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IN THIS ISSUE

Article One:

Lyman A Wendt, former pastor of the Riverside (California) Bible Church, is not a stranger to the pages of *Scripture Research*, as there are several articles found in Volume 5 which bear his imprint. This particular article (*He is Precious*) represents the last sermon he delivered to his congregation in the late months of 1957. Several of Scripture Research, Inc.'s current Board members were present that day when he preached this sermon. Also, some of us had the privilege of sitting under his ministry for a number of years. He had a mighty impact on our lives and on many others who sat under his preaching and teaching. What a privilege to share with you this, yes, "precious" sermon.

(On a personal note, Pastor Wendt officiated at the marriage of my wife, Marilyn, and me, 57 years ago, and as such we have some fond and very special memories of him and his ministry....cwa)

Article Two:

As previously alluded to, some of Pastor Wendt's teaching messages found their way into the pages of *Scripture Research* between the years of 1998-2004. In actuality, it was two to four years prior to his death that he prepared and delivered this series of messages which he termed "The Myth Series."* The titles include: *The Jesus Myth* (Vol. 5, No. 8), *The Satan Myth* (Vol. 5, No. 6), *The Church Myth* (Vol. 5, No. 10), *The God Myth* (Vol. 5, No. 10), and *The Religion Myth* (Vol. 5, No. 7). We have chosen to include, under this same cover, his *The Jesus Myth* study with *He Is Precious*. We feel confident that you will enjoy the read.

Article Three:

Dr. William Hallman brings to the pages of *Scripture Research* a depth of understanding and knowledge few people ever attain. For those of us who love the Scriptures and the individual words that constitute the written pages of this blessed Book, we hope this study will bring a new appreciation to each and every one of you as we consider and contemplate our completeness and fullness in Him, which He has graciously showered and continues to shower upon us, His blessed family. In reality, and spiritually speaking, we share in the heavenly aristocracy that the Father has given to His Son, our risen Christ Jesus, our blessed Lord. What a calling!!!

Prepare for a profitable time as you read the following pages.

Respectfully, in the Name of Christ Jesus our Lord,

**Charles W. Asbell, Ph.D.
President, Scripture Research, Inc.**

*** These five titles are still available (at no cost) to those of you who are desirous of obtaining your own personal copies. Please contact:**

**Mr. Doug Falk
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A SPECIAL THANK YOU

Several months ago, the January 1958 (Vol. 37, No. 1) issue of *VOICE* magazine (the official publishing organ of *The Independent Fundamental Churches of America* [IFCA]) found its way to my desk. Since I personally knew the author and the circumstance relating to this article, *He Is Precious*, and, given my position as President of the Board of Directors, Scripture Research, Inc. (SRI), I sought and was granted permission from those in the leadership role(s) in the IFCA to republish this touching and wonderful sermon given by Pastor Wendt. Now, some 55 years later, Pastor Wendt's sermon resurfaces. Thank you, IFCA, for allowing SRI to republish this article!

With gratitude and thanks,

Charles W. Asbell, Ph.D., President
Scripture Research, Inc.

Pastor Lyman Wendt knew he was soon to be with his Lord and Saviour. This was his last sermon to his congregation. He could think of no better theme than – *He is Precious*.

He is **PRECIOUS**

by

Lyman A. Wendt*

It was a real decision and problem for me in seeking the mind of the Lord to know what to preach to about this morning, with the possibility of this being my very last message to you, and also realizing the obligation I have to you as a congregation for whom I have a great deal of affection and of whom I have become very fond. It would have been very easy for me to have gone sentimental in my message today -- it was a great temptation -- but I finally decided it would be better for me, and I think you probably would appreciate it more, if I didn't deal with any subjects which were too close to our emotions. Consequently, I decided to preach on my favorite subject, which is the **PERSON OF CHRIST**.

As I have been looking back over my life this past week, the one thing that seems to summarize what the Lord Jesus has meant to me more than anything else in **HIS PRECIOUSNESS!** Looking back to the time when my own dear Mom was so faithful in presenting the Lord to us, the way He has dealt with our personal family, the wonderful friends that He has sent into our lives, and the marvelous little assemblies of believers

* Former pastor of the Riverside Bible Church, Riverside, CA, 1953-1957.

with whom He has given me the privilege of working, I just couldn't do anything less than to talk to you for a little while about how precious HE is.

As I thought of the preciousness of Christ, my mind went to a portion of Scripture which you will find in I Peter 2:7,

“Unto you therefore which believe He is precious!”

Now, although my time is limited today, and I am not giving an exposition of this passage of Scripture, yet I do think that to be honoring to God's Word we ought to be accurate in our exegesis; and, consequently, we need to look at the entire passage from which this text is taken.

Beginning at the first verse...

...Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tested that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men; but chosen of God and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ: Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, ‘Behold I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded.’ Unto you therefore which believe, He is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto all they were appointed.

The Rejection of Christ

The story was quite current, and has come down from the centuries, that during the building of the Jewish temple, the stones were cut out ahead of time and fitted into place, but there was one stone which was always in the way. The masons could find no place for it. It looked like the rest and had a mark on it, but they seemed to be unable to locate it, and, consequently, it became a nuisance to them. They were always stumbling over it -- it was constantly in their path. Finally, when the temple was finished, as the legend goes, they found it was the **KEY STONE**. Now we don't know for sure whether that means the cornerstone which contained all the important papers which they always set in place last -- or if they had in mind the capstone of the pyramid.

The point is that, finally, after seeing the thing kicked around and in their way year after year after year, not knowing what to do with it, they found it was the **KEY STONE, THE MOST IMPORTANT STONE OF ALL**. So our Lord Jesus, who is the Master Teacher, goes from the **KNOWN** to the **UNKNOWN**. A master teacher will take something which is known, i.e., the temple to the Israelites, and from it lead to an understanding of something which isn't known. That is what our Lord did here. He used something with which they were very familiar, the temple, to lead them into new truth. The Lord Jesus -- Messiah -- was the **STONE**. As the Stone, He was God's promised Deliverer — He was the Messiah -- He was to be the Foundation for Israel. The Lord Jesus Christ, God's promised Deliverer, was sent to "His own people," and it was to Zion that God the Father sent Him. The revelation of this was in their own Scriptures, for Peter here quotes from Isaiah 28:16:

Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation.

