

TRUTH *for the* LAST DAYS

NO. 2.

OUTSIDE
THE CAMP

... BY ...

HAMILTON SMITH.

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“This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” John vii, 39.

“Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach.” Hebrews xiii. 13.

IN the gospel of John we have in Christ the presentation of that which is entirely new upon the earth. The religious system that existed before the coming of Christ—before “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us”—is set aside in view of the introduction of Christianity. In the first chapter the law of Moses gives place to “grace and truth” which “came by Jesus Christ”: in the second chapter the Jewish temple is set aside by “the temple of His body”: in the third chapter “earthly things” give place to “heavenly things”: in the fourth chapter the failing waters of this present passing life give way to “the fountain of water springing up into everlasting life,” and Jerusalem worship is set aside for the worship of the Father in spirit and truth: in the fifth chapter the whole legal system with the pool, the angel, and the sabbath, is set aside by the all-powerful voice of the Son of God: in

the sixth chapter the natural bread, sustaining natural life, is thrown into the shade by "the bread which came down from heaven" to give and sustain a new and heavenly life: the seventh chapter brings rivers of living water into this dry and barren world: the eighth and ninth chapters bring the light of life into a world of darkness and death: in the tenth chapter the Christian flock takes the place of the Jewish fold, and finally, in the eleventh chapter, the Son of God, acting in the mighty power of resurrection life, annuls the power of death and the grave.

I.

Old things pass away and, in Christ, there is the introduction of all things new. But further we have brought before us the two great outstanding facts of the christian period on the basis of which the new things of Christianity are established, and by which the truth of Christianity is maintained. These two distinguishing facts are prophetically announced in John vii. 39. On the last and great day of the feast—the day that looks on to a new world of satisfied desire—the Lord invites all the world, to come unto Him and drink. And further He speaks of the present result for the one who comes. Such would become a channel of refreshment in this needy world. Then we are definitely told that the Lord is speaking of the Spirit which they that believe on Him should receive. True believers companied with the Lord in His earthly path, but they had not received the Spirit. Then we are told that the gift of the Spirit on earth awaited the presence of Christ in the glory, as we read "The Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." Here then we have the two great distinguishing features of Christianity.

1. There is a Man in the glory.
2. There is a Divine Person on earth.

Christ as Son of Man is seated in the glory, the Holy Spirit—a Divine Person—is present on earth.

II.

There are four great outstanding facts that every Christian should cherish. First, the Cross; second, Christ's session in the glory; third, the Holy Spirit's presence on earth, and fourth, the second coming of Christ. All true Christians rightly make much of the Cross; very generally, too, they look for the second coming of Christ. But alas, the two central facts are almost ignored, and their significance lost, and yet those two central facts are the distinguishing marks of the present moment. The blessings of the Cross are not confined to this present period. Every saint of every age whether past, present, or to come, finds in the Cross the righteous basis of all blessing. Nor can the coming of Christ be confined to the saints of the present period. This great event in one form or another, will affect every saint of every dispensation. But the two great intermediate facts give to Christianity its unique character, and distinguish the Christian period from all that went before and all that is yet to come. Never before, in this world's history could it be said there is a Man in the glory and a Divine Person on earth, and never again will it be true. These facts belong exclusively to the christian period and upon them the Church is established and by them the Church is maintained. Not until Christ was glorified as the risen exalted Head, and the Holy Ghost came to baptize believers into one Body could the Church be formed, and in its pathway through

this world it is maintained by Christ in the glory and the Holy Spirit on earth, and the last passage from the earthly journey to the heavenly home will be taken in answer to the voice of the Man in the glory and the quickening power of the Holy Spirit on earth (1 Thess. iv. 16, Rom. viii. 11).

If these then are the distinguishing marks of the Christian period, it should hardly surprise us if they become the unceasing object of the enemy's attack. The Devil knows full well that if he can succeed in obscuring these two truths, he will succeed in robbing us of every true thought of "Christ and the Church." He cares not if we are legal saints after the pattern of a former dispensation or if we seek to be millennial saints after the pattern of the world to come, if only he can prevent our being heavenly saints according to God's purpose for the present moment. The unceasing hostility of the enemy is ever shown in seeking to rob Christ of His glory and the saints of their blessings. If however by the grace of God these two great facts are received and maintained in power in our souls we shall have the key to the Christian period, and the way of recovery of the truth of that great mystery—Christ and the Church.

