

THE WORD OF TRUTH

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These Are Not Out of God

When a man believes that an idea is true because of a statement in the Word of God, then refuses to give any consideration to other plain statements which would require him to modify his understanding of the statement upon which his belief is based, that man has no real love for the truth. He may be enamored with his own opinions, or be attracted to comfortable ideas, but a real love for the truth is lacking. For example, when a man insists that; I Thessalonians 5:23 teaches the tripartite nature of man, then refuses to give any consideration to Luke 10:27 which if used in the same way would show a quadripartite nature of man, that man cares only for those parts of the Word that will support his idea. He has no real love for the exact and full truth of God's word.

There are many who firmly hold to the idea that everything with out exception or distinction is out of God. They base this idea on passages such as Romans 11:36, I Corinthians 8:6, and I Corinthians 11:12. They demand an immediate acceptance of the idea which they claim is taught in these passages, and some have been stampeded into accepting their teaching because of their honest desire to believe the Word of God. If anyone dares to suggest that their interpretation of these passages is open to question, they answer by calling upon us to "desist from reasoning" and to bow our stubborn wills to the Word of God.

To bow our wills to the Word of God is something that we are quite willing to do. Having made it a practice to do this for many years, such an experience is neither new nor strange. But to bow our wills to a man's understanding of a passage when we know that there are other plain statements in the Word which would demand modification of this understanding is something which we have had no experience in doing.

We are willing to accept every grain of truth declared in Romans 11:36. Having examined the Greek of this passage many times we accept without hesitation that the word translated "of" here means *out of* and that this sets forth God as the source; that the Greek word translated "through" is

correctly translated and that this sets forth God as the agent or channel; that the Greek word translated "to" means *for* (or, *unto*) and this sets forth God as the ultimate goal or purpose. This would make the first part of this passage to read: For out of God, and through God, and for God. However, when we come to the next phrase "are all things," and men begin to insist that this means everything without exception or distinction, the acts of men as well as the man, the work of Satan as well as the being, then we insist that there are other plain statements in the Word of God that flatly contradict this idea. This does not mean that the Bible contradicts, but it does mean that one passage will flatly contradict a wrong interpretation which we have imposed upon another passage. To fail or to refuse to consider I other statements which will modify our understanding of a passage is to reject the correction of the Word of God. Let us examine some of these statements.

Speaking to certain of the Pharisees, men who were His bitter enemies, the Lord Jesus Christ said: **"You are out of (*ek*) your father the devil." John 8:44.** Since our Lord declared otherwise, how is it possible for us to believe that these men and their system were out of God.

To the same men He again said: **"He that is out of (*ek*) God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not out of (*ek*) God." John 8:47.** Thus by a twofold statement, a positive and a negative declaration, the Lord Jesus Christ makes impossible any interpretation of Romans 11:36 which would include these Pharisees and their system. They, in their character, were out of the devil. They were not out of God.

In **I John 3:8** the Apostle declares: **"He that committeth sin is out of (*ek*) the devil."** Again he says, **"Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not out of (*ek*) God." I John 3:10.**

In **I John 2:16** the Apostle tells us: **"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not out of (*ek*) the Father, but is out of the world."** The term "all that is in the world" is quite comprehensive, and while it is limited by three explanatory phrases, even so we learn here that there is a lot in this big world that is not out of the Father but is out of the world itself. In view of these plain statements those who would read the idea of "universality" into Romans 11:36 need to reconsider their interpretation. "All things," in Romans 11:36, cannot mean everything without exception or distinction.

In order to accept the idea that "all is out of God," just because this seems to be taught in the wording of the *King James Version*, would require us to close our eyes and completely ignore other facts which we have gained over many years of Bible study. We insist that Romans 11:36 should be translated in harmony with Paul's clear example of the use of *ta panta* in Colossians 3:8. There it means "all these," and what this means can be gained from the context. This would make **Romans 11:36** to read:

For out of Him and through Him, and unto Him, is all this, to Him be glory for the eons.

If any prefer the plural form "all these" instead of "all this" that is permissible. The idiomatic nature of the expression **"ta panta"** allows it to be used in relationship to either singular or plural contexts. The basis of all idioms is in popular usage, not in grammatical or logical construction.

If Romans 11:36 told us only that "out of God are all things" it would present no problem. We would see in it the same truth that is declared in John 1:3. "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." We find no problem in believing that Satan in his original character was created by God, but we do not believe that he is now as God made him.

And we also believe that God created man in His own image and after His likeness. But we do not believe that God is responsible for men as they are today. **"God has made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions." Ecclesiastes 7:29.**

No, **Romans 11:36** is not a simple statement that all things were created by God. It tells us that God is the source, the channel, and the ultimate goal of all that is meant by *ta panta*. If as some insist *ta panta* means everything in the universe without exception or distinction, the bad as well as the good, then it is going to be somewhat embarrassing when men point to specific things and say: "Is this out of God? Is God the agent of this? Is God the goal of this?" Let us consider some pertinent examples.

In the world today there exists a great system called the Roman Catholic Church. It is headed by a pope, who reigns over a college of seventy cardinals, and these in turn control the archbishops, bishops, monsignors, priests, nuns, monks, orders, societies, monasteries, convents, churches and schools. This *system* is so large, so great, so wealthy, and so powerful that some who have mistaken gain for godliness have decided that this is indeed out of God and have cast their lot with it. Others, who would have nothing to do with this *system*, insist that on the basis of Romans 11:36 that it is out of God, through God, and that its goal is God.