Now theologians may differ as to who and what the

Stone is. We have one great religious system whose tenet is built almost entirely upon the fact that Peter is the Rock or Stone. Theologians and great religious systems may be in doubt as to who the Stone is, but there is no doubt in Peter's mind as to its identity. It is clear to Peter that the Stone is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. Israel's own Scriptures present a clear revelation of God's Deliverer, the Stone. Look at the 6th verse again: "Wherefore also, it is contained in /the Scripture...." (Here the singular is used indicating that it is talking about one particular passage, and we know that one passage is Isa. 28:16. But he might also have said the entire book of the SCRIPTURES (plural) -- meaning the Old Testament, because none of the New Testament had been written at that time -- is filled with references to Christ, the Rock, and is fragrant with His presence. Remember the city in Europe which has a perfume factory (in fact, it is the only industry in the entire European village), and some member of every family in the little village works in the perfume factory. As the result of the presence of that factory, that entire village is permeated by a beautiful, sweet fragrance night and day. The clothing of the laborers as they come home, one to each family, is so saturated with the fragrance of the perfume that it is like one great constant bouquet! So it is, dear friends, with these wonderful pages of this BOOK and which you ought to love, and cherish, and memorize, and treasure. It is FRAGRANT from beginning to end with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. HE SHOULD HAVE, THEREFORE, BEEN PRECIOUS TO ISRAEL.

The Preciousness of Christ Revealed

What is it that makes a thing precious? You know it is possible sometimes for a frog, an ugly old toad, to be very precious to one of you boys and girls. Oh, not girls! I mean one of you boys! What makes a thing precious, dear friends, depends upon your background, your state of mind, your age, a thing's prominence or rarity. For instance, if diamonds become increasingly prominent, before very long they will not be so precious. It is their *RARITY* that makes them precious.

So it is with the Lord Jesus Christ. **HE IS THE ONLY ONE!** I found this little poem somewhere this last week concerning HIM --

No angel could our place have taken
Highest of the High though He.
The loved One on the cross forsaken
Was second of the Godhead three.

Friends, the Lord Jesus Christ should have been very, very precious to Israel because of His rarity. He was the Only One.

And then another thing that makes a thing precious is its *ACTUAL VALUE*. For instance, I've been reading, of course, a lot of things in the last few days on the subject of cancer, and someone called my attention to an article in last month's *Argosy* magazine about a new serum. The man who is supposed to have invented this new serum (the reality of which is quite questionable, by the way) claims to have injected 2000 horses and then extracted the blood in which there supposedly had been built up a resistance to the malignancy, and from the blood of 2000 horses he has extracted one tiny teaspoonful of a powder which now allegedly is being used for the treatment of cancer patients. When you get one tiny teaspoonful of something from the blood of 2000 horses, it becomes extremely valuable. And that, dear friends, is what makes the Lord Jesus Christ so valuable --- His Rarity. Nothing else has ever been provided by God -- listen, dear friends -- listen, dear unsaved man or woman -- nothing else, no one else has ever been provided by Almighty God to bear the sins of the world except the Lord Jesus Christ! **HE SHOULD, THEREFORE, HAVE BEEN VERY PRECIOUS TO ISRAEL.**

And then another thing, of course, which makes a thing precious is its *POWER*. We are living in the days of plutonium, etc., which, because of nuclear physics, has made these things very precious because they are so very powerful. And I'll tell you, dear man and woman without the Saviour today, if you

have realized the power of One who is actually able to give LIFE where there has been only DEATH, you will realize why and how the Lord Jesus Christ ought to have been precious to Israel.

So God uses the story concerning the temple to reveal the relationship of the Lord Jesus Christ to Israel. Messiah, you see, was the eternal hope of the Jew, but when He came "they saw no beauty in Him that they should desire Him" -- they saw no pomp, no dignity, nothing spectacular, nothing dazzling. Where was the mighty Conqueror they were expecting? "He came unto His own," and He didn't meet their expectations, so they rejected Him -- "His own received Him not." And that, dear friends, is the tragedy of Israel with which we are all confronted. They are now scattered -- they are now wanderers -- they face, perhaps, the very near future judgment, because of their rejection of the Saviour.

The Preciousness of Christ Enjoyed

Throughout the entire Word of God we see His matchless beauty and the excellencies of His PERSON -- the Living Stone is the Lord Jesus Christ. If we spent more time in the BOOK, friends, which exudes the fragrance of His presence from every page, we would know more of Him. To be with a person is to be like him and to love him, and if we would spend more time in the Scriptures which reveal Him, we would love Him more and be more like Him.

His Preciousness in His Word

You can't find precious things on the surface! I was born and reared near the famous town of Cripple Creek, Colorado. They didn't find the gold on the surface there. Oh, sometimes there would be a tiny out-cropping of it, but in order to get the precious hundreds of millions of dollars which were taken out of the hills around my boyhood home, they had to DIG! I remember also as a boy one time my neighbor came

over and said, "Lyman, how would you like to rob a bee tree?" I said, "Swell, I'm all for it." When we got there I found I had several hours of hard work to get into the tree in which the honey was located. Things which are precious and valuable have to be worked for, and God in His Word, though He reveals the preciousness of the Saviour there, says that we have to search and we have to study. Do you want me to tell you, dear friends, why your life is probably dry and perhaps anemic, why there is a dearth of spiritual enjoyment there? You probably haven't been spending time in the BOOK. That's where the fragrance comes from which will saturate you with the knowledge of His presence.

His Preciousness in the Believer's Experience

We have had a number of hymns written which reveal His preciousness. While I was sitting in the car, waiting to come today, I turned to this song, No. 46 -- I'm not going to read it all, but let me remind you of the words of this hymn:

So precious is Jesus my Saviour,
my King
His praise all the day long with
Rapture I sing
For He is so precious to me.

