

BREAKING DOWN THE MIDDLE WALL

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A. T. Jones Sermons

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THAT we may have the subject, or rather the particular point of it, clearly before us, I will repeat a few expressions in the passages with which we closed last night's lesson:-

At the marriage at Cana, Jesus began the work of breaking down the exclusiveness which existed among the Jews. Their religion was a yoke of bondage.

The miracle at the feast pointed directly toward the breaking down of the prejudices of the Jews.

Jesus was a Jew, yet he mingled freely with the Samaritans, setting at naught the customs and bigotry of his nation. He had already begun to break down the partition wall between Jew and Gentile, and to preach salvation to the world.

Of the disciples at Samaria it says:- They had felt that in order to prove themselves loyal to their nationality, it was incumbent upon them to cherish enmity toward the Samaritans. They were filled with wonder at the conduct of Jesus, who was breaking down the wall of separation between the Jews and Samaritans, and openly setting aside the teachings of the scribes and Pharisees. ... During the two days while they shared the Lord's ministry in Samaria, fidelity to Christ kept their prejudices under control. They would not fail to show reverence to him; but in heart they were unreconciled. Yet it was a lesson essential for them to learn.

Jesus did not come into the world to lessen the dignity of the law, but to exalt it. The Jews had perverted it by their prejudices and misconceptions. Their meaningless exactions and requirements had become a by-word among the people of other nations. Especially was the Sabbath hedged in by all manner of senseless restrictions. It could not then be called a delight, the holy of the Lord, and honorable, for the scribes and Pharisees has made its observance a galling yoke. A Jew was not allowed to light a fire upon the Sabbath, or even to light a candle on that day. The views of the people were so narrow that they had become slaves to their own useless regulations.

The Sabbath, instead of being the blessing it was designed to be, had become a curse through the added requirements of the Jews.

The Jewish leaders were filled with spiritual pride. Their desire for the glorification of self manifested itself even in the service of the sanctuary.

As repeated calamities and persecutions came upon them from their heathen enemies, the Jews returned to the strict observance of all the outward forms enjoined by the sacred law. Not satisfied with this, they made burdensome additions to these ceremonies. Their pride and bigotry

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led them to the narrowest interpretation of the requirements of God. As time passed, they gradually hedged themselves in with the traditions and customs of their ancestors, till they regarded the requirements originating from men as possessing all the sanctity of the original law. This confidence in themselves and their own regulations, with its attendant prejudices against all other nations, caused them to resist the Spirit of God.

Now a few more short quotations:-

In all his lessons, Jesus presented to men the worthlessness of merely ceremonial obedience. ... The Jews had become earthly, and they did not discern spiritual things. And so when Christ set before them the very truths that were the soul of all their service, they, looking only at the external, accused him of seeking to overthrow it. ... He knew that they would use these works of mercy as strong arguments to affect the minds of the masses, who had all their lives been bound by the Jewish restrictions and exactions. Nevertheless he was not prevented by this knowledge from breaking down the senseless wall of superstition that barricaded the Sabbath.

His act of mercy did honor to the day, while those who complained of him were by their many useless rites and ceremonies themselves dishonoring the Sabbath.

The Jews accused Christ of trampling upon the Sabbath, when he was only seeking to restore it to its original character. The interpretations given to the law by the rabbis, all their minute and burdensome exactions, were turning away the Sabbath from its true object, and giving to the world a false conception of the divine law, and of the character of God. Their teachings virtually represented God as giving laws which it was impossible for the Jews, much less for any other people, to obey. Thus in their earthliness, separated from God in spirit while professedly serving him, they were doing just the work that Satan desired them to do, - taking a course to impeach the character of God, and cause the people to view him as a tyrant; to think that the observance of the Sabbath, as God required it, made man hard-hearted, unsympathetic, and cruel.

Christ did not come to set aside what the patriarchs and prophets had spoken; for he himself had spoken through these representative men. He himself was the originator of all truth. Every jewel of truth came from Christ. But those priceless gems had been placed in false settings. Their precious light had been made to minister to error. Men had taken them to adorn tradition and superstition. Jesus came to take them out of the false settings of error, and to put them into the framework of truth.