If we believed this, the writer would cast his lot with it, even as a chip of wood might be cast upon a mighty river, content and assured that in the end it would carry him to God. However, in spite of what Romans 11:36 seems to say to some, we declare without hesitation that the Catholic Church is not out of God, God is not its channel, and God is not its goal. Its end will be seen in that day when "every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it." It will be seen in that day that God was not its goal.

As another example, take the Christian Science *system*. This *system* probably brings more real comfort and personal satisfaction to its adherents than any other *system*. They speak of the joy, the confidence, and the peace which the teachings of Mrs. Eddy bring to their hearts. Some, who believe that this is the real test of a *system*, the personal satisfaction it brings to its devotees, have cast their lot with it. It provides a wonderful refuge for some who are unable to face realities, even as the doctrine that "all is out of God, the good as well as the bad" provides a refuge for some who are unable to face the stark reality of the awful things that they see on every hand. However, be this as it may, we know that no matter how loud the devotees of Christian Science may sing its praises, it is not out of God, God is not its channel, and God is not its goal.

Do you believe otherwise? Do you insist that since Romans 11:36 declares that "all things" have God as their source, channel and goal, then this must include the Christian Science *system* in all its details?

In the current issue of *Unsearchable Riches*, Mr. A. E. Knoch has an article under title of "*Not In All is there This Knowledge*." This is taken to be an answer in part to our study on **IS ALL OUT OF GOD** which appeared in the previous issue (Vol. XIII, No.6) of **THE WORD OF TRUTH** Mr. Knoch says in part:

"There is one God, the Father, out of Whom all is, and we for Him, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom all is, and we through Him. "But not in all is there this knowledge" (I Cor. 8:6, 7). Paul himself had taught the saints in Corinth, but, at this time, he had not revealed transcendent truth, even though they had been enriched .in all the

knowledge disclosed up to this time. Immediately before this we read that "there are *many* gods," exactly the opposite of this statement, so this is limited to *us*. That is, to those who have knowledge, and not to the weak.

Today, also, there seem to be very few who have some of the knowledge here referred to. Had these Corinthians known that there is only one God, out of Whom *all* is, even the idol sacrifices, their conscience would not have bothered them, had they eaten these sacrifices.

This is the first two paragraphs of Mr. Knoch's article. In the final paragraph he says:

Most of those who read these lines have believed all this, and cannot be shaken from their faith by illogical, God disgracing reasonings (I Tim. 2:8). This exhortation is written in order to urge them to avoid questionings and controversies, and all the evils that spring from them. Let us beware lest our knowledge become a stumbling block to the weak in faith, and bear with that which is due to immaturity and unbelief. Let us never show a false and offensive spirit, which is the hallmark of error. Let us bear even with those who seek to expunge God's greatest glories from the pages of Holy Writ. Apart from His grace we would be guilty of the same thing. And let us pray that our conduct will be such as to win some to consider and accept His highest truth, for He has made it plain in His Word that, at present, *He* is not imparting this knowledge to *all*. *Unsearchable Riches*, Volume 45 Number 3.

It will be seen from this that Mr. Knoch places upon himself and his followers the mantle of divine wisdom and superior enlightenment. Those who accept without question his dogma that "all is out of God, the good as well as the bad" are accorded a place among those who have reached the "highest truth." Any who question his dogma are charged with "illogical, God disgracing reasonings." The only way to free ourselves of such charges is to accept without question his interpretation of certain passages. So from their superior position he urges his readers to look down in pity upon us who have not yet had our eyes opened to see that even idol sacrifices are out of God. A pose such as this is about what we would expect from one who has made claim that he and his associates "understand the Scriptures better than anyone else since the apostles." This attitude is often typical of those who are so sure that their ideas are so superior to all others that they look with pity upon all who would think otherwise. However, we will draw the mantle of charity over this arrogant attitude and consider his statement that even the idol sacrifices were out of God.

We would be careful here not to misunderstand. It could be that he may mean that the animals used in making the sacrifices were, created by God. However, if he is consistent in his position it would seem to indicate that the very act of those who offered the animals was part of God's purpose.

In a later statement in this same epistle Paul warned the Corinthians that that which the Gentiles are sacrificing they sacrifice to demons and not to God. This settles the goal of their sacrifices. They were not for God. However, a much stronger case can be presented.

There came the time in the history of Israel that they turned from Jehovah to idols. They refused to be corrected and the truth perished from among them. They built the high places of Baal in the valley of the son of Hinnom and worshipped Molech. They adopted some rituals from other nations, but they also devised some of their own in order to carry on their idolatrous worship.

In one ceremony it seems that they built two long rows of fire with a narrow space between them. At the end of these two rows of flame was an image of Molech. They caused their sons and daughters to pass between these two lanes of fire. If they made the journey safely and fell at the feet of the image, they felt that they had been purified of all their sins and were received by Molech. However, the terrific heat and the lack of oxygen which had been sucked out by the flames caused some who were weak physically to fall into the flames and burn to death. This was taken as evidence of Molech's displeasure. One can well imagine the rejoicing when a boy or girl in Israel made the journey safely.

The people of Israel were quite proud of this elaborate ritual which they had developed, even going so far as to attribute it to Jehovah. However, Jehovah through His prophet Jeremiah described it in its true character. Hear His words!