All through this wonderful hymn, and many others that have been written, people reveal by their *experience* the preciousness of Jesus. You must realize for yourself that He is rare -- the only One -- and that is why He precious. You must realize for yourself that He has intrinsic value, and that that is why He is so precious. You must realize for yourself that He has infinite power to deliver you from death to life, and that that is why he is so precious! What is He to them who believe? Precious -- that's right, young people, He is precious! To whom is He precious? To them that Believe. **THIS THING IS LIMITED, FRIENDS! HE IS PRECIOUS TO THEM THAT BELIEVE!**

His Preciousness in His Lordship

So actually, therefore, this should be true of every believer, "Unto you therefore which believe He is precious." But this thing, like other things, is relative. The degree to which the Lord Jesus Christ is precious to you today depends upon HIS PRE-EMINENCE IN YOUR LIFE. It is possible, for instance, for these precious boys and girls to have such a place for their toys and for their little friends in their lives that actually the Lord Jesus has taken a secondary place in their lives. Consequently, it is a relative matter. He is not as precious as He should be. It is possible that some of our high school boys and girls have given chums or friends, a career, or social life such a prominent place that He is not as precious as He should be, and He has to take a secondary place. It is possible that young married people have become involved and so enamored in the creation of a home and family -- or might be golfing or it might be fishing -- that the Lord Jesus has found it necessary to take a secondary place, so that, relatively speaking, He is not precious. And it might be that some of you who are getting along in old age have put other things first.

What is it then? I don't know yet; maybe I'll never know. Maybe it's a home, a yard, or furniture -- some little thing, which could be so magnified that the preciousness of the Lord Jesus Christ has to take a secondary place. Ah, but listen, boys and girls with your toys and friends, high school fellows and girls with your careers, and young married people with your homes and families, and adult men and women with your backyards and furniture, when it is gone, what then?

WHEN THE BOTTOM FALLS OUT OF EVERYTHING, WHAT THEN?

I don't want to sound gruesome, and I am not trying to be funny or emotional, but I said to Helen [his wife] (I guess it

was yesterday), "Honey, everybody ought to die every once in awhile." Because in the last ten days my evaluation of material things has taken an absolute turn! My fishing rods that used to mean so much to me, mean nothing to me this morning! My library which I have been accumulating over a period of 25 years (and I have a wonderful theological library), means absolutely nothing to me today.

It might be a good idea this morning, dear friends, if you faced right up face-to-face with the fact that maybe this is your last day. Your evaluation of temporal things and material things will change in an instant of time, and that which was very precious to you yesterday may not mean anything to you today.

Conclusions

So perhaps today would be a good time for us all to take an inventory. Last Tuesday night at our Young People's Bible Study we were studying that 17th chapter of John, and we noticed together that the Lord Jesus in Verse 5 said:

I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do.

Then He said, in verse 6:

I have given them the words which Thou gavest me and they have received them.

What a wonderful thing it would be this morning if we could all come to the place where we could truly say to the Lord, looking into His countenance unashamedly, "I have manifested Thy Name unto the people Thou hast given me and I have given them the words which Thou hast given me." Let us then examine our hearts today and see if Jesus Christ is truly precious to us.

"Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful

face and the things of this earth (regardless of what they are) will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace."

If the Lord Jesus is not precious to you this morning, there is some reason, and the reason undoubtedly is (like the stone of the temple) the Lord Jesus is not in His proper place. Yes, when the Lord Jesus gets into His proper place, then the building of your life -- that spiritual house that Peter talks about -- will be unified and symmetrical and beautiful. You get Him into His proper place, and your whole life will line up properly,

But if "disobedient" (I Peter 2:8), what then? That word disobedient simply means the opposite of believe -- it means disbelieve -- it doesn't mean carelessness and indifference. It means willful disbelief. Oh, friend, if you have rejected Him, what is there left for you? Paul said in I Cor. 1:8:

For the preaching of the cross is to them that PERISH foolishness.

And the revelation of Peter's passage here is that the only thing left for you who reject God's Corner Stone -- the Saviour -- is tragedy, heartache, frustration, woe, and eternal loss, stumbling over the Stone. Do you want to go through the rest of your life stumbling?? Why? Why stumble over the Stone that God wants to be the foundation of your life?

May God bless to your hearts this portion of His Word to you today and may He become increasingly precious to you who believe.

THE JESUS MYTH

by

Lyman A. Wendt

In the Authorized Version (AV) of the Bible, II Corinthians 5:14 states,

For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.

In this very familiar portion of Scripture, the above statement is compatible and in order for God's people in this dispensation of Grace. Expanding for a moment on this immediate context (verses 8 through 14), it is difficult to break the wonderful continuity of thought:

For the love of Christ constraineth us: because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead....

This means, of course, that in the dispensation of Grace, we understand that when Christ died, we were identified with Him, i.e., we are also dead in Christ.

...And that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.

So now also we who have died in Christ are also alive in Christ, and that ought to be the attitude of the believer. We are not living for ourselves now, but unto Him. Here, no doubt, is the reason that this is the commission for today in the light of this wonderful truth of Grace as seen demonstrated here.

Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh.

At one time there was a distinction of men. In fact, even God's religious system which He gave to Israel made the Jew the distinctive people, distinct and apart from the Gentile, but not any longer. We don't know men after the flesh any longer. There is now no such thing as Jews and Gentiles, bond or free, male or female. Having died in Christ, we are all raised to the highest possible position.

Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more.

In other words, even our Lord Jesus Himself is no longer to be recognized as the Jesus of the Gospels, which is the only Jesus that tens of thousands of people know — only the Jesus who walked here on earth and, in the opinion of many people, established an example that we are supposed to follow. That is all the religion that many people have today. But, "We don't know Him that way any longer," the Apostle Paul says. Not just the Jesus in the flesh. We are to know Someone else.

Therefore if any man be in Christ (that is, this new Christ, this risen Christ, this exalted Christ), he is a new creature (or new creation), old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

That is, we are through with legalism, i.e., the Law. We are now under Grace, and Grace is sovereign. All things therefore are new.

And all things are of God, Who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.

Our message is not that God hates people! Some poor folks today are not under the sound of the Gospel, as they are

afraid that they have been propagandized with the idea that God has a quarrel with/against them. Such is not the case! What a wonderful message to be proclaimed: that God has made provision so that nothing stands between Him and mankind. He does not hate them! He loves them, He is at peace with them, and provision has been made for His receiving them.

To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the Word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye (let yourself be) reconciled to God. For He hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

(Shortly it will be apparent why the entirety [vss. 8-21] of this context as it relates to vs. 16 has been quoted.)

Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know Him no more.

Not too long ago the following statement was made:

The only religion many people have is Christmas.