What could more fully express the thought of the "form of godliness without the power," than do those people and their services in that day? Can you imagine? Every one of these statements is simply another way of stating the truth that they had "a form of godliness without the power." Now we are in a time in the world's history when that same thing - "the form of godliness without the power" - is cursing the world. And the same truths that were written in the Scriptures against that thing in that day, are the light and truth of Jesus Christ against that thing in this day. The same thing that saved the people from the form of godliness without the power in that day, - the same thing that saved the people from the senseless round of forms and

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ceremonies, of ceremonialism and the ceremonial law, which is simply ceremonialism - the same thing that saved the people from that in that day is to save the people from that in this day.

What saved the people from this thing in that day? "He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances [contained in ceremonies, contained in forms without the power]; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace." It was an absolute surrender to Jesus Christ of every interest in the universe, and thus finding in him the destruction of the enmity, in that day that saved people from ceremonialism; and nothing short of that will save people from ceremonialism in this day. Nothing short of that will save Seventh-day Adventists from ceremonialism, and from following the same track of the old ceremonial law.

[Prof. Prescott. - "I would like to know if we get the thought clearly, because it all seems to center right there. Are we to understand that thought, that Jesus Christ did at that time really abolish not simply that ceremonial law, but that he did a great deal more than that; that he abolished ceremonial law everywhere and always, no matter how expressed."]

Yes, sir; that is the point exactly.

We will come at that in another way. What was the cause of all this? What was the cause of that separation between Jews and Gentiles? What was the cause of their having a form of godliness without the power? What was the matter with the disciples with Jesus at Samaria? - "Enmity" - enmity, sin, self. But enmity, sin, self, is all self. It was the putting of self in the place of God that not only perverted God's appointed services and forms of service, but added to these a whole mountain of ceremonies and additions of their own, as we have read. What was the object of it all? What were they doing all this for? - To be saved, to be righteous. But there is no form or ceremony that even God himself appointed that can save a man. That is where they missed it. That is where thousands of people still miss it. And that is the "form of godliness without the power," and that is ceremonialism; and if you will receive it, that is the ceremonial law, that was abolished by the abolishing in His flesh of the enmity, and so breaking down the middle wall of partition.

It was the lack of the presence of Jesus Christ in the heart by living faith, that caused them to put their trust in these other things for salvation. Not having Christ for salvation, they did these other things, that by these they might be righteous. And thus they took the means which God had appointed for other purposes, - they took the ten commandments; they took circumcision; they took sacrifices and offerings, and burnt offerings, and offerings for sin. They took all these, which God had given for another purpose, and used them to obtain salvation by them; used them to obtain righteousness by the performance of them.

But they could not find righteousness by the doing of these things; they could not find peace; they could not find satisfaction of heart; because it is not there; it was all of themselves. Therefore, in order to be certain of it, they had to draw out these things which God had appointed, and the things which he had said, into ten thousand hair-splitting and casuistic distinctions, so that they could be so certain to come directly to the exact line that they could be

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sure that they had the righteousness they were after. Yet all these things did not satisfy; they did not find peace of heart yet; and consequently they had to add a great many things of their own invention; and all these were their own invention anyhow. It was all ceremonialism from beginning to end; and it was all done that by these they might become righteous.

But nothing but faith in Jesus Christ can make a man righteous; and nothing but that can keep him righteous. But they did not have that; they did not have him abiding in the heart by living faith, so that his virtue itself would shine out in the life through these things that God had appointed, which Christ himself appointed for that purpose. And therefore, when they attempted by these things - simply the expression of their own selves working out thus - to obtain righteousness, they missed real righteousness; and thus that self in them built up this that the testimony calls so often "middle wall," "a wall of partition," "senseless exactions," "hedging about," - using the expressions over and over again in almost every conceivable way.

What caused that wall to be built up? Did God build it up? - No. Who did build it up? - They themselves. And what was it in them that was the foundation of the whole thing? - Self. And that self, as we have studied so often, is enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. And we read that the disciples "felt that in order to prove themselves loyal to their nationality, it was incumbent upon them to cherish enmity toward the Samaritans." To acquire it? - O, no; but to cherish it, to hold fast to it.

Then as that enmity, which is simply the expression of self, is that which caused all this wall to be built up, when Jesus Christ wanted to break down the wall and destroy it, - annihilate it, - what was the only way effectually to do it? Is it the way to break down a wall, a building, to begin at the top, and take off a layer of stone here, and another there, or to begin in the middle, and take out a stone here and another there? - No; if you want to break down the whole thing, you take away the foundation, and the thing is done; the wall is destroyed; the building is torn down.