And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech: which I commanded them not, neither came it into My mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin. Jeremiah 32:35.

This same truth is also declared in Jeremiah 7:31 and Jeremiah 19:5. Thus three times over God disavows any relationship to Israel's idolatry. It was not out of Him. He did not command it. He did not speak concerning it. It never even entered His mind.

Some will insist that the words here translated "neither came it into my mind" means literally that it "did not ascend on His heart." If they find any comfort in this, we would not want to deprive them of it.

In view of the facts set forth we would conclude by saying that the one who believes all that God has spoken cannot believe that everything without exception or distinction finds its source in God. The passages that seem to teach this have been crudely translated, wrongly interpreted and ignorantly misapplied.

THE END

The Word 'Body' in 1 Corinthians 15

In Volume XIII, Number 5 of THE WORD OF TRUTH it was set forth that the Greek word *soma* and the English word *body* both mean substance. The body of a man is his substance - what he is. The body of Christ is His substance - what He is.

From Genesis 2:7 we learn that man's substance is dust or soil. God made him of the "soil of the ground," therefore, man is soil and unto the soil he returns. This is God's declaration in Genesis 3:19.

The "body of Christ" is the substance of Christ, that is, what He is, His essence. He is the Expression of God. He is the image of the invisible God. In Him dwells all the fullness of the Deity.

To produce a man, God started with the soil; but in bringing forth His son, God started with Himself. The Word was God, but the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. John 1:1 and 14. It is

only as we partake of what Christ is, that we can become the body (substance) of Christ. We do not make or form the body of Christ. The body of Christ, when we partake of it, makes us what we are.

A truth that is new to us, one that does not follow familiar paths of thought, is not easy to enter into. Every truth needs to be thought out and thought through. We need to think ourselves free from old errors. But, alas, very few have ever trained themselves to think. "Think on these things" is a divine exhortation that very few can obey or desire to obey.

In the great fact that the word *body* means substance, we have a truth that if we think it through, we will find that we are in possession of certain knowledge which will illuminate every passage in Paul's epistles in which the word *body* is found. This can be demonstrated in I Corinthians 15:35- 50, a passage in which the word *body* is found ten times. We will examine this in detail.

But some will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? 15:35.

In these words we see that Paul anticipates a question. He knows that this question will be asked by some, not for information, but 'in order to deny the credibility of. the resurrection. They would make' it to be an impossible and ridiculous idea.

Even today, the average man, even the professing Christian thinks that it is "a thing incredible that God should raise the dead (Acts 26:8). There are very few who truly believe in the resurrection of the dead, no matter how many times they may affirm this in their creeds. Resurrection means the full restoration to life of one whose life has been cut off by death. Since the average uninstructed Christian does not believe that anyone ever really dies, he cannot possibly believe that anyone is ever raised from the dead. What he describes as resurrection is in reality some form of reincarnation, in which something he calls "the soul" (sometimes he calls it "the spirit") is supposed to reenter and live again in something he calls "the body." Whatever this idea may be called, it cannot be truly called "the resurrection of the dead." This explains why so many spend their time prattling "about the resurrection of the body," a phrase that cannot be found in Scripture.

As a safeguard here it needs to be said that the Scriptures teach actual, physical, bodily resurrection. But it nowhere teaches that the. very elements which were buried in the soil are the ones that are' to form the man in resurrection.

There are many who reject the truth of "the resurrection of the dead" because they do not know how the dead are raised up. Anything that is beyond their comprehension is held by them to be impossible. Some in Corinth were doing this. As part of their argument against the fact of resurrection they were demanding to know, "How are the dead raised up?"

Since the Lord has not revealed "how" the dead are raised, since He has not shown how He puts forth His power so that dead men may live again, there can be no answer to this question. Paul does not attempt to give any answer. God has revealed the fact of resurrection for our hope and faith, but He has not told us how the dead will be raised.

A second question they asked was, "With what body (substance) do they come?"

There is only one possible answer to this question. In life their substance was soil, and in resurrection their substance will still be soil. If those who asked this question were honest seekers for the truth, Paul could have given this simple and direct answer. How ever, if Paul answers after this

manner, he will be walking into the trap which they have set for him. The nature of this trap becomes plain when we consider the beliefs of those who asked this question.

These Corinthians had imbibed deeply of Greek philosophy, a philosophy that caused them to depreciate and despise the bodily nature or the substance of man. They attempted to divide man into material and spiritual parts. They did not believe that the material part or the body of man was any integral part of him. The Greeks believed that man's body was a hindrance to the intellectual life, and that the serenity needed for meditation was disturbed by bodily desires. They attributed all pain, disease, and grossness to the body. Hence, to them, the resumption of life with a bodily aspect presented no attraction. The very idea was repugnant to them. They felt that life, if it were restored, should be restored without the body. They reasoned that if the dead are raised up they would still be handicapped with the same bodily disabilities that they had known in the previous life. Their greatest desire was to be rid of the body, which they felt was responsible for all their ills. A philosophy such as this created a mental block against the reception of Paul's message of resurrection. Therefore, some of them are saying: **"There is no resurrection of the dead" (I Cor. 15:12).**

We have already noted that Paul anticipates that they will challenge him with the question, "If the dead are raised up, with what body (substance) do they come." If Paul answers, "Their substance will be soil, the same material God used when He made the first man," he will be walking into the neat trap they have laid for him. Their reply will be, "If that is the case, then resurrection is not even desirable." However, Paul does give an answer, but he skillfully avoids the snare they have set. .