Perhaps the significance of that statement is not understood. However, a little consideration will reveal its bearing on this study, for, in reality, to most of the world the Jesus Christ of Christmas is only a baby in a manger! There are literally tens of thousands of people who know no Jesus except a little baby who was born many years ago; and they hear about Him and sing about Him once a year. That's the religion they have! Succinctly, the birth of this baby Jesus whom two-thirds of Christendom celebrates is a myth. Obviously, this statement will not be shared by many "of the cloth"

or those who occupy the pew. In the remainder of this text, it will be shown that this statement is true and that the Jesus of Christendom is a myth.

Three years ago, a professor from the University of California, Riverside, seeing the church ad ("The Jesus Myth") in the local newspaper, expressed his amazement that anyone today could doubt the actuality of the historical Jesus. He, of course, misunderstood the ad, and perhaps some of those who read the following will also misunderstand. For those of you who read this manuscript, please don't question the actuality of the Lord Jesus, as it will be (hopefully) a very strong apologetic not only for His historic reality, but for His present existence as a real Person.

At this point, consider the following declaration. As you will eventually see, it is in actuality the conclusion of this entire message put as an opening statement: According to Hebrews 10:5, our Lord Jesus Christ, in addressing the Father, said,

A body hast Thou prepared Me.

(You will note that the word "prepared" is in the margin. Another rendering might be "fitted Me," which is quite interesting and significant.) The Lord Jesus said, "A body Thou fitted Me" (or "prepared Me"). It is quite evident by the frantic activities of the Christmas season that many people believe there was a baby named Jesus born bodily.

The religious world, however, does not agree on the circumstances of His birth, on WHO was being born, i.e., that He was born of a virgin. But that He was born, a baby named Jesus, is quite generally admitted. Many people go a little further and admit the bodily death of this One who was born, but here again there are differences of opinion as to WHO was dying, and HOW He died, and WHY He died, and what was accomplished when He died. The Word of God is not indecisive in this matter, for it states in I Peter 2:24:

**Who His own self bore our sins in His own body
on the tree.**

If the Word of God has credence, see WHY He died, WHO He was as He died, and what He accomplished by His death. In fact, here on the death of the Lord Jesus Christ is where the Roman Catholic Church puts its great emphasis. That is the reason the Roman Catholic faith is a very somber and joyless religion, because there is no assurance connected with it. They have no joy in His death and its implications. No life out of death. No hope. No promise. You can't be sure, under that system, that you are positively going to heaven. In fact, you are positively sure that you are not going directly to heaven. Consequently, it is not a religion filled with joyfulness.

In Latin American countries, the body of our Lord is paraded through the streets with the whole religious emphasis, as you are no doubt aware, on the second point previously mentioned, that Christ died. And they are correct. He did die and, even in a false system, faith in the right object saves. Trusting in the work of Calvary, a person is saved, no matter what his religion.

There are some who go a bit further in this matter and recognize that, not only was the Lord Jesus born bodily and crucified bodily, but the Lord Jesus Christ was raised bodily from the grave. Now you can begin to understand why there is a vastly fewer number who believe in the bodily resurrection than those who believe in His birth and His death, because it immediately reveals the uniqueness of the One who was able to rise from the dead.

Once His resurrection has been acknowledged, He has assumed the power of omnipotence (all powerful). Omnipotence — only God Himself rises up from the dead. Concomitantly, acknowledgment of the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ indicates that His victory over death guarantees there is no spiritual death for any believer who is "in Him" at His appearance (Col. 3:4), nor should the believer

taste death after His appearance.

Another proof text to the believer's identification in His resurrection is found in I Corinthians 15 (as well as other texts). At this point, however, the vast masses of humanity are divided. There have always been a relatively few who will accept the last two statements (relating to His crucifixion and resurrection).

The Lord Jesus Christ was not only born bodily and died bodily and raised bodily, but He ascended bodily. Consequently, in I Timothy 2:5 the Scriptures reveal that,

There is one God and one Mediator between
God and man, the Man Christ Jesus.

The Lord Jesus Christ now lives at the right hand of the Father and is there, bodily present. He saves those who believe in Him.

By His wonderful work of advocacy, which is the work of a legal representative, He keeps us saved even while we are sinning. He works as our "intercessor," for "He ever lives to make intercession for us," and guarantees us strength and power in things that we do not realize are sins. Wonderful, wonderful truth, Christian friend! The theology books are strangely lacking in information concerning the fact that Jesus Christ is now bodily doing a work in the presence of the Father.

Finally, God's plan of salvation makes it absolutely imperative and the Word of God positively declares:

... that this same Jesus will return to the earth
bodily.

First, He will translate and give glorified bodies to His people, and then He will reign in righteousness as King of Israel and Lord of all the earth.

Most will wonder, What is so remarkable or unusual about this statement in the former paragraph? Nothing, to those who have a keen understanding of the Scriptures. However, it would be unthinkable and virtually impossible to have made this same statement to at least half of the churches in this city. The vast masses of professing Christian people do not believe in the bodily ascension and present bodily work and actual bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ. Many who read this article take these things for granted, but if others have been raised under some of the religious systems found in our world, or in one of the numerous cults that are ever present, then they would have been taught to reject the work(s) done by the Lord Jesus as stated above (except, perhaps, that Jesus was born bodily and, since nearly everyone believes that everybody dies, that Jesus also died).

At this point, the reader may begin to realize what is meant by the "Jesus Myth." Briefly stated, it is this: **THE JESUS OF CHRISTMAS, THE JESUS OF THE CULTS, THE JESUS OF THIS WORLD'S GREAT RELIGIONS (including Protestantism and Romanism) IS NOT THE LORD JESUS CHRIST OF THE BIBLE AT ALL.** He is a myth! Hopefully, a few striking illustrations will be convincing. At the same time, these illustrations may show an individual his or her need of accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour.

The object of this message is to expose all to the "teaching of Christendom." Let us tear off the false robes of "Christendom" (including the "Protestant religion") and expose it for what it is. In addition, the RELIGIONS of this world need to be unmasked. For, in reality, Satan's realm is found here. In a former publication ("The Satan Myth"), it was shown that Satan's captives were to be found in religions. Satan's masterpiece is "religion." Not the saloon, the dance hall, nor the red light district — it is in religion. Succinctly, this is where Satan's subjects are to be found and, therefore, religion in all of its subtleties needs to be exposed for what it is.

