

THE ETERNAL SONSHIP OF CHRIST

—J. G. Bellett

I do not doubt that the Lord is called 'the Son of God' in several respects. He is called Son of God as born of the virgin (Lk. 1:35). He is also Son of God by divine decree, as in resurrection (Ps. 2:7; Acts 13:33). This is true, and remains true, although further revelation be made to us of His divine Sonship. He is the Son, and yet has obtained the name of Son (Heb. 1:1-3). Matthew and Mark first notice His Son-ship of God at His baptism. Luke goes farther back, and notices it at His birth. But John goes back farther still, even to the immeasurable, unspeakable distance of eternity, and declares His Sonship 'in the bosom of the Father.'

And there were, I do not doubt, different measures of understanding of Him, different measures of faith touching His Person, in those who called on Him. He Himself recognizes, for instance, the faith of the centurion, in understanding His personal glory, to be beyond what He had found in Israel (Mt. 8; Lk. 7). But all this in no way affects what we hear of Him, that He was the Son 'in the bosom of the Father,' or 'that Eternal life, which was with the Father,' and was manifested to us (1 Jn. 1).

We must not touch this precious mystery. We should fear to dim the light of that love in which our souls are invited to walk on their way to heaven. And — what is a deeper and tenderer thought, if I may be bold to utter it — we should fear to accept any confession of faith (rather, indeed, of unbelief) that would defraud the divine bosom of its eternal, inexpressible delights, and which would tell our God that He did not know a Father's joy in that bosom, as He opened it; and which would tell our Lord that He did not know a Son's joy in that bosom as He lay there from all eternity.

I cannot join in this. If there are Persons in the Godhead, as we know there are, are we not to know also that there are relationships between them? Can we dispense with such a thought? Is there not revealed to faith, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit; the Son begotten, and the Spirit proceeding? Indeed there is. The Persons in that glory are not *independent*, but *related*. Nor is it beyond our measure to say that the great arch-type of love, the blessed model or original of all relative affection, is found in that relationship.

Can I be satisfied with the unbelieving thought, that there are not *Persons* in the Godhead, and that Father, Son, and Spirit are only different lights in which the One Person is presented? The *substance* of the gospel would be destroyed by such a thought. And can I be satisfied with the unbelieving thought, that these Persons are not related? The *love* of the gospel would be dimmed by such a thought.

I was once asked, "Had the Father no bosom till the Babe was born in Bethlehem?" Indeed, fully sure I am, as that inquiry suggests, He had from all eternity. The bosom of the Father was an eternal home, enjoyed by the Son, in the sacred delight of the Father — 'the hiding-place of love,' as one has called it, 'of *inexpressible* love which is beyond glory; for glory may be revealed, this cannot.'

We may have remained unexercised about such thoughts as these, but we cannot allow them to be denied.

"Lamb of God, Thy Father's bosom
Ever was Thy dwelling place!"

J. G. Deck

We dare not surrender such a mystery to the thoughts of men. Faith will dispute such ground with 'philosophy and vain deceit.' Even the Jews may rebuke the difficulty which some feel regarding it. They felt that the Lord's asserting His *Sonship* amounted to making Himself equal with God. So that, instead of Sonship implying a secondary or inferior Person, in their thought it asserted *equality*. And, in like manner, on another occasion, they treated Jesus as a blasphemer, because He was making Himself *God*, in a discourse which was declaring the relationship of *a son to a father* (Jn. 5:18; 10:33). The Jews may therefore again and again, rebuke this wretched, unbelieving difficulty which the 'vain deceit' of man suggests. They were wiser than to pretend to test, by prism of human reasonings, the light where God dwells.

"No man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father" (Lk. 10:22), is a sentence which may well check our reasonings. And the word, that the eternal life was manifested to us, to give us fellowship with the Father and the Son (1 Jn. 1:2), distinctly utters the inestimable mystery of *the Son* being of the Godhead, having 'eternal life' with *the Father*. And again, as we well

know, it is written, "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." I ask, "Can any but God declare God?" In some sense God may be *described*. But the soul of the Church will not rest in descriptions of God; though the wisdom of the world knows nothing else. It asks for declaration or revelation of Him, which must be by *Himself*. Is not then, I ask, the Son in the bosom a *divine* Person?