Paul begins his answer by charging that those who ask this question are foolish. The word here translated "fool" means "without prudence" or "lacking sense." It is a severe term but entirely justified. These skeptics were making a show of great intelligence, but they had failed to consider numerous basic and important facts which will shed much light upon the matter. These facts Paul sets forth by a simple recital. He begins with the very familiar process of sowing seed.

That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die. 15:36.

It is of the utmost importance to note here that this is not a statement concerning man, man's body, or resurrection. It is a simple statement of fact concerning plant life, a fact which will lead them " into what Paul has to say about resurrection. The fact stated is simple and easily understood. Seed, until it is placed in the earth, is dormant. It becomes active when placed in the ground.

And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body (substance) that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or some other grain. 15:37.

This is in full accord with the experience of all who sow seed. We take one grain of corn, plant it in the earth and reap an utterly amazing harvest composed of root, stalk, leaves, husks, cob, tassel, silk, and numerous grains identical in character and substance with the one which we planted. We did not plant the substance which it produced. All that we planted was one naked kernel. From this we see the great variety of things God can produce out of the same material or substance.

But God giveth it a body (substance) as it has pleased Him, and to every seed his own body. 15:38.

In His great plan it has been established by God that each seed shall bring forth a certain substance. Mighty oaks from little acorns grow, but nothing else ever grows from an acorn. And when the oak tree completes its cycle and reproduces other acorns, these will be identical in substance with the acorn that produced the oak. There are many who believe that the substance of a plant or fruit is regulated by the soil in which it is grown. This is contrary to the direct statement of the Spirit of God that when seed is sown God gives its product a substance or body as it pleases Him.

We will make a mistake if we try to apply Paul's words here to anything but plants, and we will make a still greater mistake if we think that he is giving illustrations of the resurrection of the dead. This can lead to nothing but confusion. There can be no analogy between planting a seed and burying a man, and there is no possible likeness between a living seed and a dead man. Paul is not giving illustrations of the resurrection. He is stating certain obvious and incontrovertible facts in order to provide stepping stones up to the great truth he is yet to reveal. He now changes to another theme, but he continues to build steps toward the truth he will later declare.

All flesh is not the same flesh; but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. 15:39.

Men, beasts, fishes, and birds are all composed of the same substance. They are all soil. But God has so arranged this substance that it forms four different kinds of flesh. This is an obvious truth, and having stated it, Paul advances another step.

There are also celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. 15:40.

The word translated "celestial" here (*epourania*) means *super, heavenly*, and the word translated "terrestrial" means *superearthly*.

As Paul goes ever higher in his presentation of facts, he declares truth that can be known only by inspiration. There are substances which are superheavenly and there are substances which are super-earthly. No one can speak with authority, but it seems reasonable to conclude that superheavenly beings such as cherubim and seraphim are not made of any earthly material. These beings get their tangibility from a superheavenly substance. They are not made of soil. It follows also that the sun is not composed of the same substance or material as the earth, that is, of any arrangement of elements that is common to the earth. The sun is not composed of soil. It is composed of a superearthly material.

At this point we should note that the facts so far stated by Paul lead us to realize that God is never hindered or helped by the material He uses. The finest workman would be hindered if he were given a bar of lead and told to make a sharp cutting tool from it. He could not do it. But God could do it. His ability to make a glorious product is not hindered or helped by the substance or material he starts with. He can do just as much with the earthly substance of soil as He can do with the superheavenly substances, whatever they may be.

There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differs from another star in glory. 15:41.

The sun, moon, and stars are all composed of the same superearthly substance, yet they differ greatly in glory. Even one star differs from another star in glory. This demonstrates that the sub-

stance or material which God uses does not produce the glory of the thing created. The glory of a thing comes from what the Creator does with the material.

Having stated these facts Paul is now ready to declare the truth that is upon his heart.

So also is the resurrection of the dead. 15:42

When man is raised, his substance will still be soil. God does not need to use a new or different substance. The faults of man, the weaknesses that he displays do not come from the material used in His creation. The grossness of man is the result of sin and death having entered upon the scene.

What the Greeks attributed to the body, the believer attributes to sin and death.

It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. 15:42.

The pronoun "it" here refers to the human body, that is, the human substance. This direct statement will be followed by three others wherein the Apostle speaks of a man being "sown." Many take this "sowing" to refer to the burial of a believer, but this is not the truth. This idea casts a shadow over this portion, making a true understanding impossible. A body is not "sown" when it is placed in the ground or in the tomb. The words "it is sown" in all four occurrences in this portion refer to one's birth, the beginning of one's life, when he is given a place upon earth among mankind. This figure is quite common in the Old Testament. See Jeremiah 31:27; Hosea 2:23; Zechariah 10:9.

The analogy between seed being sown and man being born is entirely harmonious. When seed is sown it must be alive, or nothing will come out of it. The sowing, spoken of four times here, is a man's birth into the Adamic race. When a life begins, when a man is born into this world, he begins with a body, that is, a physical substance. This body or substance is subject to corruption. Notice I, carefully that it does not say, "It is sown corrupt." The words "sown in corruption" mean that it is by birth brought into a situation that is corrupt. It does not mean that men are born corrupt.