Salvation is to know and accept by faith the perfect and

finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary as is found in the Bible. Those who would promote an "otherwise" salvation are promulgating the "Jesus Myth." These statements are not made in a tone of bitterness nor anger. Nor are they made with the idea of belittling another person's religious group. They are made because they are matters of such vital importance that they must be said with conviction! To "water down" these statements of conviction would impinge upon spiritual matters which bear upon a person's eternal state (i.e., issues of life and death, heaven and hell). Therefore, it is imperative that attention to truth and error in these matters must be addressed. In the following paragraphs, consider the following:

Protestantism. Is the Jesus of Protestantism a myth? Following are quotations from leaders found in several of the Protestant organizations. One of the leaders in the Presbyterian denomination (who, incidentally, was formerly the President of the National Council of Churches) states, "The Virgin Birth is absolutely unimportant." This statement was made by a man who was a Presbyterian minister. He later became an outstanding Baptist leader in the world. (At one time he was the spokesman for the Federal Council of Churches.)

In his book, *The Modern Use of the Bible* (page 269), he says, "Jesus is an extraordinarily good man. In fact, his goodness was about the only thing with which to make his impression on the world." On another page he says, "Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary." Outstanding Protestant leaders such as Harry Emerson Fosdick and E. Stanley Jones hold to these beliefs. And, by sacred Biblical definition, their Jesus is a myth. They may think that Jesus' goodness is the only thing that He had to make an impression on the world, but, thank God, the Word of God declares WHO He is and WHAT He has done! And the "Jesus" that they are presenting — the "Jesus of Protestantism" — is a myth. Thank God!

A former Protestant missionary and an outstanding

leading Methodist of today echoes nearly the same words as those individuals in the former paragraph and those of a well-known Japanese Christian worker who has gone up and down our country. Here are some statements attributed to them: "Jesus came to show men how to live." Another said, "Jesus came to show men how to die." Both comments are, of course, false. Thank God! Their Jesus is a Myth! Perhaps if they had said, "Jesus did not come to show men how to die, but to die for men," they would have been closer to the truth.

In addition to the many statements made by the current leadership of the large Protestant denominations, the matter of "ritualism" as practiced by these same organizations is obscuring the historical Lord Jesus Christ of the Bible.

Also, there is the use of names, or the improper use of names in referring to our Lord — the irreverence in speaking to Him, addressing Him as "Jesus," which we do so often, thoughtlessly. It is as rude to call Him "Jesus" as it would be to walk up to the Queen of England and call her Elizabeth, or to our President and call him by his first name. In government circles you say, "Mr. President." Locally, the mayor is addressed as "Honorable Mayor."

Yet "Jesus" is the title which the Word of God plainly declares is the name of His humiliation and humanity. He is the LORD JESUS CHRIST -- the Christ of the Bible.

In Protestantism there seems to be the idea that "Jesus" is ready to show favor to a certain favored class — that God will demonstrate His love and grace to people who are good and who behave themselves. (As the writer of this article, that was my impression until I was 25 years old.) Their "Jesus" is one who will be kind and gracious to people who behave themselves and quit their sinning. Thank God that this "Jesus" is a Myth, and our Lord Jesus Christ stands graciously ready to receive the basest and lowest of sinners. In fact, that is the only kind of people He saves — lost sinners.

Even more pronounced is the "Jesus Myth" as seen in Romanism. To many Roman Catholics, the Lord Jesus Christ is a piece of bread! Yes, that is correct. On page eleven of a Roman Catholic publication, an article titled "The Mass" (it was published to be presented to a non-Catholic audience and has the "blessing" of the Roman Catholic Church in it), states, "His words, 'This is My body,' cause the substance of bread to become His body. His words, "This is my blood," cause the wine to become His blood. The act by which the change is made is called consecration. The word "mass" is the same sacrifice as Calvary."

That "Jesus" is not the Lord Jesus Christ of the Bible. He is not a piece of bread. It may be said that they really don't believe that. In reality, they do! An illustration is in order. When a schoolboy says in an examination that he believes "seven plus seven equals fourteen" and then later says that he believes "seven plus seven equals fifteen," his incorrect answer nullifies his right answer. Experience and logic would indicate that he is not basing his answer on an intelligent foundation. So it is that when Roman Catholics affirm something which is an untruth, it nullifies the reality of the truth that they claim to believe. It should be obvious to the believer that it is imperative there be intelligence in faith rather than superstition.

To many Roman Catholics, the Lord Jesus Christ is only "a baby." An explanation is in order. Two letters were recently written to a personal friend who has trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ as her Saviour — one from a Roman Catholic priest, one from a Catholic nun. A statement from the priest reads, "On Christmas day, Jesus is coming for the resurrection and for the ruin of many. I wonder whether He is coming for your resurrection or for your ruin. It's up to you now." This is followed by, "I want to wish you a Merry Christmas, although in my heart I feel that you can't have one because the baby Jesus will not be welcoming you back into the fold."

Adding to the priest's comments, the nun writes, "I

pray, Catherine, that the infant Lord Jesus at this Christmas season will extend His tiny hands welcoming you back into His fold." Do the Catholics believe this? If these statements are not true, what do they mean? And how might this Catholic "doctrine/teaching" influence Protestantism?

A personal friend who attends a Baptist Church in a suburban city in Los Angeles recently attended this church (Riverside Bible Church) and provided this author with his Christmas church bulletin. In this bulletin was found the pastor's greeting to his people: "What gift are you going to give the Christ Child this year?" In the following paragraph it states, "Just as the wise men came from the east with their precious gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, so we too will fall down before the cradle and adore Him." What is this person saying?

Is it not apparent that the influence of this belief is indeed present on our Christmas cards? It is not the intention of this author to get you to be too "Christmas card conscious." In looking through the seasonal cards received by me this year, out of a stack of 50, I found only one having a picture of a little baby Jesus. Perhaps this congregation is also getting conscious of this same issue because of something that has been said from this pulpit, or because God is giving you a little spiritual discernment. Thanks be to God that "He grew up" -- He is not a baby! The Jesus of "Protestantism" and of "Romanism" is in most cases a myth. And thank God that this Jesus is a myth!

This influence has even interjected itself into our hymns (please do not become too conscious of hymnology, either). Consider, for example, the fourth verse of "O, Little Town of Bethlehem": "Oh, Holy Child of Bethlehem, descend on us we pray. Cast out our sin and enter in. Be born in us today." What should the response of the Believer be to these lyrics? (Again, there should not be an overreaction to these words.)