Jesus Christ wanted to abolish that whole thing; he wanted to break down that wall absolutely, and leave it in ruins; therefore he struck at the foundation of the thing. And as the spring, the foundation of the whole senseless wall was this enmity, Jesus broke down the wall by "having abolished in himself, in his flesh, the enmity," and along with that, "even the law of commandments contained in ordinances."

[Mr. Gilbert. - That word "righteousness" itself has become perverted, so that now the meaning of the word "righteousness" is a man that gives alms; that is, a man that gives a certain amount of alms has obtained righteousness.]

Brother Gilbert, who is a born Hebrew, and a Jew indeed now, says that that same idea still prevails among the Jews; that the word "righteousness," and the idea of righteousness itself, has been perverted, and that now it means simply that which they receive as the consequence of that which they have done, in giving alms, or whatsoever it may be, in the way of right doing. It is all righteousness by works, righteousness by deeds, without Jesus Christ. It is all ceremonialism. And it is just as bad for Seventh-day Adventists to-day as for any Pharisee in Judea eighteen hundred years ago. All have it who have the profession of Christianity without

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Christ, who have the form of godliness without the power; it is only the fruit of the enmity, that is all.

Whenever, wherever, you have the enmity, you will have ceremonialism. You cannot get rid of the thing without getting rid of the enmity; and as certainly as that enmity is there, it will show itself. In some places it shows itself in what is called a color line; in other places it shows itself in national lines, - a German line, a Scandinavian line, etc., etc., - so that when fully developed, there would be as many lines in the Third Angel's Message as there are nationalities and colors on the earth. But in Jesus Christ no such thing can ever be. And if we are not in Jesus Christ, we are not in the Third Angel's Message.

In Jesus Christ the enmity is abolished, and consequently in him there is no color line; there is no Scandinavian line; there is no German line; nor any other kind of line. There is neither white nor black; neither Germans, nor French, nor Scandinavians, nor English, nor anything else, but just Jesus Christ manifest upon all, and through all, and in you all. But we will never find that out, - even Seventh-day Adventists will not certainly find it out, - until that enmity is abolished by a living faith in Jesus Christ, that surrenders the will to him, to receive that living, divine image of which we heard in Brother Prescott's lesson to-night. That is where we are; and this is present truth to-day, and for Seventh day Adventists as well as for other people. O, it is still the same cry; "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities."

Here is another word right upon that. It tells the whole story on both sides:-

At that time the Israelites had come to regard the sacrificial service as having in itself virtue to atone for sin, and thus had lost sight of Christ, to whom it pointed. God would teach them that all their services were as valueless in themselves as that serpent of brass, but were, like that, to lead their minds to Christ, the great sin-offering. Whether for the healing of their wounds or the pardon of sin, they could do nothing for themselves but to manifest their faith in the remedy which God had provided. They were to look and live.

Now see the present truth:-

There are thousands in the Christian age who have fallen into an error similar to that of the Jewish people. They feel that they must depend on their obedience to the law of God to recommend them to his favor.

Who have fallen into that similar error with the Jews? - Those who feel that they must depend upon their obedience to the law of God to recommend them to his favor. Is that you? Have you ever seen anybody like that any time in your life? Thank God that he has broken down the middle wall of partition.

The nature and importance of faith have been lost sight of, and this is why it is so hard for many to believe in Christ as their personal Saviour.

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It is that same determined drawing of that enmity that will not let go until it is crucified, dead, and buried with Jesus Christ, - it is that that draws, and draws, - "O, I must do something; I am not good enough for God to liek me; he is not good enough to care for one as bad as I. I must do something to pave the way; I must do something to break down the barriers that are between him and me, and make myself good enough, so that he can take favorable notice of me. And therefore I must and I will keep the ten commandments; I will sign a contract, and enter into a bargain to do it." And then you try to do it as hard as you can.

Here is a passage from Farrar's "Life of Paul," page 40, that I will read:-

The Jewish priests had imagined, and had directed, that if a man did not feel inclined to do this or that, he should force himself to do it by a direct vow.

Precisely. And so if you do not have it in your heart to do it, why, you must do it anyhow, because it is right, and you want to do right; and so we will sign the covenant, take a vow, "O, well, now I have signed the covenant, of course I must do it. I have no pleasure in it; it is a galling yoke; but I have signed the covenant, and I must keep the pledge, of course." That is ceremonialism. And it springs from the enmity which is self.

There are thousands in the Christian age who have fallen into an error similar to that of the Jewish people. They feel that they must depend on their obedience to the law of God to recommend them to his favor. The nature and importance of faith have been lost sight of, and this is why it is so hard for many to believe in Christ as their personal Saviour.