When a child is born, no matter what the circumstances of its birth may be, it is sown and must develop in a situation which is corrupt. In addition to this, death begins its work at once, and none is able to say what progress it will make or what course it will take. It may quickly reach that stage where life can no longer remain in and function in the substance that forms the man, and if life departs from the body it soon disintegrates and returns to the soil from whence it came. None can doubt this, for the evidence of it is plain to our sight. Man as born into this world is subject to disease, corruption, and death. This is the lot of man because of Adam's sin. By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men. The decay that is seen in men from birth to death is not caused by the material from which God made man.

Seed may be sown in many kinds of soil. Some soil will kill the seed that is planted in it. Man is sown or born in a situation that is corrupt. He is subject to the corruption that surrounds him.

However, this is not to be the case "in the resurrection." When God begins that great work wherein "in Christ shall all be made alive," those raised are not to be brought back to a situation characterized by corruption. Neither will they any longer be subject to the disease and death that comes upon all men because Adam sinned. When the dead are raised they are to be raised "in incorruption." These two words do not necessarily describe the condition of those who are raised. They describe the condition of things upon this earth that men are to be raised into. No man will be raised from the dead until God's government is a reality upon the earth. His government will bring about a situation that is without corruption.

It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. 15:43.

Every child born since the fall of Adam has been born into a situation characterized by dishonor and weakness, and each one born may fall the victim of these things. That this is true, human experience abundantly testifies. Take for example the victim of crippling arthritis and see how through no fault of his own his body has been dishonored. Then on the other hand, take those who "dishonor their own bodies between themselves."

In this life we are not subject to incorruptibility, glory, or power. True, by becoming partakers of the divine nature we can "escape the corruption that is in the world through lust," but we cannot escape the physical corruption that came through Adam's sin. Even if we are able to maintain good health through our lifetime, we will still die in the end. In the resurrection all this is to be changed. As born into this world man enters a situation characterized by sin, iniquity, corruption, dishonor, infirmity, and death. But when men are raised they will be raised to a situation characterized by righteousness, morality, incorruption, honor, power, and life. Let us consider well all that it will mean to live and serve in such a glorious condition.

It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. 15:44.

In this statement Paul makes an important change. In the first three contrasts he has set forth the conditions or situations in which men are sown - that is, into which they are born. Now he tells the state of the body or substance when man is born into this world. It is sown a natural body.

There is an error of translation in this passage which must be straightened out if the truth is ever to be understood. The Greek word translated "natural" here is *psuchikos*, and it is the adjective formed from the word *psuche* which means soul. That this adjective, means *soulish* every student will readily recognize, but few will be willing to follow this fact out to all its conclusions. This passage should read "It is sown a soulish body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a soulish body, and there is a spiritual body."

It seems that there is no statement in all of Paul's writings that, has been twisted and tortured as much as this one. It has suffered from mistranslation and misinterpretation. So many childish ideas have been read into it or supported by it that one must wonder if it is now possible to get beneath this great rubbish heap and find the truth of God in this passage.

The first great error that is habitually imposed upon this passage is the idea that *spiritual* is the opposite of *material* and that nothing that is *material* can be *spiritual*. Out of this error has grown the idea that those who are raised from the dead will not have material bodies. This idea is linked up to the fact that Christ after His resurrection appeared in a room where the doors were closed and bolted. This leads to the childish idea that in the resurrection men will have bodies of such nature that they can walk through material substances, such as doors, without opening them. By reasoning such as this the flood-gates of imagination are opened and all sorts of error rushes forth. Preachers get tangled up in their own sermons. on this subject and are unable to distinguish between their messages and the truth of God.

In refutation of all such ideas it can be said that in the Word of God *spiritual* is not the opposite of *material*. After His resurrection Jesus Christ said to His disciples:

Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have. Luke 24:32.

No one could ever claim to be more spiritual than the Lord Jesus Christ; nevertheless, He invited His disciples to handle Him and prove to themselves that He was flesh and bones. In fact, our Lord was no more spiritual after His resurrection than He was before His death.

In the portion we are considering, Paul emphatically declares, "There is a spiritual body (substance.)" A body or a substance has to be material. Nevertheless, that which is material can be spiritual. *Spiritual* is not the opposite of *material*. This idea is a part of ancient Greek philosophy, but it has no support in the Word of God.

While it is true that the Lord Jesus after His resurrection appeared in a room without opening a door, we will err if we think that this miracle was made possible by means of a different kind of body, which He obtained in resurrection. He could have done this just as easily before His resurrection as after it. This miracle was based upon His own inherent power. The One who could pass "through the midst" of a great mass of angry men could have just as easily passed through a solid door. See Luke 4:29, 30.

The idea that we too in resurrection shall possess bodies of such nature that we can pass through closed doors is utterly childish. It is not even desirable. It would destroy all privacy in the life to come. I, for one, would not want such powers. If a door is closed, I will open it; and if it is locked, I will wait until God opens it.

In order to understand the portion we are considering we will need to find the answer to two questions: What is a soulish body? What is a spiritual body?

In answering these questions let us note carefully that basically and fundamentally we are men, that is, human beings. We are not angels, we are not spirits. These are other orders of creation. When we seek the answer to the question, "What is man?" the Bible reveals that considered from one standpoint men are soul, from another standpoint, men are spirit, and from yet another standpoint men are body.