On the other hand, what chance does the poor, confused sinner have when such phrases as these are heard? The plea is

for intelligence in the Christian faith. Even God's people add to the confusion. The Jesus of Christendom is a Myth! One of the missions of the Believer is to let people know that He is not a baby! He is the living Lord Jesus Christ in glory.

What of the Jesus as found in the Book of Mormon? He is a myth! The Jesus of Jehovah's Witnesses is not the Lord Jesus Christ of the Bible! Reader, the Jesus of Christendom is a myth!

What of the man on the streets? To some, Jesus is a little baby and, as previously stated above, "The only religion that some people have is at Christmas" (just a little baby whom they hear of and sing about once a year). To others, He is a "good man." Some say that He is a man who set an example as to how we are to live. Ladies and gentlemen, their Jesus is a myth, and not the Lord Jesus Christ of the Bible.

Others say that He is a man who came to show people "how they ought to die." That's a myth! That is not the Lord Jesus Christ of the Bible! What is He to the media? A glance at an intelligent newspaper announcement reveals utter confusion when it concerns our Lord Jesus Christ. Never in (our) newspapers can there be found a reference to the living Jesus Christ. There are articles about world leaders -- page after page. Why? Because the Jesus of Christendom is a myth. References to His atoning sacrifice in the media cannot be found. Reason: To them He is just a mythical person. He doesn't exist -- He isn't a reality. May God help us to see the emptiness and the error of "religion."

These comments are made not in the spirit of being pious, but in sincerity before God. Perhaps an unsaved person reading this article might see the error of "religion" as to the Person and work of our blessed Lord, and recognize the futility and emptiness of "religion" as seen in Christendom. And, with this information, perhaps he or she will accept what the Scriptures declare about the Lord Jesus Christ -- Who He is

and What He did and Where He is now and What He is doing and What He is going to do.

John 20:31 clearly reveals that the purpose of the Word of God is to direct sinners as to how to be saved. He further tells us there plainly that it is by "believing" -- not by doing, not by understanding, but by trusting in the living Lord Jesus Christ. In John 10:10, He said, "I am come that they may have life." I John 5:11-12 states, "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not Me."

Eternal life does not depend on your attitude toward men (this is the message of the world's religions and modernism [liberalism]). What of salvation's being dependent on one's attitude toward his/her fellowman? The Word of God indicates otherwise. The Word clearly declares that eternal salvation depends on a person's relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. Not to a Bethlehem Babe — not even the Christ on a crucifix -- but the RISEN, ASCENDED, GLORIFIED, COMING LORD.

You who read these few paragraphs, do you know Him? Is that the Jesus Christ that you know? Have you trusted that One? Are you longing and waiting for Him, or do you worship or recognize only a Jesus myth? It is the desire of this author that God, the Holy Spirit, might grant you the spiritual discernment concerning the subtleties of the world's religions as they relate to the Jesus who is a myth. That Jesus does not exist!

I would encourage you that you, by faith, would lift your heart and eyes, and see that One Who is exalted and glorified, and Who is worthy of all trust, praise, and adoration, instead of calling attention to the little baby Jesus. As the words of that great hymn declare, "ALL HAIL THE POWER OF JESUS' NAME. LET ANGELS PROSTRATE FALL. Bring forth the royal diadem and crown HIM LORD OF ALL."

*** Editors note: For an excellent exegetical examination of this same passage, please see three articles written by Mr. Daniel Anderson:**

- 1. "The End of Israel According to Flesh," *This I Believe*, No. 26, August 1992. O-2611 Winans St., Grand Rapids, MI 49504-9526.**
- 2. CHRIST AND ISRAEL, A Sequel to, "The End of Israel According to Flesh," *This I Believe*, No. 27, August 1993.**
- 3. "Be Reconciled To God, A Perspective on Biblical Evangelism," an article published by The Open Bible Trust, Fordland Mount, Upper Basildon, Reading, RG8 8LU, UK.**

COMPLETE IN CHRIST

by William B. Hallman

Colossians 2:8-10 -- "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him, which is the Head of all principality and power."

THE GREATEST DISCOVERY that any human being can make is the discovery of the **ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST**, and the utter worthlessness of man without Him. Christ is all, and in Him we have all. Without Him we are nothing, absolutely nothing. It makes no difference how many times we multiply ciphers: they will be devoid of all magnitude or quality until we place some digit before them. But, once a digit is placed before them, they take on meaning, value, significance.

"CHRIST IS ALL" is the covering principle of this Book of Colossians. Look at the following verses:

That in all things He might have the preeminence (1:18);

In Him should all fullness dwell (1:19);

In Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (2:3);

In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (2:9);

In Him, which is the Head of all principality and power (2:10);

Christ is all and in all (3:11).

I am sure we all can sing with Charles Wesley, "Thou, O Christ, art all I want, more than all in Thee I find."

Browning wrote, "I say, the acknowledgement of God in Christ, accepted by that reason, solves for thee all questions in the earth and out of it, and has so far advanced thee to be wise." And it was Bishop Moule who said, "No surer test according to Scripture can be applied to anything claiming to be Christian teaching. Where does it put Jesus Christ? What does it make of Jesus Christ? Is He some thing in it, or is He all?"

This Epistle of Colossians is a positive presentation of the antidote to every form of heresy. Epaphras had come to Paul at Rome with the news that a real danger of false teaching had beset the church at Colosse. This new heresy called Gnosticism was a combination of Judaic Ritualism and Oriental Mysticism (see 2:16-18). These Colossians were asked to accept something in addition to Christ. They taught that Christ was not sufficient, not unique. They taught an additional philosophy (v. 8), an additional astrology (v. 8), "elements of the world" having to do with stars and planets), an additional circumcision (v. 11), additional ascetic rules and regulations (vss. 16, 20-23), and additional worship of angels (v. 18).

When anyone says that we are to be saved or kept by the Law, they have never understood the phrase, "COMPLETE IN HIM."

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth (Rom. 10:4).

When anyone suggests that we can add to our salvation

by doing something, they have never understood the phrase, "COMPLETE IN CHRIST."

For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God (Eph. 2:8).

