes the notice of feeding birds.

The scientist then found that the members of this caterpillar species that hatch in early spring and feed on catkins end up looking like catkins. But members of the same species that hatch later and feed in oak trees end up looking like oak twigs. This observation was a complete surprise because it means that it is the caterpillars' diet that causes the difference in appearance.

When things are hidden, reality is always different than we expect. While the Gospel is clear, Scripture often mentions that unbelief causes the clear to be hidden to the unbeliever. It is helpful for us to understand this as we see the popularity of belief in evolution and a world without God.

Don't just do something, stand there

As for global warming, Nobel Peace Prize-winning prophet of doom Al Gore complained this week that the situation hasn't improved since his 2006 crockumentary, "An Inconvenient Truth."

No improvement indeed. As *Investor's Business Daily* notes, "This Earth Day finds the world threatened not by rising sea levels, but by rising food prices. Many on the planet are more likely to starve than drown, and we have only Gore's disciples to blame." But who cares about food prices and starvation caused by the fad of biofuels, as long as liberals feel like they're helping?

Still, Gore moans, "If you give... [people] a list of 25 or 30 issues and ask them to rank them in order of seriousness, climate change comes at the bottom or near the bottom. I remember one poll where it came under dog litter." That would be right about where it belongs. Of course, with politicians promising to "do something" about a non-issue, voters *should* be concerned. Then again, with record snowfall around the globe, a 0.7C-degree drop in temperature in 2007 and a noticeable drop in sunspot activity (possibly signaling years of cooling), maybe it *is* time to do something to stop that doggone warming.

Former conservative icon and House Speaker Newt Gingrich, for one, thinks it's time to do something. He paired with current Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) to do a commercial for the "We" campaign to "solve the climate crisis," sponsored by The Alliance for Climate Protection, a group founded by Al Gore. One might diagnose Newt with a case of "Potomac Fever."

-- RING . . RING. "Good morning, Sovereign Grace Church. How may I help you? "I'd like to speak with Pastor Long?" "This is he." "This is Special Agent Smith from the IRS. I'm calling to inquire about a member of your congregation, a Dr. Jones. Do you recognize the name?" "Of course. He's a member of our congregation. How may I be of service?" "Well, on his 2007 tax return, the doctor claimed that he made a sizable tax-deductible contribution to your church? Is it true?" "Well, I'll have to have our church secretary verify this information for you. How much did Dr. Jones say he contributed?" "Twenty-five thousand dollars," answered Agent Smith. "Can you tell me if that's true?" There is a long pause. "I'll tell you what," replied Pastor Long. "Call back tomorrow and I'm sure it will be.