Nothing can satisfy all which the Scriptures tell us of this great mystery, but the faith of this: that the Father and the Son are in the glory of the Godhead; and in that relationship, too, though equal in that glory. Another has expressed it this way:

"He who was with God in the beginning, as eternal as God, being God Himself, was also the Son of God. God allows many things to remain mysteries, partly, I believe, that He may in this way test the obedience of our minds; for He requires obedience of *mind* from us, as much as He does obedience in action. This is a part of holiness, this subjection of the *mind* to God; and it is something which the Spirit alone can give. He alone is able to calm and humble those inward powers of mind which rise and venture to judge the things of God, refusing to receive what cannot be understood; a disobedience and pride which has no parallel, except in the disobedience and pride of Satan."

Holy, seasonable caution for our souls! "Who is a liar," asks the apostle, "but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?" And he immediately adds, "He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son." And again, "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father" (1 Jn. 2:22-23). These are very serious sentences under the judgment of the Holy Ghost. And how can there be knowledge of the Father, but through and in the Son? How can the Father be known otherwise? And therefore is it written, "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." I may say, "Abba, Father," in the spirit of adoption; a poet may say, "We are also His offspring"; but God is not known as *the Father*, if the Son in the glory of the Godhead be not recognized (Rom. 8:15; Acts 17:28). We may be sure, even *assured*, on divine authority, that if the unction which we have received abides in us, we shall abide in 'the Son,' and in 'the Father'.

Can the Son be honoured even as the Father, if He is not recognized in the Godhead? (Jn. 5:23). The faith of Him is not the faith that He is *a* Son of God, Son of God as born of the virgin, or as raised from the dead; although these are truths concerning Him, assuredly so! But the faith of Him is the faith of His proper Person. I cannot call Jesus 'Son of God,' unless I believe in His *divine* Sonship. The understanding which has been given us, has been given us to know 'Him that is true,' as being "in Him that is true, even in His *Son* Jesus Christ"; and to this it is added, "This is the true God, and eternal life" (1 Jn. 5).

Is not 'the truth,' in the sense of John's Second Epistle, 'the doctrine of Christ,' or the teaching which we have in Scripture respecting the *Person of Christ*? And in that teaching, is not the truth of Sonship in the Godhead contained? For what is said there? "He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, *he has both the Father and the Son*." God's Word requires us to shut the door to those who do not bring this doctrine. The very same epistle speaks of Him as 'the Son of the Father,' language which would not suit Him as born of the virgin by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit.

But let us go further. I ask, Can the love of God be understood according to Scripture, if this Sonship be not recognized? Doesn't that love get its character from that very doctrine? Aren't our hearts challenged by it? "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Again, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." And again, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." Yet again, "We have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (Jn. 3; 1 Jn. 4).

Doesn't this love at once lose its unparalleled glory, if this truth be questioned? How would our souls answer the person who would tell us that it was not *His own* Son whom God spared not, but gave Him up for us all? How would it wither the heart to hear that such a One was only His Son as born of the virgin, and that those words, 'He that spared not His own Son,' are to be read as *human*, and not as *divine*? (Rom. 8:32).

John Gifford Bellett, born in Dublin Ireland, in 1795, was educated as a classical scholar, lawyer, and Anglican clergyman. He became one of the first to take his place among the so-called Brethren in the 1830's. He was a close friend of John Nelson Darby, and died in 1864. This article is reprinted, with a few grammatical changes, from his book THE SON OF GOD.

RESISTING THE WORLD AND ITS LURE

—W. Weir

What is a lure? It is something artificial and attractive that we dangle in front of a fish. If he swallows it, he will soon be dead. If Christians, persons trusting the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour, take the world's lure, it doesn't necessarily kill them. But it surely can render ineffective their witness for the Lord and their service for Him! How do we resist the world and its lure?

The Christian Life is a Warfare

In 2 Timothy, Paul calls Timothy a soldier of Jesus Christ. Paul often compares the Christian life to warfare. He speaks about weapons, armour, and fighting. Yet we often think that the Christian life is a life of ease. It is not! It is warfare! Many think that it is warfare only when we go to the mission field, or when we serve the Lord. But it is warfare even when we are just trying to exist or to resist. If you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are in the battle. And so Paul says to us, as he says to Timothy, "Strive earnestly in the good conflict of faith" (1 Tim. 6:12). There is much we can learn about Christian warfare if we compare it to military service.

In the air force I learned two groups of three letters each. The first group was K.R.&R. They stand for "Kings Rules and Regulations." On every airbase there was a book explaining the rules and regulations governing the air force. You had access to them, and you had better know what they said! The other group was D.R.O. This stood for "Daily Routine Orders." Each day these were posted on the bulletin board of every base to tell you what was going to happen that day. If you knew the K.R.&R.'s and the D.R.O.'s, your life in the air force would be successful, because you knew everything you needed to know.