When anyone suggests that water baptism in any form is necessary for salvation, or as a testimony to one's faith or the door to the church, they do not understand the phrase, "COMPLETE IN HIM."

For we are buried with Him in baptism (Col. 2:12).

When we are told that we must keep the Sabbath, we know men do not understand the COMPLETENESS we have in Christ.

The Sabbath days which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ (Col. 2:16-17).

The word translated "*fullness*" in 2:9 is in the Greek the word *pleroma*, and the word "*complete*" in 2:10 is the word *pepleromenoi*. This latter is a perfect passive participle of the word *pleroo*. The word means to "make full, to fill up, to fill to the full, to diffuse throughout, complete, nothing wanting." So the great word in this Epistle, both with reference to Christ, is this word *pleroma* or *pleroo*. This fullness is worked into the very structure and language of the Epistle. (See 1:9; 1:19; 1:24; 1:25; 2:2; 2:9, 2:10; 4:12; 4:17.)

Not only in Colossians, but in the whole Bible we have tributes to Jesus Christ. He is seen in every promise, parable, prophecy, type, poem, narrative, allegory, and symbol. He is likened to the sun, the stars, the shepherd, the lamb, the lion, the door, the cornerstone, the foundation, the bread, and the wine. Everything about Him is superlative. He is the:

"Lord of Lords," "the King of Kings," "the

fairest among ten thousand."

Nothing can go beyond completeness. You can add nothing to it. You might as well try to purge a sunbeam, or purify the whiteness of the newly fallen snow as to add to that which is already perfect. And it is not only true that "*all fullness dwells in Him*, but also that we are "COMPLETE IN HIM."

One day Michelangelo went into the studio of the young painter Raphael, and, finding him gone, left without leaving his name. But before he went, he took a piece of chalk and wrote on the canvas of the poor and meager design of Raphael a bold and sweeping line with the word "amplius" (wider). When Raphael returned and saw this, he knew immediately who had been there and done this. He thus changed his style. So our Lord points to His fullness and our narrowness and emptiness, and challenges us to partake of *His fullness — His pleroma*. It is the privilege of every person to recognize their completeness in Christ. This can be done first,

BY RECOGNIZING CHRIST'S FULLNESS

For in Him dwelleth all the Fullness of the Godhead bodily (2:9).

Alford paraphrases this verse,

For in Him all the complete perfection essential to the Godhead abides corporeally, substantially, really, and not in the manner of shadows.

CHRIST'S FULLNESS is resident in His Person ("*in Him*" — *en auto*). This phrase is given the emphatic position in the verse, and draws our attention first to the One Who has the FULLNESS. The Holy Spirit wants us to see Him, even before we see HIS FULLNESS. This is important.

We must also recognize the Permanence of this FULLNESS in the word "*dwelleth*" -- *katoikei*. This word means "to settle down, to be at home." Deity is at home in Christ, and dwells so in a permanent way.

There is also the Plentitude of this FULLNESS as seen in the words, "*all the Fullness of the Godhead*" — *pan to pleroma tes Theotetos*. To make this matter exceedingly clear, the Apostle use the word "pan" (all), emphasizing that the FULLNESS is complete. There is no portion of the plentitude that is not present. Paul is pointing out further by the use of the word *Theotetos* (Godhead) that not mere quality of God resides in Christ, as seen in Romans 1:20 by the use of the word *Theotes*, but the absolute essence of God dwells in Christ. **CHRIST IS NOT MERELY LIKE GOD, THAT IS DIVINE, BUT HE IS THEOS -- GOD.** This was Paul's declaration against the Gnostics before Athanasius had to oppose Arius (who said that the Son is not of the same substance as the Father, but was created as an agent for creating the world).

IN THIS FULLNESS OF CHRIST we also recognize the place in the word "bodily" -- *somatikos*. This is an adverb modifying the verb "dwell," pointing to the manner. It means "bodily," or "in bodily manifestation." This does not mean a mystical dwelling, nor a mere spiritual dwelling, nor a limited bodily dwelling. It does mean an eternal bodily dwelling. There can be only one tenable explanation, and that is that Christ was and is God. All the Fullness dwelt in Him before the incarnation, during the incarnation, and continues so permanently. Since "in Christ" the plentitude dwells permanently, and bodily, there is the manifestation that gives the lie to all forms of Gnosticism, which perverts the truth about the Person of Christ.

If the foregoing exposition is true, and it is, then certain things follow in logical sequence.

CHRIST IS HEAD OF ALL CREATION.

For by Him were all things created...all things were created by Him, and for Him (Col. 1:16-17).

In creation, Christ is pre-eminent. Every form and kind of matter, simple and complex, were created by Him. The atom and the star, the sun and the cloud, every grade of life from the worm to the angel, every order of intellect and being around and above us, the splendors of Heaven and the nearer phenomena of the earth are the product of the first-born of all creation. Three prepositions are used in relation to Christ as Creator -- *en, dia, and eis* -- "*in Him,*" "*through Him,*" and "*for Him.*" Christ is the source, the means, and the end of all creation. He is also the conserver of all -- "*by Him all things consist*" (Col. 1:17). He impresses upon creation its unity and solidarity, making it a cosmos instead of a chaos. He feeds the sun with fuel and the sparrow with corn. He guides the planets in their courses, and keeps the heart beating in man. He cares for the tiniest insect that makes the coral and the mightiest leviathan which plows the deep. He guides the seraph and the cherub in their inter-spacial missions. The helm of the universe is in His hands that were nailed to Calvary for you and me. Everywhere we behold His footprints; out of every storm and solitude we hear His voice across the darkness saying, "*It is I, be not afraid.*"

CHRIST IS ALSO THE HEAD OF ALL REDEMPTION.

And having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself (Col. 1:20).

He is both the "*Author and Finisher*" of our faith, the "*Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and End*" of our redemption. When He cried, "*It is finished,*" it was finished. Nothing was left undone, and nothing need be added. In the incarnation He became both God and man; in the crucifixion He became our means of peace and provision for every spiritual blessing; in the resurrection He became our power over death, the grave, and Lake of Fire; in His ascension and seating at God's

right hand, He became our guarantee of all future glory with Him. Nothing has been left undone for our future glorification with Him "*in the Heavens.*"

CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH, HIS BODY. "*And He is the Head of the body, the church*" (Col. 1:18). The head is the glory of the body. There the chief beauty of manhood dwells. Christ is fairer than all. We are circumcised with Him, baptized with Him, risen with Him, ascended with Him, and seated with Him in glory. What a complete identification! It is the head which unifies the body, coordinates all its movements, regulates all its actions. From the head comes the mandate which lifts the hand and moves the foot.