III.

In the early chapters of the Acts we have the record of the historical fulfilment of these two outstanding facts. In the first chapter Christ is received up into glory. As He stood, as the risen One, in the midst of His disciples, having uttered His last words, "He was taken up and a cloud received Him out of their sight." In the second chapter the Holy Spirit is received on earth. The disciples "were all together in one place (N. Tr.) and

there came suddenly a sound out of heaven as of a rushing mighty wind and filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them cloven tongues of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost."

The immediate result is that the disciples are baptized into one body, united to Christ the Head in heaven. The Church is formed, the gospel is preached, the dreadful works of men are exposed, the wonderful works of God are declared, three thousand souls are converted, and additions are made to the Church daily.

Thus there is found on earth an assembly of people apart from this world, belonging to another world, drawing all their resources from Christ in the glory, and controlled by the Holy Spirit on earth.

IV.

The effect of these two great facts upon the individual saint is strikingly set forth in the history of Stephen. In this devoted servant we see a characteristic saint of the Christian period, according to God's thought, and hence the display of the moral features which should have marked the whole Church during the absence of Christ.

The closing verses of chapter vii. present a man on earth indwelt by a Divine Person—the Holy Ghost—and drawing all his resources from a Man in the glory. As we read "He being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God" (verse 55). Blessed effects follow:—

i. He "*looked up.*" A man on earth full of the Holy Ghost, looks up. Such an one is not indifferent to what is within, or what is around, but characteristically he is

not marked by looking within, or looking around. To look within is to be depressed, to look around is to be confused but to look up is to see no man any more save Jesus only.

2. He looks up "*stedfastly*." As a better translation has it, he "*fixed his eyes*" on another scene and refused to be distracted by the evil of this world on the one hand, or detained by its attractions on the other.

3. He "*looked up stedfastly into heaven*." The man filled with the Holy Spirit is linked with heaven while passing through the earth. Such an one realizes that he is a partaker of the heavenly calling. Insomuch as we yield to the control of the Holy Spirit we shall be led into the heavenly calling even as Rebekah of old, consenting to go with the servant, was led from the land of her fathers to have part with Isaac in a new land. Ignoring the presence of the Holy Spirit the Church has settled down in the earth, quieting its conscience by much zeal for the good of man.

4. Stephen, looking up to heaven, sees "*the glory of God*." Everything in this world speaks of the glory of man. But the man filled with the Spirit is no longer occupied with the fading glory of dying men but looks into a scene where everything and everyone speaks of the glory of God. "*In His temple doth everyone say, Glory!*" (Psl. xxix. 9, N. Tr.)

5. Not only does he see glory, but he sees the glory of God "*and Jesus*." He sees a Man in the glory. In the brightest spot of the universe, where God is fully displayed in all His infinite perfections, he sees a Man. All other men may come short of the glory of God, but at last a man is found—the Man Christ Jesus—who has

answered to the glory, maintained the glory, and passed into the glory. The chapter opens with the God of glory appearing to a man on earth and ends with a Man appearing in the glory of God in heaven.

6. Furthermore the Man that he sees in heaven—Jesus—is standing on “*the right hand of God.*” Not only is there a Man in the glory, but that Man is set in the place of supreme power and honour. The one who came into the world in circumstances of weakness, who passed through it as a poor Man, who in passing out of it was crucified in weakness, in heaven now holds the place of highest power and glory.

Every mark of dark dishonour,
Heaped upon the thorn-crowned brow,
All the depths of His heart's sorrow
Told in answering glory now.