The Bible contains our K.R.&R.'s and D.R.O.'s. God has mercifully given them to us so that every day we may read His "rules and regulations." I would like to compare the K.R.&R.'s to the information we need for our whole life. If we want to live victorious, Christian lives, we need to know what it says in the Bible. Our D.R.O.'s tell us how we should walk day by day. The Bible says, "Strive diligently to present thyself approved to God, a workman that has not to be ashamed, cutting in a straight line the Word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). We will never be able to do so unless we read it daily and know it.

Our enemy is sneaky and sly; he doesn't fight fair

"Our struggle is not against blood and flesh, but against principalities, against authorities, against the universal lords of this darkness, against spiritual power of wickedness in the heavenlies" (Eph. 6:12). The Scriptures tell us that our enemy is a liar from the beginning. We better know that he attacks us relentlessly. We make a big mistake if we underestimate him. Sometimes he comes at us as a roaring lion. He did so when He first attacked Job. God had said to Satan, "You can test him, but don't kill him." Immediately Job ended up with boils from the top of his head to the soles of his feet. A swift and terrible attack! At other times he comes as the serpent, sly and sneaky. When Job was in a terrible state, his wife said, "Why don't you curse God and die?"

Satan also attacks us in those areas of our life where we are apt to slip, the areas we call "besetting sins." I will relate one instance in my life where Satan set me up so that I would fall. This one has to do with pride.

Just before Christmas I received a small package with \$30 worth of vitamins from the United States. I opened the attached custom's envelope, and found a note which said, "You owe us \$40." I thought, "This can't be." I checked closer and found that a custom's officer had valued the contents at \$155. "This is terrible," I said to myself, "they charge way more than the whole package is worth."

Off I went with parcel and note to the custom's office. There I talked to a lady officer and explained it all to her. She didn't know what to do and went to talk to her supervisor. She soon returned, put the box on the counter, and said, "We are not so sure that this is actually the parcel that this invoice refers to." And then she added, "We don't even know whether you have taken something out of it and whether this is really all there was!"

A hot rage crept up within me. I was ready to tell her, "Don't you know who I am? I am a Christian and I don't tell lies! Who do you think I am, do you think I am like this guy standing next to me who cheats and steals. I am not like him." (Does that sound familiar? "I am not like this publican." Rage came because of pride. This is how Satan works and we had better know it! He never stops.) But then a voice said to me, "Who do you think you are, Bill Weir? Do you think that you are better than anybody else?" They returned the box to me to take it to another office after the holidays. When I presented it there, the officer said, "They put the wrong number on it, I'll fix it up, and that is it." I had started to pray about it, and God solved it just like that.

At other times Satan comes as an angel of light. All looks good, all looks right and perfect, but he is sneaky and sly, and he doesn't fight fair. We need to know this. When Satan attempts to infiltrate God's army, his desire is to cut off vital communications. If we underestimate him and allow this to happen, we are in deep trouble.

During World War II, the allied forces were about to make a big sweep up through three cities, then through Arnhem in Holland, and from there up into the belly of Germany. But they underestimated the strength of the German army. They successfully took the three cities, dropping paratroopers at Arnhem to soften up the enemy. But when they finally got close to Arnhem, they encountered deadly opposition. Something devastating had happened to their paratroopers. For three days there had been no communication between the officers and their soldiers. Nobody knew what was happening or what they were supposed to be doing. They lost that battle because of the breakdown of communications, and because they underestimated the strength of the enemy.

Victory and proper communications require daily Bible reading, but recent statistics show that only some eight percent of the Christians who claim to be born-again are reading the Bible every day. How do we expect to fight the enemy without reading the Word? How many times have you read through the Bible? We need to be in the Word, and we need to pray to keep the communications open. Only then can God tell us what we need to know.

Satan entangles us in the affairs of this life

"No one going as a soldier entangles himself with the affairs of life, that he may please him who has enlisted him as a soldier" (2 Tim. 2:4).

A Christian once ordered a big TV. As it was being delivered, he read the paper streamer attached across the tube, "This TV will bring the world right into your home." When he saw that, he said, "Put it back on the truck. We don't need the world right in our home."

Recently a cartoon in our newspaper showed a parrot in a petshop. Just when some clients inquired from the shop owner if the parrot could talk, the parrot let go of a few dirty swearwords. The store owner remarked, "He was either owned by a rough sailor or somebody who had cable TV." When the world starts pointing at the faults of TV and what it can do to us, we know there is trouble!