Soul is not a peculiar characteristic of man alone for this same characteristic is possessed by animals, angels, and spirit beings. All beings that have sensory capacities such as the ability to see, hear, smell, feel or taste must be classified as souls. The man God created became a living soul when God breathed into His nostrils the breath of life. Genesis 2:7. It is illogical to say that man "has a soul," for a man cannot have what he is. A woman can be a wife, but cannot have a wife. A man can be a husband, but cannot have one. All passages that seem to suggest that the soul is something which man possesses (See Genesis 12:13) are figures of speech in which the word *soul* means *I, myself, or me*.

The word *spirit* has many uses and meanings in the Word of God. In one of its uses in relationship to man it sets forth a characteristic or aspect of man. Man is an intelligent being with almost unlimited power to think and reason. Man's ability to do these things is called *spirit*, just as his ability to feel is called soul. As Dr. Scofield says, "Spirit is that part of man which knows: 'Man is *spirit* because of his intelligence. He is *soul* because of his senses. He is *body* because of his material.

In man one aspect can dominate another. The body of man can be dominated either by soul or by spirit. As born into this world the body of man is soulish, that is, it is dominated by the fact that man is soul. The Greek philosophers recognized this fact in a measure, but they pushed it to an extreme where their greatest desire was to get rid of and be done with the body, so that the bodily desire would no longer hinder their quest for intellectual attainment. They failed to recognize that this was because man's bodily aspect was dominated by the aspect of soul. Since men as born into this world have soulish bodies, they can never get away from this fact. However, in the life to come men are going to have bodies that are dominated by the spirit aspect of man. They are to be raised spiritual bodies. This is Paul's direct answer to the question, "With what body do they come?"

Our present bodies respond to the soul, or the senses. The bodily aspect of man seeks for physical comfort and satisfaction. Our bodies do not respond to spiritual things. We are dominated by bodies which respond to the soul, never to the spirit. In the resurrection our bodies will hunger for, seek for, and respond to the things of the spirit. That all this is in harmony with revealed truth, Paul goes on to show.

And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. 15:45.

This passage imposes major difficulties. I am unable to accept the traditional interpretation that makes the "first Adam" to be the one in Genesis 2 and the "last Adam" to be Christ. Too many important words in verses 45 to 47 are lacking full manuscript authority, and the translations do not follow the Greek. Is it not possible that the first Adam is the man Adam that God created and that the final Adam is the one who will be recreated by resurrection? Many feel that the forty-seventh verse makes this impossible, but they need to realize that there is no manuscript authority for the words "the Lord" in this verse. The problem is left with the reader, as this writer does not yet possess sufficient facts to work out a solution.

Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. 15:46.

A better rendering of this would be: "However, the spiritual is not first, but the soulish, thereupon the spiritual." This is in harmony with God's great program that man who is soulish by creation should be spiritual by resurrection.

The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. 15:47.

As stated before the words "the Lord" are lacking in manuscript authority. The first statement refers to men as born into this world. The second statement refers to men as raised from the dead. Being "out of the earth," men as born are earthy. Being "out of heaven," men as raised are to be heavenly.

As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the I heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. 15:48.

The stamp of the superheavens which was upon Adam in creation was lost in the fall, and this allowed the material of which he was made to become his predominant characteristic. As descendents of fallen man we have this same soilish stamp upon us. In resurrection we regain the stamp of the superheavenly.

And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. 15:49.

Adam was created in the image and likeness of God. Genesis 1:26. This image and likeness was lost in the fall. Seth was born "in the image and after the likeness of fallen Adam." Genesis 5:3. It is in the image and likeness of this fallen parent that we are born. We have the promise here that in resurrection we shall bear the image of the superheavenly. In view of this a warning becomes necessary.

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 15:50

Here we have another passage which is badly translated, misinterpreted, misapplied, and misunderstood. The believer should make a serious attempt to understand it or else should cease using it altogether.

First of all, let us consider the Greek word which is twice translated "inherit" in this passage. This translation is bound to lead our thinking into wrong channels in regard to this passage. The word is *kleronomeo*, and it has to do with a portion or a part, and it can probably best be expressed by the word *allotment*. However, the word *kleros* alone signifies a lot, a portion, or a part, so this word means still more. It means to actually possess or to enjoy a portion or part, or to be given a place. In view of these facts we can know that Paul here tells us that "flesh and blood" are not to be given any place in the kingdom of God, neither is corruption to be given any place in incorruption.

In previous studies it has been shown that the kingdom of God is the government of God, that is, God's government. It is now suspended, but will some day be a reality in, upon, and over the earth. When it comes the words *incorrupt* and *incorruptible* can be written over every detail of it. In all human governments, corruption is considered as a necessary evil. Men do not complain unless the corruption becomes too bad. "To the victor belongs the spoils" is an accepted principle of all human governments. In view of this, those in power are expected to find acceptable ways of enriching themselves or helping their friends.

Under God's government nothing that even savors of corruption is to be given a place. All who are raised to live under God's government will be living in an incorrupt world that cannot be corrupted. These are plain truths that present no difficulty. However, the statement that "flesh and blood" is not to be given any place in God's government presents a greater problem. Nevertheless, everything hinges on the meaning of the term "flesh and blood."

If the reader will feel the lobe of his ear, or touch his cheek, or feel the muscle of his upper arm he will be feeling that which is called "flesh." If he will feel the front part of his lower leg he will be feeling that which is called "bone."

Coursing through the body is a red fluid called "blood," which can be seen in part if the flesh is cut or broken.

