

Christ is Victor

MARCH/APRIL 2018

VOL. 31, NO. 2

“The New Covenant”

Here is the promise of the new covenant. God gave the people of Israel His law through Moses. But the Spirit of the law was lost and only the letter of the law remained. You can follow the letter of the law and completely lose the spirit thereof. The Mosaic laws have seven “Thou-shalt-nots.” The positive nature of God did not come into man—the nature of love. There can be love without faith. But love without faith is selfish. Love with faith makes you hate yourself and love others and you find fullness of joy. Your righteousness must reach out to others and convert them. Through the law, the nature of God did not come into people. The law came into the mind of man but the heart remained the same. God wanted to drive in His laws into the heart. There was no other way but by the Cross. Moses taught Israel to slay the Passover lamb to deliver the children of Israel from Egypt. The spotless Lamb of God had to be slain that He may put His new covenant into us. When we look at Jesus, something happens to us as happened to the snake-bitten people who looked at the brazen serpent. They were rid of the poison in their body. When Jesus took our sins on Himself to the Cross, the new covenant could operate. The devil stood firm claiming men on the basis of the law. Jeremiah 31:31, 33: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah ... But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

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“Buy the truth, and sell it not”

I recalled that my father once preached, “Buy the truth, and sell it not.” “Sell the truth and buy the world,” is what some people’s bible seems to teach them. But the Bible teaches: “Buy the truth and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding” (Proverbs 23:23). Now what do I notice? People will pay anything for what they really want. Don’t you see that? When they really want to go to a football game, or some very prominent teams playing each other, they will go find some ticket somewhere. It is amazing how people work and live all through the year for that vacation time. I am going to get a week’s vacation and I am going to the Bahamas. That is their dream all through the year. And so they gather up enough money, however large the sum might be, and they set off to come back tired and weary. So I have found that people will pay a price for something that they really want. Therefore, we had better ask ourselves: what do we really want? Now, what is truth? There is no possession in this world which is not subject to some kind of decomposition or disintegration or devaluation. There is only one thing that stands secure: the truth of God.

And you know in all history you will not find another who could say without fear of contradiction, “I am the truth.” I have had in my audiences all kinds of people—people of so many religions, communists, infidels, atheists, mockers, and scorners. But no one has ever dared to challenge this irrevocable truth: “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” The Lord Jesus becomes greater and greater in value, whereas we are afraid that as soon as you bring your car out of a show room, it loses ten percent right there. But truth never loses its value. So you can see how deeply you are searching or treasuring the truth by what you are ready to spend for it. It is very simple. That is how we understand value. We seem to understand value only in terms of the dollar and that is all that speaks to some people. Let me ask some of you: how much are you willing to spend in dollars to get truth?

Today, we see a kind of gallery person who talks about truth without ever being ready to

spend a thing to acquire the truth. Now let me tell you, that is a false, perverted soul. When you talk about the truth, you do not dare talk about it as Pilate talked about the truth. Where did Pilate talk about truth? When he had Jesus Christ before him. If you turn to John 18, it is a very enigmatic situation. Actually a judge is there to investigate and discover the truth. What really happened? How did this crime occur? Was it a premeditated crime, or was it something done on the spot out of impulse? That is the purpose of a judge to discover the truth. And here we see Pilate saying unto Him in John 18:37-38: “Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all.” Here was the one person of whom it might be said in all [the] history of humanity, the one person who stands perfect, and that is our Lord Jesus, that He is indeed the Truth. And so Pilate has Jesus standing before him, and says, “What is truth?” Why is the judge there? To discover the truth, to stand by the truth, and not to stand by what the crowd says? Today all the truth that some people have discovered is what some philosophers say or some speakers say or some authors say—that is all. Their search for truth has been so shallow, it has never brought them to Jesus. What a tragedy! What a travesty of a seeker! When I see people who say, “We are seeking the truth,” I say, but what are you ready to sell out to get the truth? Are you ready to sell out the rubbish and clutter in your mind? Are you ready to become a childlike person? Are you ready to acknowledge the truth, to fall prostrate before the truth? Then you will have no difficulty discovering Jesus. But the point is when you have preconceived notions, borrowed ideas and second-hand stuff from a variety of people, your mind is so cluttered that you can never come to the truth.

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These laws in our hearts act as reins to our life. Psalm 16:7, “I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons.” When the truth of God becomes the reins of our life, they lead us into the paths of life. We come under the complete control of the eternal wisdom of God. Ezekiel 36:27: “And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.” The Holy Spirit could not be given without the Cross and the Resurrection. Mark 14:24: “And He said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.” To God, the future, the present and the past are the same. When He makes a covenant, it is an eternal covenant. The Cross is an eternal principle. God has accepted the sacrifice of Christ. If Christ had not died, it were not possible for man to live the life in the Spirit.

When we receive new life by looking at the Cross, the seed of this new nature is in us. Christ seals our new birth with His blood. The devil has no power over us and a new principle begins to work in us. There will come an experience in our lives when our selves will be nailed to the Cross. That is sanctification. Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. On the Cross we see on either side of Jesus two kinds of men—those that are penitent and go up with Christ and those that are impenitent and go down to hell.