I have been in Christian homes where the TV was on when I came down in the morning and it remained on till the last thing at night. Some may say, "Well, TV is OK. In itself there is nothing inherently wrong with it. We can always control it." But we are not controlling it when it is on all our waking hours.

Satan attempts to enlist quislings

When the Germans invaded Norway in 1940, a man named Vidkun Quisling collaborated with them to make their entry into his country easier. So today "quisling" stands for one who collaborates with the enemy. Satan wants us to be quislings. That is what we are when we assume the world's morals, their way of life, their way of thinking.

Recently, the ladies magazine "Canadian Living" contained a letter to the editor from a lady who wrote, "I realize that 'Canadian Living' does not write from a Christian viewpoint, but the article 'Who Gets the Kids' and the article 'Getting Married' do glorify secular humanism. Just because divorce and family breakups are happening doesn't make them right." Her final paragraph began, "Don't cheapen the sacred covenant of marriage." Then she gave some positive suggestions such as: "Why don't you write articles that help broken marriages, and give advice on how to prepare for marriage?" Here is a Christian lady who desires to stand for the Lord Jesus Christ and live for Him. Have you ever written a letter like this to a magazine or to a politician? Are we salt in this world?

We are also assimilating the world's thoughts as to our style of living and morals. Take cheating for instance. Not long ago, during exams, a Christian teacher caught three students cheating — notes written on their hands and so forth. All three were either Christians, or at least involved in the Christian clubs in the school. That is where we are. It looks as if the enemy is winning.

In the last book of the Bible, we find an address to Laodicea, the Church in the end times. The Lord Jesus, the "faithful and true witness," has something to say to us. "I know thy works, that thou art neither hot nor cold... because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I am about to spew thee out of My mouth" (Rev. 3:14-16). We reply that we are rich

and have become wealthy and have need of nothing. But He continues, "Don't you know that you are wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked?" This is what He sees in us. We may not see it, for I am afraid we have swallowed Satan's lure.

The Battle Is The Lord's

When David faced Goliath, he stood against a foe who was much superior in every way. Yet David had the faith to say, "The battle is the Lord's, and you have defied the living God." Thank God that the battle is still the Lord's today, and that He who is in us is greater than he who is against us! It is His battle, and there is hope! Let us consider His advice to the Church of Laodicea.

1. "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold purified by fire, that thou mayest be rich" (Rev. 3:18). We need to buy gold, that which is real, that which doesn't burn up. In 1 Corinthians 3, those works which are straw and hay burn up, whereas the gold endures and becomes purer. So we need to be committed to the Lord and desire His best. We need to walk in His way, that we may bring forth that which is gold refined in the fire.

2. "And white garments, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness may not be made manifest" (Rev. 3:18). The white garments stand for moral purity and holy living, just the areas where we are missing the boat. We are getting sucked in by all the lures of the world, the movies and all the filth that is out there. We need to be living holy lives for the Lord Jesus Christ, that our nakedness might be covered.

3. "And eye-salve to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see" (Rev. 3:18). Then you can see things as they really are, you can see me as I really am, and you can see Satan and not underestimate him. We need eye-salve to cleanse our eyes so we can see all from Christ's perspective.

4. "I rebuke and discipline as many as I love; be zealous therefore and repent" (Rev. 3:19). He still loves us. He doesn't give up on us, but says, "I want to work with you to make you into the kind of people that I wish you to be." Maybe He allowed a box to come to my house with the wrong charge for import duty to refine me a little bit. Oh, that we would respond, "Lord, work with me and refine me that I may be pleasing to Thee."

5. "Behold, I stand at the door and am knocking; if any one hear My voice and open the door, I will come in unto him and sup with him, and he with Me" (Rev. 3:20). Can you imagine that the Lord Jesus Christ is saying, "All I want to do with you who belong to Me is to come into your life and into your home, sit down at your table, come right into the intimate part of your life, so that you get to know Me, so that I can tell you what I want, and share with you the things that are in My heart."

Conclusion

"Confide in Jehovah with all thy heart, and lean not unto thine own intelligence; in all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He will make plain thy paths" (Prov. 3:5-6). We need to trust in the Lord, with all our heart, in every area of our life. Are there areas of our life that we don't want the Lord to enter? He wants to have charge of that area too. We need to be totally sold out to God, instead of being sold out to the world, and sucked in by our insidious foe. God says, "Don't lean on your own understanding." That is what we have been doing. Then He says, "In all thy ways [in every area of your life, in every circumstance of your life] acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths."