And when Christ is believed in as your personal Saviour, when true faith lives and reigns in your heart, you need no vows to force yourself to do this or that. No; but the heart will always gladly exclaim; "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart."

But Jesus Christ has broken down that middle wall of partition. He has abolished in his flesh that enmity that would fight against faith, and keep man away from God. He has abolished that enmity that would keep man away from Christ, that would put something else, everything else, in place of Christ, and that causes men to depend upon anything and everything under the sun for salvation, - everything but Jesus Christ, - whereas, nothing, nothing under the sun, in heaven or earth, nor anywhere else, can save, but simply Jesus Christ, and faith in him. That is the only thing that saves. And if any one expects to be saved by what he calls faith in Christ and something else, it is still the same old ceremonialism; it is still the working of the enmity. Men are not saved by faith in Christ and something else.

Some may think that is too strong, and perhaps I would better read the rest of that sentence:-

When they are bidden to look to Jesus by faith, and believe that without any good works of their own he saves them, solely through the merits of his atoning sacrifice, many are ready to doubt the question. They exclaim with Nicodemus, "How can these things be?"

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Yet nothing is more plainly taught in the Scriptures. Than Christ "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12. Man has nothing to present as an atonement, nothing to render to divine justice, on which the law has not a claim. If he were able to obey the law perfectly from this time forward, this could not atone for past transgressions.

The law claims from man entire obedience through the whole period of his life. Hence it is impossible for him by future obedience to atone for even one sin. And without the grace of Christ to renew the heart, we cannot render obedience to the law of God. Our hearts are by nature evil, and how, then, can they bring forth that which is good? "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." Job 14:4. All that man can do without Christ is polluted with selfishness and sin. Therefore he who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law, is attempting an impossibility. True, man cannot be saved in disobedience, but his works should not be of himself. Christ must work in him to will and to do of his own good pleasure. If man could save himself by his own works, he might have something in himself in which to rejoice. But it is only through the grace of Christ that we can receive power to perform a righteous act.

Many err in thinking that repentance is of such value as to atone for sin, but this cannot be. Repentance can in no sense be accepted as atonement. And, furthermore, even repentance cannot possibly be exercised without the influence of the Spirit of God. Grace must be imparted, the atoning sacrifice must avail for man, before he can repent.

The apostle Peter declared concerning Christ, "Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." Acts 5:31. Repentance comes from Christ just as truly as does pardon. The sinner cannot take the first step in repentance without the help of Christ. Those whom God pardons, he first makes penitent.

Nothing, nothing, nothing but faith in Jesus Christ, and in him alone - nothing but that saves the soul, and nothing but that keeps the soul saved.

The great trouble with the Jews from the beginning unto the end was in having the Lord so far away that even the things which God had given to signify his perfect nearness, were taken and used as the tokens of his being far away. Sacrifices, offerings, the tabernacle, the temple, its services, - all those things were used by the Jewish teachers and the great mass of the people in such a way that all that these services meant to them was that they pointed to Christ away off yonder somewhere. It was understood that these things meant the Messiah, but it was the Messiah afar off. And they must make themselves good, so as to bring him near; and these things were looked to as having virtue in themselves, and so as able to give righteousness.

I am not certain whether Seventh-day Adventists have got beyond the idea of those things back there, that they signified Christ afar off. I am not saying now that Seventh-day Adventists think that Christ is now away off. But I am afraid that they have not gotten away from the idea, when they look at the sanctuary and its services, the sacrifices and offerings, that that was intended to teach them of Christ away off yonder somewhere. So it is said that these things all pointed to Christ. These things did all point to Christ, that is the truth. But it was Christ near and

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not far off. God intended that all these things should point to Christ living in their hearts, not 1800 years away; not as far off as heaven is from the earth; but pointing to Christ in their living experience from day to day. When we get fast hold of that idea, and then study the sanctuary, the sacrifices, the offerings, - in short, the gospel as it is in Leviticus, - then we shall see that that meant Christ a living, present Saviour to them day by day, and we shall also see that he is that to us today also.

There is gospel, there is Christian experience, for us to-day in Leviticus, in Deuteronomy, in Genesis, in Exodus, and in the whole Bible. But when we read those passages, and say that those sacrifices and offerings all pointed to Christ afar off from the Jews, and expect that the Jews were to look through these services away off yonder to Christ to come sometime - when we read those scriptures, and look at them that way, then we are reading those scriptures precisely as the Jews did, and we are standing precisely where they did at that time in these scriptures.