We are thieves in God’s sight. We have used the talents God has given us to secure for ourselves the destructive pleasures of this world. Like the prodigal son we have taken His property and wasted it. There are many righteous men also who are thieves. They have stolen God’s glory. Their righteousness is like filthy rags. God’s righteousness always

touches the neighbour. The righteousness that confines itself to self and congratulates itself is not God’s righteousness. The gift of life is God’s. The gift of a personality in the likeness of God is His. The capacity to learn is God’s. We are thieves. On the Cross we see two thieves. They represent humanity. One of them owns up that he deserves it. The other hardens his heart. Jesus Christ is making the supreme sacrifice. A new covenant is coming into force. A new heart and a new spirit are given to us and we are enabled spontaneously to live the Christian life. There is a higher power coming into operation—not a mental or intellectual power. It is a spiritual power. It is the mighty power of God—the Resurrection power.

—N. Daniel

“Buy the truth, and sell it not” Cont’d

“Ever learning, but never being able to come to the truth.” This is the mark of the last days, a mark of people whose souls will be lost. Why? They are not ready to sell out.

Psalm 117: “O praise the Lord, all ye nations: praise Him, all ye people. For His merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever. Praise ye the Lord.” There is one solid, monolithic thing that endures forever—the truth. All else passes away, but the truth of the Lord endureth forever. To heathen religions, truth is relative, they say. This can also be true, and that may also be true. It is amazing. A man who studies the Bible and a man who knows the Word of God will never say that. Truth cannot be truth when it is undefined. How can you look at the jellyfish and say, the jellyfish is just this exact length, and exact breadth, only. If you put it on the ground it will widen out. If you put it in a small test tube, you can have the jellyfish one meter long. So your truth is one meter long, and it can also be one centimeter flat. It can be anything.

I want to tell you that truth is intolerant because truth is defined. If you are going to live by the Word and tolerate garbage, dung, filth, and the whole bunch of rubbish, then don’t you ever say you are seeking the truth. Truth is defined. The distance between two cities is defined by the miles between two locations.

People do not want to know their heart. They like a kind of hairy-fairy speculation.

When you come to the Lord Jesus Christ, He will show you your thoughts and your heart. “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart ...” (Jeremiah 17:9-10). That’s it. If you really want to know what you are, you need to go to the Cross. It is only at the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ that you know your true self. That is where I got to know for the first time that I was not a good fellow and how depraved and how abject was my sinful condition.

So my dear friends, we come to a prayer which is very important. You see that prayer in Psalm 119:73: “Give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments.” How important! King Solomon prayed in 1 Kings 3:7-9: “I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?” God loved that prayer. King Solomon, the wisest of men, had an answer to this prayer, as he had to judge God’s people. He felt, where do I have the wisdom to discern the truth? There came two harlots of whom one had crushed her baby to death. After seeing that her baby was dead, she put that baby beside the other woman and took the live child. And so they came and questioned King Solomon. To whom does

the live baby belong? And the king had no problem at all solving that problem. Here were two mothers saying, “This is my baby.” Is not that very simple? Get a knife, divide the child in half, give it to each one. And the true mother said, “No. Do not do that. Give it away to that woman. But do not kill my child.” King Solomon said, “I do not have the wisdom to deal with it.” The heart of man is so complex. Some of the situations we can produce can be so complex. We do not know each other. That is why great conflict comes when two people get married—two complex people living together under the same roof, without the unifying force of the Lord Jesus Christ, and without the humbleness to say: “Lord, teach us, and give us understanding.” Every father or mother can say: “I do not know how to bring up these children.” A father and a mother who [do] not have the understanding to say that they have no understanding are all at sea. Today life has

Reality Check!

**“KNOW YE THAT THE LORD
HE IS GOD: IT IS HE THAT
HATH MADE US, AND NOT
WE OURSELVES. ... [B]E
THANKFUL UNTO HIM, AND
BLESS HIS NAME”
(PSALM 100:3, 4).**

become so insecure; we simply do not know the future. I suppose this is quite a time when all the fortune-tellers can just multiply in number everywhere because people do not know what is going to happen. They feel so insecure at such a time. What is understanding? It is to put the reins of our life into the hands of Jesus and say, "Lord, you guide me. I do not know." If you are not prepared to say that, you have no understanding. There are some people who are afraid to ask God's will. Why? It may go counter to their wishes. Can you imagine such immaturity? They are afraid to ask God's will, simply because it may go against their wishes or their convenience. That means they have no regard for the truth, or they have no desire to be really productive in their lives. They are just aimless, drifting kind of people. What a tragedy! 1 Kings 3:9: "Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad." Is there anybody who can bypass this prayer?