Recently a man came to his pastor and said, "Pastor, I want you to pray for me. I am working in this factory, and it is terrible — the filth that I have to listen to everyday, the swearing. It is hell on earth, and I am the only Christian there. Would you pray with me for another job?" The pastor answered, "I can't do that, for God has put you there. You are the only Christian in that factory. What I would like you to do is to give me a wake-up call every morning, and we will pray together over the phone that God will help you to be a witness right there in that miserable situation." So the man called the pastor early in the morning and they prayed each day that the man would live that day for Jesus Christ in the factory. This went on for some time, but then one day the pastor realized that the man hadn't called him for a couple of days. So he phoned the man, "You didn't give me my wake-up call for several mornings so that we could pray." The man replied, "I didn't have time to call you. I had to leave early for work because three fellows have been saved and now we are having a prayer meeting and a Bible study!"

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the compassions of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your intelligent [reasonable] service. And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the

renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:1-2). The New Testament by J. B. Phillips says, "*Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold.*" That is where it is at. We need to give our bodies completely to Him, and He calls this "our reasonable service." We belong to Him who died on the cross for us. He says, "Be not conformed to this world." Somehow we must be different so that others can see that there is something besides what the world has to offer.

Search me, O God, and know my heart today.
Try me, O Saviour, know my thoughts, I pray;
See if there be some wicked way in me;
Cleanse me from ev'ry sin, and set me free.

Edwin Orr

PAUL'S THESIS

—W. D. Hayhoe

As Phoebe was making her way to Rome with Paul's letter of commendation tucked under her arm, little did she realize that she was carrying the most important thesis ever written — Paul's thesis of Christianity. It is, in some ways, the most important book of the New Testament; and was therefore sent to Rome, the capital city of the world at that time. There were many pagan and mystic religions current in the Roman empire, besides the orthodox religion of the Jews. But Paul asserts, with divinely-inspired logic, that salvation by faith in Jesus Christ is the only answer to the dilemma of man separated from God. He also convincingly demonstrates that the gospel of Christ which he preached was entirely consistent with the Old Testament Scriptures.

How to write a thesis

Recently, I was given some advice by my sister about a thesis I am writing in connection with my secular studies. She had just completed a thesis herself and was ready to guide me in the process. "The introduction," she said, "should be short, but contain a brief statement of the thesis." She then continued, "The first chapter develops the background of the problem, surveying previous solutions and their inadequacy, and pointing out the need for a new solution. The second chapter usually develops the new solution in detail, anticipating objections that maybe brought against it, and showing how it meets these. The following chapters then give the implications that follow from the thesis, and show how the thesis ties in with other work in related fields."

She was probably not aware of it, but what she was doing was describing exactly the steps the apostle Paul followed in his epic epistle! For example, he starts with a short introduction of 17 verses, in which he immediately gives the *subject* of his discourse: "Concerning His Son (come of David's seed according to flesh, marked out Son of God in power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by resurrection of the dead) Jesus Christ our Lord" (1:3-4).

Notice how he relates it to the old religion of the Jews — "come of David's seed" — and yet shows how it has something entirely new, which none of the pagan or mystic religions had: "the resurrection of the dead." Building on the rock of the person of Christ, the apostle then presents his *thesis*: "The glad tidings... is God's power to salvation, to everyone that believes... For righteousness of God is revealed therein, on the principle of faith, to faith: according as it is written, But the just shall live by faith" (1:16-17).

The development of Paul's thesis

The first section of Paul's thesis (1:18-3:20) surveys the condition of the pagans (the Romans and others), the philosophers (the Greeks), and the orthodox (the Jews). He shows conclusively that all were lost in *sins*, condemned under the righteous judgment of God: "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

Then Paul develops his thesis in the second section (3:21-5:11), having shown that all other religions failed in rectifying man's condition. *Salvation* is by faith alone in the blood of Christ. This faith, which even Abraham and David experienced, gives a peace with God and a joy through all the trials of life: "Therefore having been justified on the principle of faith, we have peace towards God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (5:1).

In the third section of his thesis (5:12-8:39), the apostle asserts that salvation by faith leads to *sanctification* in the Spirit. We are not only dead to sin and dead to the law, but we have an entirely new mode of being: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and of death" (8:2). This eighth chapter is the climax to the book. Do we still have a problem with our sinful nature? God is *in* us to control our minds and actions (8:1-14). Do we suffer trials and pains? God is *with* us during this waiting period (8:15-27). Do we face ultimate separation and death? God is *for* us, no matter what may come: "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life... nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (8:38-39).