CHRIST IS AGAIN THE HEAD OF OUR HOPE.

When Christ Who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory (Col. 3:4).

Christ takes care of all our sorrows, sufferings, trials and tribulations. Matthew Arnold shows the failure of the Greeks' religion to take into account the sorrows of life. It was only a fair-weather religion.

Twenty miners were once buried in a coal pit in Wales, standing in water to the waist, until but five remained. Yet they were singing, "In the deep and mighty waters there is none to hold my head, but my only Saviour Jesus, Who was offered in my stead." The South Sea Islanders have a palm tree that they use for bread, drink, clothing, shelter, light, material for books, cordage for boats, and for needles. So our Lord Jesus Christ is all and in all. We are God's heavenly people. Our citizenship is in Heaven, and from thence we look for our Saviour.

Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13).

THE "FULNESS" OF CHRIST is but half of the story. The apostle hastens on to show the other side. So we must also,

RECOGNIZE THE CHRISTIAN'S FULLNESS.

Ye are complete in Him (2:10).

Note our present possession in the words "ye are." This word in the Greek holds the emphatic position. "*Beloved, now are we the sons of God*" (I John 3:2). Note also our present position "*in Him.*" Again the Greek gives this an emphatic location. "*In Him*" is the richest little phrase in all of Paul's Epistles. This is the sphere of the believer's life. It is a sphere, not a mere circle. We are "in Him," surrounded above, beneath, beside, and all around. So nothing can come from without to harm us, and with Him within we should be "*more than conquerors.*" "*In Him*" we have all that He has, and He is our fullness, our complement, our completeness. So also our past perfection as believers. The word is *pepleromenoi*, and means "COMPLETE, FILLED FULL, PERFECTED." This is a perfect, passive participle, so it represents a past perfect work. Demosthenes used the word here translated "complete" in describing a ship fully manned. Truly our ship is fully manned, from prow to stern, by her Captain, Who steers the vessel, stills the storm, guides through rocks and reefs, feeds the crew, fills every need, and brings the vessel to its desired haven.

If we are "COMPLETE IN HIM," and we are "*by grace through faith,*" then it follows what Paul sets forth in this Epistle.

WE ARE COMPLETE WITHOUT PHILOSOPHY.

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments (elements) of the world, and not after Christ" (2:8).

We need no sophisms of this world to prop our faith. There is nothing new in philosophy except old error. One day three friend philosophers came to Job to comfort him and to set him straight as to his thinking. These three represent the reasonings of the best of men. Eliphaz reasons on human experience (4:8; 5:3; 15:17): *"Even as I have seen," "I have seen," "I have seen."* It is what he had seen, heard, and felt. Bildad comes with human tradition (8:8,10): *"For enquire, I pray thee, of the former age," "search of the fathers."* Zophar reasons on human merit (11:13-14): *"If thou prepare thine heart."* This is the gospel of humanism. Six thousand years of human gropings after wisdom have not given men the true knowledge of God, nor His ways with men. Man's reason is inadequate to understand either the will or way of God. If man by his own reason could find God, and His way of redemption, then there would be no need of a revelation. Like little David we are content with the sling and the stones. As for the armor of philosophy, we leave that to proud Goliath to wear. *"Spoil you,"* says Paul. The word is *sulagogon*, and means *"to carry off as a captive, a slave, as booty."* It is used of kidnapping and plundering a house, also seducing a maiden.

WE ARE ALSO "COMPLETE IN HIM" WITHOUT CEREMONIES.

"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross; Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days" (2:14, 16-17).

All these ceremonies had their day. They belong to the time of shadows; we now have the Substance, Christ. *"Finished are the types and shadows of the ceremonial law."* Circumcision, sacrifices, Passover, water baptisms, temple services, priestly functions, etc., are but *"beggery elements"* of a past age, encumbrances no longer needed. Who looks for the moon as long as the sun is shining? We are in the day of the

Substance, not in the night of the shadows. But man is so prone to be religious, and to add something to Christ. He must "touch," and "taste," and "handle" something.

Again, WE ARE "COMPLETE IN HIM" WITHOUT ANY HUMAN MERIT.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast (Eph. 2:8-9).

All our righteousnesses are but filthy rags. If we were "dead in sins," and we were, how could a dead man do anything? He cannot see, hear, touch, smell, speak, or walk. So how utterly foolish it is like Zophar to talk about preparing one's heart to appease God or to merit His favor.

Therefore, if "IN HIM" there dwells all "*the fullness of the Godhead bodily*," and we are "COMPLETE IN HIM," let us live as those who know this fullness! The Pauline doctrine of Christ is His absolute "*fullness*," HIS *pleroma*. And the doctrine of "*ye are complete in Him*," Christ should therefore command all our worship, our admiration, our love. There is at our disposal the infinite merit of His righteousness; the infinite efficacy in His blood; and the infinite power of His resurrection and glorification.

The celebrated artist Danneker was asked by Napoleon to paint Venus for the Louvre, and declined. An enormous sum was offered him, but still he declined. The little emperor angrily demanded the reason. "I have just painted Christ," was the answer, "and I can never lower my brush to paint such an inferior subject as Venus."

Let us therefore sing:

Now blest in heavenly places
In Christ at God's right hand;
And filled with all His fullness

**Complete in Him to stand.
Sing to the praise and glory
Of Him Who thus hath shown
Such gracious love and mercy,
To call us for His own.**

(inside back cover)

"...our *physical* death is *passive*: He died *actively*. Our *spiritual* death, by contrast, is *active*, for we deliberately choose to be and want to be the kind of people we are. His *spiritual* death, on the other hand, was *passive*, for 'God laid upon Him the iniquity of us all' (Isa. 53:6), and, though He willingly accepted the burden, He nevertheless cried out in agony against it when the judgment fell (Matt. 27:46); for it meant spiritual separation from His Father in heaven, and such a 'darkness' that even the sun hid its face."

**Arthur Custance, *The Seed of The Woman*,
p. 162, Doorway Publications, 1st ed.**