I am asking God for discernment. There are certain times when some people come to see me; I tell them, "I know why you have come to see me. The Lord has shown me what you have come to see me for." Yes, I need a discerning heart. How stupid is a man who leans on his own understanding! He is substituting his understanding for God's decision and choosing. Is there any way you can do that? You think my mind can display the mind of God? But how many of us act on that premise? "Lean not on your own understanding. Acknowledge Him in all your ways, and He shall direct your paths." See, we do not do that. We want some of our own ways. We like them so much. We are sold out to the idea that in this matter I must get my own way whatever anybody thinks. Listen! You might get your own way whatever anybody thinks. But if

you include God in that "anybody", you are going to crash. You are going to have total wreckage. To many people, truth is relative.

I am so shocked how subtle people can be. I think besides the native depravity, your background also does play a part there. Some people come from a very calculating, suspicious background. That is a very unfortunate background from which to come, which makes one suspicious and snoop. It is a horrible background when parents are full of fear, when no one is trusted in a family, and when there is continuous argument over trifling things. So you become a very shifty and subtle person. You play to this situation and that situation. That is a background that becomes your character. It is a blessing when the values of a Christian home are built on God's Word such that a "yes" is "yes" and "no" is "no". "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile." And when we see a whole generation growing up in the midst of this spate of divorces, your heart ought to break. Can you imagine how twisted and warped the minds of these little children are going to be all through their lives, brought up in the midst of arguments, fighting, division, debate, anger, resentment, and bitterness? There is a whole background you give to your children, and they are going to be very shifty, calculating people.

Jacob is the typical case of a man to whom truth could be twisted and turned according to convenience. But what did he gain? He gained the loss of ten of his children, who became deceivers. "Okay, we will tell our dad that some wild beast has slain our brother Joseph and we will present this coat which our father gave him, all bloodied. We will put some blood on it, and we will ask daddy, 'Is this your son's coat?' And he will surely recognize it." And here was Jacob mourning all through his many

years while Joseph was over on the throne in Egypt. Here was a father who was mourning inconsolably over a death which did not take place. But who deceived him? His own children. Who gave them that nature? [He] himself. Who was responsible for his tears and his mourning? [He] himself. My dear friends, we are going to reap what we sow. You deal with truth as though it can be this, that, and the other thing. It can be Jesus. It can be somebody else. Well, you are going to reap your reward. Truth is not to be played with. Nobody can chip away truth—no one. "I am the truth," said Jesus. These are the incontrovertible words ringing through the ages, uncontested by anybody. But those that pervert, play, and quibble about the truth are going to earn for themselves enduring tears. Do not play with the truth. Buy the truth, and never sell the truth. It is a blood-bought commodity. The very life of our Lord Jesus Christ was given to uphold the truth. God is holy, and your sin has its penalty, and that penalty has to be paid. And without the payment for that penalty, there is no redemption. My dear friends, that truth stands incontrovertible, and that is the rock on which I stand. What is your rock? Where do you stand? I will sell out anything, everything for the truth. "Buy the truth, and sell it not: also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding."

—Joshua Daniel

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“Amazing grace”

“My history is briefly expressed in Deuteronomy 32:10,” wrote John Newton, an eighteenth-century Christian, one day:

He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye.

“He found me in a howling wilderness indeed!” continued Newton. “He has led me about into a variety of situations, and in them all He watched over me, and kept me as the apple of His eye.”

The reformations of self

Born in London in 1725, Newton was orphaned of his mother shortly before his seventh birthday, and he was later left to learn the ways of wickedness. His father, a ship master for many years, took him to sea at the age of eleven, and from that point until 1742, Newton made several voyages.

Before Newton had reached the age of sixteen, he had taken up and laid aside a religious profession three or four different times. Yet his heart was insincere; he thought he needed religion to escape hell but loved sin and was unwilling to forsake it. His last reform was to become an Ascetic, yet it left him under sin’s power, “gloomy, stupid, unsociable, and useless.”

In 1742, Newton went as a common sailor to Venice in Italy. He relaxed from his asceticism and made large strides towards apostasy from God. At length he received a remarkable check by a dream which made a strong, but not abiding, impression upon his mind.

The returning of God

Newton ended up plunging into atheism and renounced the hopes and comforts of the Gospel at a time when every other comfort was about to fail. The years 1745 to 1747, spent in Africa as a “slave”, later seemed “as an absolute blank” in his life. His spirits sunk but he did not repent.

In 1748, however, after having joined a ship bound homeward, a storm arose and the ship suffered damage. Newton was to express his desire for mercy for the first time in many years. He knew his exceedingly great sinfulness. After God displayed his hand in the ship’s favour, Newton began to pray. He began to think of Jesus whom He had so often derided, His life and His death for sins not his own. In the Bible he read of a Spirit, communicated to those who asked for it, to help understand the Bible.

When the ship finally anchored in Ireland, Newton began to know that there was a God who hears and answers prayer. He saw, too, the Lord’s goodness to returning sinners in the parable of the Prodigal Son and prayed much. The Lord had interposed so far to save him and he hoped He would do more. God began to return to Newton and he—the “chief of sinners”—eventually became a believer by the amazing grace of Jesus Christ.

—John Newton by Richard Cecil, updated by Marylynn Rouse

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