Objections to his thesis answered

Notice how the apostle Paul, in these first three sections, carefully anticipates every objection that could be brought against his thesis. Is it fair for God to judge the heathen who haven't heard of Christ? Doesn't the Jew have special privileges as the chosen race? What about the law, isn't it perfect, divinely given? Does grace mean that we can sin all we want? To each of these, and many more, he has a ready answer, showing that his thesis of the gospel really does have the solution to this great problem of mankind.

A great multitude of Jews lived throughout the Roman empire, many of these had been converted and become part of the early church. Because of this, Paul devotes the fourth section of his thesis (ch. 9-11) to the important question of how the gospel of the grace of God is compatible with God's special choice of the Jews and the giving of the law. Here he starts with the great theme of the *sovereignty* of God. If God is infinite and all-powerful, He must be sovereign. He must be able to do whatever He wants to do. Paul carefully supports this with many references to the Old Testament, as to *past* examples of God's sovereign choices (ch. 9). He then shows equally well the *present* opportunities for all, Jews as well as Gentiles, to simply confess with their mouth and believe in their heart (ch. 10). In fact, God's special purposes for Israel will be fulfilled in the *future* (ch. 11).

Implications of his thesis

The practical implications of this great thesis, for our daily life among believers and in the world, are developed in the fifth and final section (12:1-15:8). The emphasis here is on *service*, both at the beginning and end (12:7; 15:8). The apostle is not so much asserting as urging in this important section: "I beseech (urge) you therefore, brethren, by the compassions of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your intelligent service" (12:1).

We see here the great difference between Paul's thesis and a secular thesis presented before a group of academics. While the latter deals exclusively with the mind, the apostle speaks directly to the hearts and consciences of his audience. Since God has done so much for us, should we not live daily for Him in every detail of our lives?

Sin, salvation, sanctification, sovereignty, and service — this is the structure of Paul's thesis of Christianity

OUTLINE FOR BIBLE STUDY (40)

83. KINGS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH. DEATHS OF JEZEBEL AND ELISHA. THE TEN TRIBES GO INTO EXILE. — 2 Kings 8:7-15; 9:1-10:36; 13:1-25; 15:8-31; 17:1-41

Outline

1. Elisha and Hazael 2 Ki. 8:7-15
2. Jehu Anointed King 2 Ki. 9:1-15
3. Deaths of Joram, Ahaziah, and Jezebel 2 Ki. 9:16-37
4. Judgment over Ahab's House 2 Ki. 10:1-36
5. Jehoahaz and Jehoash (Joash) 2 Ki. 13:1-13
6. Elisha's Death and Burial 2 Ki. 13:14-21
7. Israel's Last Kings and Exile 2 Ki. 15:8-31; 17:1-14
8. Other Nations Occupy the Land 2 Ki. 17:24-41

Explanation

1. Elisha completed the tasks God had given to Elijah. Weeping, he anointed Hazael King over Syria, for he knew that Hazael would be God's instrument to punish Israel.
2. He anointed Jehu, who would bring punishment over the house of Ahab, King over Israel.
3. Without delay Jehu killed Joram (Ahab's son) Jezebel (Ahab's wife) as well as Ahaziah (the King of Judah).
4. Jehu proceeded to kill all who belonged to the house of Ahab. Using a ruse, he also killed all the priests of Baal, but he continued to serve the calves of Jeroboam. For his zeal, God promised him that his house would continue until the fourth generation.
5. Four kings of Jehu's house reigned after him, Jehoahaz, Joash, Jeroboam II, Zechariah, but all served idols.
6. During the reign of Joash, Elisha died. Even on his deathbed and in the grave, God used him as a vessel through which grace was shown to a disobedient nation and its king.
7. Shallum, who killed the last king of Jehu's house, reigned only one month. After him Menahem reigned ten years. His son Pekahiah reigned two years and was slain by his captain, Pekah, who then reigned 20 years. He in turn was slain by Hoshea who reigned nine years. Then the king of Assyria came and led the ten tribes into captivity.
8. The King of Assyria brought people from Babylon and other places to replace Israel in the land.