7. Lastly Stephen can say “Behold I see *the heavens opened.*” There has been unrolled before his vision a heavenly scene, wherein he sees the glory of God. In the glory he sees a Man—the Man Christ Jesus, and that Man he sees in the place of supreme power. But he sees more, he sees that the heavens are opened so that all the glory and the power of the Man in heaven is at the disposal of a man on earth. If the Lord Jesus has gone back to heaven to occupy a place of supreme power, He has left the heavens open behind Him, so that all the love, and power, and grace of the Man in heaven may stream down upon a man on earth.

And the result of this seven-fold vision, if we may so speak, is very blessedly set forth in the closing scene of Stephen's earthly life. He is a man on earth controlled by the Holy Spirit, and consequently drawing all his

resources from Christ in the glory. In result we see in Stephen a beautiful example of a man on earth, in the midst of the most terrible circumstances, supported by the Man in heaven. And further we see that just as the man on earth is *supported* by the Man in the glory, so the Man in the glory is *represented* in the man on earth. Stephen, lifted above all thought of self, becomes a shining witness to the character of Christ in heaven. Like his Master he prays for his enemies, commits his spirit to the Lord, and leads the long line of martyrs by sealing his testimony with his blood.

In Stephen then we are permitted to see the practical results that flow from an individual believer being controlled by the Holy Spirit on earth, and drawing his resources from Christ in heaven. And what was so blessedly set forth in Stephen is still God's thought for His people to-day, and seeing that Christ is in the glory and the Holy Spirit is yet on earth it is still possible to answer to the mind of God.

V.

Moreover the Word of God not only presents the realization of these two great facts in the case of an individual believer but we are permitted to see companies of saints governed and characterised by these facts. In Acts ix. 31 we read "Then had the Churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, were multiplied." Here we have Christian assemblies marked by two things; they walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit. Opposed and persecuted by the religious world of the day they were directed and supported by the Lord in glory and guided by the Holy Spirit on earth.

Not many wise after the flesh, nor many mighty or noble were found in these assemblies. For the most part those who formed these companies were drawn from the foolish, the weak, and the base of this world, who, like Peter and John, were unlearned and ignorant men. And yet in the sight of the Lord they were the excellent of the earth in whom He finds His delight, and with whom the Holy Spirit is content to dwell. Without worldly wealth, without humanly-devised creed or articles of religion, without visible head or guide, with nothing indeed that appealed to sight, or which nature could appreciate, or in which flesh could boast, they pursued their pilgrim way as the ransomed of the Lord, with songs and everlasting joy, for were they not on their way to the city which hath foundations in company with the Lord in glory and the Holy Spirit on earth ?

Without Christ and the Holy Spirit they had nothing, for earth was closed behind them, but with Christ and the Spirit they had everything, for heaven was opened before them. Little wonder that they enjoyed rest and edification, comfort and multiplication. How far, alas ! has Christendom travelled from this simple and beautiful picture. The Assemblies have not held the Head in heaven and have ignored the Holy Spirit on earth. As a result there is among the people of God unrest and starvation, distress and disintegration. And yet Christ in the glory remains the same yesterday, to-day and for ever, and the Holy Spirit abides with us for ever. There is no change in Divine Persons. If then, in separation from the corruptions of Christendom, even a few will yet look to Christ in heaven as their only resource, and submit to the control of the Holy Spirit on earth, will

they not in the end of the Church's history find, even as at the beginning, some measure of "rest," "edification," "comfort," and "multiplication"?

VI.

The consideration of the history of Stephen and the early Assemblies brings before us the further great fact that Christianity sets our feet in a path which demands, at every step, the exercise of *faith*. In this respect Christianity is in direct contrast to Judaism. The Jewish system was designedly of a national, and earthly order. Everything in that system—the temple with the costly stones, the priests with their beautiful robes, the singers with their instruments, the altars with their sacrifices—appealed to sight and sense. Its laws and precepts regulated every detail of the present natural life; but it was silent as to heaven, the life to come, and things unseen. That there existed great men of faith in connection with that system is beyond question, but the system itself demanded obedience from the natural man rather than faith from one born again. In Christianity, while of necessity it will greatly influence the life here, we are at once brought into relation with heaven, and the unseen, and, above all, with Divine Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Here at once faith is a necessity for only by faith can we know the Father, see Jesus crowned with glory and honour or realize the presence of the Holy Spirit on earth.