Therefore, it is entirely correct to say that flesh is the soft tissue of the body, and that blood is the red fluid that flows through it. However, it is most evident that this is not what the words "flesh and blood" mean in this passage. If so, then *Jesus Christ* would be excluded from the kingdom of God.

He invited His disciples to I feel His flesh after He had arisen from the dead. It is utterly impossible that the phrase "flesh and blood" in this passage could mean the tissue or the fluid of the body. .

The phrase "flesh and blood" is found in Matthew 16:17; I Corinthians 15:50; Galatians 1:16; Ephesians 6:12; and Hebrews 2:14.

In Matthew 16:17 it would be ridiculous to read into our Lord's statement the ideas of a man's tissue or fluid, since these have never revealed anything to anyone.

In Galatians 1:16 Paul could not have meant that he had not conferred with a piece of meat or with the red fluid that courses through the veins of men.

In Ephesians 6:12 Paul is not telling us that our warfare is not with body tissue or body fluid.

In Hebrews 2:14 it is most evident that flesh and blood means far more than the basic definition of these two words.

In considering all occurrences it becomes plain that the term "flesh and blood" is used figuratively for all that men are by birth and nationality. These things are allotted a very large place under human governments. The mere "accident" of birth gives men a very great advantage, or else places them at a disadvantage in this life. Nationality means much in this world. But under God's government anything that men happen to be by birth or nationality will never be allotted a place.

The saying "You cannot take it with you," applies to much more than money. Take for example the man or the woman who by birth has a throat so constructed and vocal chords of such nature that glorious tones come almost automatically from them. There are many who believe that this accident of birth guarantees them a place among those who will sing forth the praises of God in the life to come. I insist that this is not so. What we are by birth here can make no contribution to the glory of God in the life to come. What God may give to us will make a contribution.

This explains why "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble" are called by God. Some of these are called, for such things do not put the man who has them at a disadvantage. Nevertheless the wisdom, the might, and the nobility that men may possess are not to be allotted any place in the kingdom of God. Men cannot take such things with them. I Corinthians 15:50 must be read in the light of the first part of Paul's letter. We must not use it to support the impossible idea that in the life to come we are going to consist of some kind of "immaterial material."

There is nothing wrong whatsoever with the substance that God used in the creation of man. God is going to transfigure this substance of our humiliation so that it will conform to the substance of His glory. Philippians 3:20. No new substance is used. The old is transfigured.

In resurrection we will be human beings. When I return from the grave, I will invite my friends to handle me, to feel my flesh and my bones. I expect that blood shall be flowing through my veins. I have no sympathy with the idea that there is no blood in the man in resurrection.

The End

An Examination of Acts 3:19-21

It is my belief and my teaching that the Word of God predicts a long period of blessing for this earth and for the people of this earth before the second coming of Jesus Christ. This time of blessing is based upon Jesus Christ governing the world from His throne in the heavens. It is not in any manner dependent upon His personal presence upon the earth. This period of divine government is spoken of prophetically in Psalm 103:19. Its relationship to Israel is declared in Ezekiel 20:33. It is called in the gospel of Matthew "the kingdom of the heavens." It is called in the other gospels "the kingdom of God." It is a time when all men will be under the government of God.

The average professing Christian today seems to believe that God has no plans for this earth except to set a match to it. Ideas such as this arise out of ignorance of God's revealed plan and purpose for this earth and the nations of the earth. If they will read nothing more, then let them at least read Isaiah 2:1- 5 and they will learn there of God's program for the nation of Israel and for the other nations of this earth. Then if they ask, "How can these things be?" let them read Psalm 22:27; Psalm 46:8,9; and Psalm 66:3, and they will find the answer. Even though the advent of God's benevolent government has been long delayed, it will surely come to pass.

There is a song, the first line of which declares, "Glorious things of thee are spoken, Zion, city of our God." This is true. However, the most glorious things in the Word of God are spoken of the earth. A sample of this is seen in the specific promise, "He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth." Psalm 46:9. The fulfillment of this one promise alone would bring about such unbelievable changes that it is beyond our comprehension; nevertheless, this is only one detail of the glorious things that God has spoken in regard to the earth. All His promises will be fulfilled to the letter in those days when God intervenes and imposes His government upon mankind.

The first great stage of God's glorious government is to be seen under the kingdom of the heavens. This precedes the second coming of Christ. The second great stage is seen in the millennium. This follows the second coming of Christ. The millennium is followed by a condition of things called the new heaven and new earth.

The average professing Christian is altogether ignorant of the first great stage of divine government. They begin everything with the second coming of Christ, and they deny altogether the idea that there will be a period of time preceding His coming when the heavens will govern the earth. They take every statement and prophecy of the kingdom of the heavens and apply them either to the present time, to the church, or to the millennium. By doing this they eliminate the kingdom of the heavens altogether, and they make impossible any true understanding of the order of events when God resumes His prophesied dealings with the nations of the earth.

It has also become quite popular today to eliminate the millennium, to apply all statements concerning it to the past or the present, and to begin all future glory with the new heaven and new earth.

We need to resist all such attempts to eliminate parts of God's prophetic program. We need to hold firmly to the truth that there will be two great transitional periods before the new heaven and the new earth. The first of these transitional periods is the kingdom of the heavens. The second is the millennium. These are two terms of a great school which will fully educate men for a place in the new earth.