Lesson

Israel and its king had ignored the words of Elijah and Elisha. Therefore the Lord used Hazael and Jehu to execute judgment (1 Ki. 19:15-16). Yet in the midst of judgment God remembered mercy which He brought through the death of Elisha, who is a picture of Him whose death has brought mercy to us (2 Ki. 13:14-21). For more than 250 years God had shown mercy (Ps. 103:8). Again God warned Israel through Amos (Amos 2-3) and Hosea (Hos. 4-5). Since they did not listen, the judgment came. In 722 BC, King Shalmaneser of Assyria brought the people to Assyria (Rom. 2:4-6; Dt. 4:26-28). Judgment over any who disregard the voice of the Lord is certain (Gal. 6:7-8; Rom. 11:22).

The ten tribes never returned from captivity. The heathen brought from Mesopotamia did not know God, but priests were brought to teach them the things of Jehovah. The result was that their religion became a strange mixture of idolatry and Judaism. These people became the progenitors of the Samaritans (Jn. 4:9).

84. JONAH — Jonah 1-4

Outline

1. Jonah's Disobedience Jon. 1-2
2. His Message to Nineveh Jon. 3
3. His Anger and Rebuke Jon. 4

Explanation

1. Nineveh, founded by Nimrod on the Tigris, was the capital of Assyria. The prophet Jonah (circa 800 BC; 2 Ki. 14:25) refused to announce the well-deserved judgment on its wicked, heathen inhabitants (compare the divine judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah) and fled. God caused him to return through a mighty tempest (Ps. 104:4; 139:7-10).
2. Then Jonah went to Nineveh and brought the message of impending judgment. The Ninevites listened and repented.

3. Jonah then watched for the coming destruction of the city and was displeased when Jehovah had mercy on its repentant people. Jonah felt his honour had been slighted when the predicted destruction was postponed (Dt. 18:22).

Lesson

Jonah tried to flee, but one cannot flee from the presence of God (Ps. 139:7).

Jonah's judgment and preservation are a picture of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection (Mt. 12:40-41) which brought salvation to mankind. Compare Jonah's prayer in Jonah 2 (v. 3) with Psalm 42 (v. 7).

God is longsuffering; but not so Jonah or man in general (Mt. 9:13; 2 Pet. 3:9).

To be cont'd

CONFERENCE OUTLINE (5)

XVI. THE NEW CREATION

- A. God's workmanship — Eph. 2:10
- B. The created, new man — Eph. 2:15; 4:24; Col. 3:10
- C. The new creation — 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15

XVII. SANCTIFICATION

- A. Outwardly — Mt. 23:17,19; 1 Cor. 7:14; 1 Tim. 4:5
- B. Sanctification in principle
 - 1. In and through Christ — 1 Cor. 1:30; 6:11; Heb. 2:11; 10:10,29; 13:12
 - 2. Through the Spirit — 1 Cor. 6:11; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:2
- C. Practical Sanctification
 - 1. In general — Rom. 6:19,22; Heb. 12:14
 - 2. Through Christ — Jn. 17:19; Eph. 5:25-26; 1 Thess. 3:12-13
 - 3. Through cleansing — 2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 5:26; 2 Tim. 2:21
 - 4. According to God — Jn. 17:17; Heb. 12:10; 1 Pet. 1:15

XVIII. CHILDHOOD AND SONSHIP

- A. Childhood
 - 1. Children of God
 - a. What this means — Jn. 1:12; 11:52; Rom. 9:8
 - b. Its results — Rom. 8:16-17,21; 1 Jn. 3:1-2
 - c. Our responsibility — Eph. 5:1; Phil. 2:15; 1 Jn. 3:10; 5:2
 - 2. Childhood in another sense — Lk. 7:35; Gal. 4:24-31; Eph. 5:6-10
- B. Sonship
 - 1. Sons of God
 - a. What it means — Eph. 1:5; Gal. 3:26; 4:1-7; cf. Rom. 9:26
 - b. Practical realization — Rom 8:14-15; 2 Cor. 6:17-18; Heb. 12:5-8; Rev. 21:7
 - c. Future fulfillment — Rom. 8:19,23; cf. Heb. 2:10
 - d. Outside of the Assembly — Mt. 5:9,45; Lk. 6:35; 20:36
 - 2. Sonship in another sense — Mt. 13:38; Lk. 10:6; 16:8; Jn. 12:36; 1 Thess. 5:5

XIX. FREE ACCESS

- A. To God
 - 1. In Principle — Rom. 5:2; Eph. 3:12
 - 2. In practice — Heb. 2:17-18; 4:14-16; 7:25; 10:19-22; cf. Rom. 8:34
- B. To the Father
 - 1. In Principle — Eph. 2:18
 - 2. In Practice — Jn. 16:26-27; 1 Jn. 2:1