And yet if we look at Christendom to-day, we are at once faced with the solemn fact that it has turned back to a Jewish order of things, marked by everything that appeals to sight and sense, with very little that calls for

the exercise of faith. In result the great distinguishing truths of Christianity are entirely lost. Christ in the glory as the risen and exalted Head of the Church is set aside by humanly appointed heads and the presence of the Holy Spirit on earth is almost entirely ignored.

If, however, Christ in the glory, and the Holy Spirit on earth, are ignored, it must inevitably lead to the loss of all true conception of that great Mystery—Christ and the Church,—of the heavenly calling, and the purpose of God, with the result that true Christians will not rise beyond preaching the gospel to meet the need of man, while the great mass of mere professors prepare the way for the great apostasy.

VII.

If, however, through the mercy of God, the eyes of a few have been opened to see the distinguishing truths of Christianity, and the great departure from those great truths in Christendom, what are such to do? Are they to remain in ecclesiastical systems which by their constitution or practice set aside the Headship of Christ and the presence of the Spirit? Does Scripture afford any light as to the course those should take whose eyes have been opened to these great truths and who desire to answer to them?

It is impossible to think that God has left His people without any guidance for an evil day. We read, in 2 Timothy iii. 16, 17, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." So we may be sure there is light to show the path of the godly in an evil day. Through ignorance or

bad teaching we may fail to discern it. We may be so wedded to national and hereditary systems of men that we even oppose it. We may through indifference and lack of exercise fail to walk in it. Nevertheless God has an highway through this wilderness world for the ransomed of the Lord, and He has given light that we may discern this way in a day of ruin.

This light is not confined to one Scripture. The Second Epistle to Timothy, the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, the Second Epistle of Peter, the Epistles of John, and of Jude, the Addresses to the Seven Churches, all have in view the ruin of the Church in responsibility and in an especial way give light for the Christian path in the last days. Moreover we have in the Epistle to the Hebrews very special light for those who find themselves linked up with religious systems formed after the pattern of Judaism.

That Epistle was written to Jewish believers, who were in danger of turning back from Christianity to Judaism. To meet this danger, Christ is presented to their hearts. The glory of His Person, the glory of the place He holds at the right hand of God, the grace and sympathy of His heart as our great High Priest, and the efficacy of His work, all pass before us in order to attract our hearts, and thus draw us outside of every religious system on earth, and attach our hearts to Himself in heaven. Hence the great closing exhortation of the Epistle "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach" (Hebrews xiii. 13). One great aim of the Epistle is to show that if Christ appears before the face of God in heaven, He takes a place outside the religious systems of men on earth. If He has

gone within the veil He has also gone without the Camp. And the exhortation to the believer is to go without the Camp to reach the company of Christ in the outside place.

Here then is the Scriptural reason and the Scriptural warrant for leaving the religious systems of men. We do so, not simply because there is a great deal of evil in these systems, but because Christ is outside of these systems, and we desire to reach Him, and give Him His place. We "go forth . . . *unto Him*."

VIII.

The question, however, may arise, What is signified by "the Camp," and how can this term cover in its significance the religious systems of Christendom so as to warrant us in leaving them?

First let us note that whatever the significance of the Camp it is something of which it is said Christ is outside. Three times in the three verses of Hebrews xiii. 11-13, we have the word "without." In verse 11 it is used in connection with the type; in verse 12 in connection with the great antitype, and in verse 13 in its application to believers.

Under the law the body of the sacrifice was burned without the Camp. In the Antitype, Jesus, that He might set apart His people from everything inconsistent with the holiness of God, suffered the judgment of sins in the place of forsaking. But to accomplish this great work He went outside the worldly religious system, which in its beginning had been sanctioned by God and in its history had become corrupted by man. This system is set before us under the figure of a Camp or a City;

both figures presenting the same idea of an ordered religious system adapted to the natural man, but in different circumstances—in movement at one time and settled at another.