In the past five years it has been my duty and privilege to bring to the attention of many the truth revealed in the Word concerning this first great period of time. This testimony has been carefully considered and wholeheartedly received by the majority of those who follow my teaching ministry. These have aided me by bringing my views to the attention of many students and teachers, and it is hardly necessary for me to say that among these are quite a few who, after hearing of my teaching, reject the idea of a period of divine government before the second coming of Christ. In fact, it has been somewhat bitterly opposed by those who are wedded to the theory "that all signs point to His coming." Numerous arguments are brought forth as to why there can be no period of divine government before the second coming. However, I am able to say that most of the arguments which they bring forth were duly considered by me long before I ever began to make this teaching public.

One of the regularly repeated arguments against my position is based upon a misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the truth revealed in **Acts 3:19-21**. This portion in the King James Version reads as follows:

Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of the restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

Those who use this passage as an argument against my position insist that in these words there is a promise that if Israel will repent, God will at once send back the Lord Jesus Christ. If this is true then there could be nothing that must precede His return except the repentance of Israel. One correspondent declares:

"If Israel had repented at the preaching of Peter, the Lord would have descended at once. If then, there is predicted in Scripture a period of blessing which is to precede the Lord's second coming, this prediction would not have been fulfilled and God's Word would be broken."

In answer to this I would say that neither would there have been many other things which Scripture declares must precede the second coming. In fact if Israel had repented and Christ had returned, then He would have been here ahead of the antichrist. He would also have been here ahead of Elijah, **"who must come first and restore all things."** **Matthew 17:11.**

However, I prefer to give a more careful answer than this, and I will begin by saying that there is no promise in Acts 3:19-21 that if Israel will repent, God will send back Jesus Christ immediately. That conclusion is arrived at by cutting the very heart out of this passage. Another writer boldly states as follows:

"Repent ye therefore. . . and He shall send Jesus Christ. . ." This is the heart of the message of Peter in **Acts 3:12-26**.

The truth is that the very heart of Peter's message is represented by the three periods in the quotation above which signifies an omission. By cutting out the heart, the passage becomes a lifeless thing, and by cutting off the feet, it has nothing on which to stand. Let us examine this message in detail.

Repent ye therefore, and be converted. To repent is to submit, and to be converted means to be turned toward God. This message is in perfect harmony with the fact that God's government has begun upon earth in a stage that is comparable to the blade stage of growing grain (See Mark 4:26-29). Their guilt and rebellion has not excluded them from this, but they must at once submit and be turned toward God. This was the final offer to all who heard Peter's message.

That your sins may be blotted out. This does not say (either in " the Greek or the English) that if they submit their sins will be blotted out. They are to submit and be turned toward God with this end in view. Repentance and conversion cannot purge even the least of sins, let alone the sin of killing the Prince of life. This call of Peter to Israel is even as if a mother should call her boy to come into the house in order that his hands might be washed before dinner. Coming into the house will not cleanse his hands, but it will put him in the proper place to get it done.

These hearers of Peter need the blood of Christ. Their guilt is great in the sight of God. But His blood can be of no value to them as long as they continue in their stubbornness and opposition with their faces turned away from God. "Submit and be turned to God with a view to the blotting out of your sins," is the message of Peter.

When the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. A more accurate translation of these words would be: In order that the seasons of refreshing may come from the face of the Lord. These words declare the purpose of their submission, their conversion, and the blotting out of their sins. These things must be first before there can ever be seasons of refreshing from the face of the Lord. Peter later declares that "the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." I Peter 3:12. These "seasons of refreshing" are the period of blessing for Israel before the second coming of Christ. And if Israel is blessed, the nations will in turn be blessed.

And He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you. This reads in the Greek: And that He may be sending Christ Jesus, the One appointed before for you.

The careful student will have noted that the words we are considering set forth a divine order of events that must yet take place.

1. Israel must submit.
2. Israel must be turned toward God.
3. These things must be first, and they prepare the way that Israel's sins may be blotted out.
4. These things must be in order that seasons of refreshing may come direct from the Lord.
5. These four things (Submission, Conversion, Cleansing, Seasons of refreshing) must be realized before God sends back again the Lord Jesus Christ. This is reiterated in Peter's next statement.

Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things. This statement alone proves that there was no promise that Christ would return if Israel repented. If the heaven must receive Him until a certain condition of things is realized, then He will not come back one moment before that time, The condition of, things upon the earth that will make possible His return is not the repentance of Israel. It is the times of the restoration of all which God has predicted through His holy prophets. Notice that it is not the *time* of the restoration. It is the *times* of the restoration. This does not mean that when it comes time to restore all that He will come and do it. The times of the restoration must be an accomplished fact before He returns. Elijah will indeed come first and restore all things. Matthew 17:10. Five times in the Word of God we read that the Lord Jesus is to remain at the right hand of the Father until His foes are made His footstool. The world is not yet ready for the personal presence of Christ. Elijah has not yet done his great work. The times of the restoration have not yet come to pass. His foes are not yet in subjection to Him.

It is my contention that Acts 3:19-21 is positive confirmation of my teaching that there is to be a period of divine blessing for Israel and for the world before the second coming of Christ. Those who contend for the "any moment" theory of the second coming overlook the fact that the Spirit of God through Peter places the "times of refreshing" ahead of the sending of Jesus for the time of His personal presence upon the earth. They ignore the fact that the Lord will never leave His present place in the heavens until His foes have been brought into subjection to Him.

THE END

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