XX. FELLOWSHIP

- A. In and with Divine Persons — 1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Cor. 13:13; Phil. 2:1; 1 Jn. 3:5-6
- B. With believers — Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 10:16-20; 1 Jn. 1:3,7

C. In a practical sense

1. Wrong fellowship — 2 Cor. 6:14; Eph. 5:11; 1 Tim. 5:22; 2 Jn. 11; Rev. 18:4
2. Fellowship by means of collections — Rom. 15:26; 2 Cor. 8:4; 9:13; Phil. 1:5; Heb. 13:6
3. Towards believers — 2 Cor. 1:7; Gal. 2:9; Phil. 4:14; Phil. 6
4. Towards Christ — Phil. 3:10; 1 Pet. 4:13

XXI. BROUGHT TO GOD

- A. Believers falling asleep
 1. Paradise — Lk. 16:19-23; 2 Cor. 12:2-4
 2. With Christ — Lk. 23:42-43
- B. Not in God's judgment over the earth — 1 Thess. 1:10b; Rev. 3:10-11
- C. The Father's house — Jn. 14:2-3, 17:24; 1 Jn. 3:2c
- D. Our heavenly service in connection with the earth — Rev. 4:2-4; 4:9-11; 5:5-10
- E. The judgment seat of Christ — Rom. 14:10b-12; 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Tim. 4:8
- F. The marriage of the Lamb — Rev. 19:6-9
- G. The glorified saints in the Millennium — Rev. 21:9-22:5
- H. Our position in eternity relative to the new earth — Rev. 21:1-8

The End

THE PROBLEM OF UNANSWERED PRAYER (7)

—*J. Rouw*

In 2 Corinthians 12:1-9 we read that Paul had been taken up into paradise and the third heaven. There he had "heard unspeakable things said which it is not allowed to man to utter. Of such [a one]," he says, "I will boast, but of myself I will not boast, unless in my weaknesses. For if I shall desire to boast, I shall not be a fool; for I will say [the] truth; but I forbear, lest any one should think as to me above what he sees me [to be], or whatever he may hear of me." Then follows a prayer. "And that I might not be exalted by the exceeding greatness of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn for the flesh, a messenger of Satan that he might buffet me, that I might not be exalted. For this I thrice besought the Lord that it might depart from me. And He said to me, My grace suffices thee; for [My] power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather boast in my weaknesses, that the power of the Christ may dwell upon me."

God, therefore, had given a thorn in the flesh to His great servant Paul, the greatest gospel preacher that ever lived. What was that thorn? We don't know! It may have been a sickness or something that troubled him to no end; it is simply not recorded. But we know that he prayed to the Lord Jesus about it. We may pray to God the Father, but in this case Paul prayed to the Lord Jesus; we may do that too. "Lord Jesus, please remove that thorn out of my flesh." After that, he prayed again, and then once more; three times he prayed. God said, "Paul, stop praying!" How often did Paul pray? Three times. Why? I believe it is because the Lord Jesus is standing between Moses and Paul. In Gethsemane the Lord Jesus prayed three times. No doubt Paul had heard of that. The Lord said, "This thorn in the flesh remains." But then came the answer, "You will receive My grace, I will strengthen you by My grace; My strength is perfected in weakness." This is why Paul says, "Because Christ's power dwells in me, I can glory in my weaknesses." Through the grace of Christ, Paul received special strength during his life, and that was infinitely more precious than the lack he experienced.

Jesus prays that you'll acquire
Your desire,
If it will but good impart.
Does God keep it beyond reaching,
He is teaching
You to trust His Father heart.

When a child of God, while being tested says, "Yes," to God, "I don't understand it, but I want to be quiet, I do not want to blame Thee, I want to believe in Thy love," then that is of infinite value to God. That, perhaps, gives God greater joy than anything else.

A father gave his son a rather heavy parcel to carry. Someone saw the boy and said, "That parcel is much too heavy for you!" "Not at all," the boy replied. "Why not?" "My father gave it me. And my father, if anybody, should know what I can carry." Life is often full of enigmas and difficulties, but our Father hears all our prayers. Very often He answers these prayers. But when He doesn't do so, then let us not despair, but trust Him. For He is faithful. He is full of grace and full of love. This we may experience too in our daily, practical life. Let us, in the part of the pilgrim's journey still before us, trust

him blindly. Soon the Lord Jesus will come. When we are with Him, every question will be answered, and we will thank and adore Him eternally.

The End