But what, more precisely, is the Camp? The Camp represents a worldly religious system, originally set up of God, making its appeal to the natural man, and composed of people outwardly in relationship with God. Turning to Hebrews ix. we find in verses 1-10 a description of the Camp.

1. It was marked by "a worldly sanctuary," with magnificent vessels and furniture (1, 2).

2. There was an inner shrine to this worldly sanctuary veiled from the outer, and known as "the Holiest of all" (3, 4).

3. In connection with this worldly sanctuary there existed an order of priests, distinct from the people, who devoted themselves to the service of the sanctuary, and over whom there was an High Priest (6, 7).

4. There were the people (verse 7) distinct from the priests and who had no direct part in the service of the sanctuary.

5. The system, as such, signified that while it lasted there was no direct access to God (8).

6. This worldly sanctuary with its priests and sacrifices, could not give a purged conscience.

7. There is one significant omission. There is no thought of any reproach connected with this worldly religious system.

Such is the description of the Camp in its salient features as presented in the Word of God. But the Word also presents Christianity in all its beauty as the exact contrast to the Camp. The Christian Company is composed of a people, not in mere outward relationship with God by natural birth, but in vital relationship by new birth. Instead of outward worship in magnificent buildings it introduces living worship in "spirit and truth." In place of a special class of priests distinct from the laity all believers are priests with Christ their great High Priest. Moreover, Christianity carries with it the blessing of a purged conscience and direct access to God. Moreover, if it opens heaven to the simplest believer, on earth it entails the reproach of Christ.

Having before us the characteristic differences between the Jewish camp and the Christian company we may easily test the great religious systems of men. Do these great universal, national, or non-conformist systems of men bear the characteristics of the Camp or those of Christianity? Alas! beyond all question truth compels us to admit that they are framed after the pattern of the Camp. They have adopted a worldly sanctuary with its railed off inner shrine; they have ordained a special class of priests under the direction of a supreme priest, who stands between God and the people, with the result that these systems, as such, give no direct access to God and no purged conscience. These systems recognise man in the flesh, appeal to man in the flesh, and are so constituted as to embrace man in the flesh, and hence with them there is no reproach.

Are then such systems the Camp? Strictly they are not. In one sense they are worse than the Camp inasmuch as they are merely imitations framed after the pattern of

the Camp with certain Christian adjuncts. The Camp was in its inception set up by God, but these great systems have been originated by men, however sincere and pious they may have been. Hence if the exhortation to the Jewish believers was to go forth without the Camp, how much more incumbent is it upon the believer to-day to go forth outside that which is merely an imitation of the Camp.

IX.

Here then we have our warrant for going outside the great religious systems of men, but let us remember we do so in order to come under the direction of Christ in the glory, and the control of the Holy Spirit on earth. We have had our eyes open to see that it is impossible to remain in these systems and give Christ His place or the Holy Spirit His place. As to our actual histories a variety of reasons may have swayed us in leaving these systems. But it is of the first importance to see that the true scriptural motive for leaving these systems is to "go forth *unto Him*." Going forth from that which we have learnt to be evil is merely negative. No one can live on negatives. Going forth unto Christ is positive. It will indeed involve separation from much that is evil but it is above all separation to Christ. A separation that gives us a positive Object for the heart. If we are moved by any less motive we shall be in danger of going back and building again the things we have destroyed. Those who go forth lightly can go back lightly, but the soul actuated by true motives goes forth from the Camp order of religion to come under the sway of Christ and the Spirit.

This outside place with Christ is one of great privilege and corresponding responsibility. Of privilege, for what can be more blessed than coming into the company of the

risen Christ, and under the control of the Spirit? Of responsibility, for the company of Christ and the Spirit will demand the exclusion of all evil—moral, doctrinal, or ecclesiastical—inconsistent with the presence of Divine Persons.

To come into this place is very different from merely leaving a sect because in it there exists bad doctrine or bad practice, or bad ecclesiastical procedure, such as one-man ministry. We may indeed separate from some system and come together in somewhat more scriptural fashion, meeting simply as believers and refusing one-man ministry, and yet fall far short of coming to Christ and giving the Spirit His place, and in result only make one more sect, which opens the door to a great deal of self-will through any-man ministry.

Moreover this outside place with Christ, is not only a place of privilege and responsibility, but one of reproach. In the verses we have considered (Heb. xiii. 2-13) the outside place is viewed in two ways; first as the place of judgment, and second as the place of reproach. In marvellous grace Christ went outside the gate bearing both the judgment of God against men, and the reproach of men against God. As He could say "The reproaches of them that reproached Thee are fallen upon Me" (Psa. lxix. 9). None but Christ could bear the judgment of God, but others can share in the reproaches of men. So that while Christ has gone without the gate bearing our sins, we are called to go without the gate bearing His reproach. If the grace of God has associated us with the glory of Christ in heaven, it gives us also the high privilege of sharing the reproach of Christ on earth. The riches of Christ in heaven entail the reproach of Christ

on earth. The Jewish system gave man a great place on earth but no place in heaven. Christianity gives the believer a blessed place in heaven, but no place on earth but one of reproach.

And yet if once we realize that we are in the company of Christ and the Holy Spirit we shall esteem "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt." For what more blessed or more wonderful than a company of people on their way to glory in company with the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Such indeed may be poor and feeble in themselves, with no human creed to maintain sound doctrine, no articles of religion to maintain order, no ritual or ceremonial rites to conduct their assembly meetings, or their service for the Lord, but, having Christ in the glory as their Head and the Holy Spirit on earth to control, they will have more than all the systems that pious men have ever devised, for they will have all the vast resources of the Godhead at their disposal. For in Christ all the fulness of the Godhead is pleased to dwell. How great then the encouragement to our feeble faith to act upon the exhortation "Let us go forth unto Him."

X.

It may be that only a few have faith to obey the exhortation: Those who do will find themselves not only in a place of great blessing but in a place where so much that is according to God's word can be carried out quite simply which would only be possible in a limited way to those who remain in the Camp. This is strikingly indicated by the writer of the Epistle in the verses that follow.

1. For those in the outside place it is comparatively simple to wear the pilgrim character, as the writer says "Here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

2. Such, set free from the trammels of man's systems, can worship in spirit and in truth. So we are exhorted "to offer the sacrifice of praise continually, that is the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His Name" (15).

3. Those in this outside place will not be indifferent to the needs of the bodies of men (16).

4. They will also care for souls, as we read "They watch for your souls" (17).

5. Set free from the hampering ritual of men they will be able to draw nigh to God in prayer (18).

6. They will be in a place where it is possible to do the will of God (21).

7. They will be in a place where it is possible to be well pleasing in His sight (21).

XI.

Seeing then the path that is opened to us by Scripture, and seeing something of the blessedness of this path, may we have grace and faith to leave all that is of man and enter upon the highway that has been cast up for the ransomed of the Lord. However great our individual failure, however great the ruin of the Church in its responsibility, these two tremendous facts still abide.

Christ is still a Man in the glory at the right hand of God and the Holy Spirit is yet on earth, and thus it is still possible to answer to the exhortation "Let us go forth unto Him."

With these two stupendous facts the Church was formed and commenced its pilgrim way: with these two facts it has been maintained throughout the long ages, and with these two facts it will at last close its earthly journey. For ere God closes His Book we have one last view of the Church on earth as the waiting Bride, led by the Spirit on earth and listening to Jesus in the glory.

In the course of its journey through this scene how greatly these facts have been obscured. How much has been adopted that is wholly inconsistent with them, but at last the Church, stripped of every human resource, every religious device, and all worldly aids, will pass into glory in the power of the two great facts that Jesus is in the glory, and the Holy Spirit present with the Church on earth.

Great indeed has been the failure, small indeed has been the appreciation of the vast resources involved in these truths, yet because Jesus remains in the glory, the same yesterday, to-day and for ever, because the Holy Spirit abides with the Church for ever, the ransomed of the Lord will at last come to the heavenly city with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.