That will never do. No. We are not to look at the sanctuary, with its furniture and paraphernalia standing as God placed it, with God's presence therein, and think that signified to them that they were to learn by it that God dwelt only in the sanctuary in heaven. When we look at it that way, then we are ready to think that that is about as near as he is to us, because that is as near as we have had him come to them. For if we look at it for them in that way, then if we had been there in their places, how would we have looked at it for ourselves? - In the same way; and this shows that had we been there, we would have been precisely as they were.

The tendency is, even with us, to read of the sanctuary and its services, and God dwelling in the sanctuary, and the text, "Make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them," and say, Yes, God dwelt among them in the sanctuary, and that pointed to the sanctuary that is in heaven; and the time is coming when God will dwell with his people again, for he says of the new earth, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and God will dwell with them, and be their God, and they shall be his people;" - so when the new earth comes, God is going to dwell with his people again. But where is God now? That is what we want to know. What matters it to me that he dwelt with the Jews in Jerusalem two or three thousand years ago? What matters it to me that he is going to dwell with his people on the new earth? What matters all this, if he does not dwell with me now? For if he cannot dwell with me now, it is certain that he never can dwell with me on the new earth nor anywhere else; for he has no chance. What I want to know, and what every soul needs to know, is, Does he dwell with me now? If we put him away back yonder int he days of the Jews, and then put him away off on the new earth, what does that do for us now? How does that give him to men now? In that way, how is he with us now? That is what we need constantly to study.

Now, you can see that there is a great deal more in that system of ceremonialism than simply a little passing thing that disturbed the Jews a little while, and then vanished. For human nature is still and ever bothered with it as certainly as the devil lives, as certainly as the enmity is in the human heart. That mind which is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be - jsut as certainly as that is in the world, and as long as it is in the world, just so long the world will be cursed with ceremonialism. And as long as there is any of that in my heart, I shall be in danger of being cursed with ceremonialism.

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What we are to do is to find such deliverance in Jesus Christ, such absolute victory and exaltation at the right hand of God in heaven, in him, that that enmity should be completely annihilated in us in him. Then we shall be free from ceremonialism; then we shall be free from traditions and men's commandments, and men making themselves a conscience for us. (See in Brother Durland's lesson, page 167 of the BULLETIN.) Men say, "You must do this, or you cannot be saved; you have got to do that, or you cannot be saved." No, no. Believe in Jesus Christ, or you cannot be saved. Have true faith in Jesus Christ, and you are saved.

It is the same battle that was fought out in Paul's day and work. He was preaching Jesus Christ alone for salvation. But certain Pharisees "who believed" followed him around, saying, "O, yes, it's all well enough to believe in Jesus Christ; but there is something else. You have got to be circumcised, and keep the law of Moses, or you cannot be saved." That contest lasted for years, and against it all Paul fought all the way; he would not compromise a hair's breadth at any point. "If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." "Whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." Nothing, nothing but Christ, and faith in him! Well, they took it to the council at last; and there the Spirit of God decided that Christ, and not ceremonialism, is the way of salvation. That is the whole story. One was an attempt to fasten ceremonialism upon Christianity, or rather, in the place of Christianity; the other was the living principle of Jesus Christ by living faith, actuating the life and the heart of those who believe in him.

There is a vast difference between ceremonialism and principle. Jesus Christ wants us to find him so, fully and so personally that the living principles of the truth of God, as they are in Jesus Christ, shall be our guide, and that those living principles shining in the life of the man, by the glory of Jesus Christ, shall be our guide at every point, and we shall know what to do at the time. Then we do not need any resolutions or vows to force ourselves to do this, that, or the other. That is the difference between ceremonialism and the principle of the living presence of Christ in the heart. One is all formalism and outward service, without Christ; and the other is all in Christ, and Christ all and in all.

Let us look again at the things the Jews were doing back there, at the temple services, the sacrifices, and the offerings, that you may see this a little more fully yet. I know, and so do you, that the sanctuary, the temple, was a representation of the sanctuary which is in heaven; that the sacrifices were representations of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ; and the priesthood and its service were representations of the priesthood of Christ. In all these things God would teach them, and us too, of himself as he is revealed in Christ. There was a sanctuary first, and there was the temple built in place of the sanctuary. There was the temple standing on Mount Zion in Jerusalem. And from that, God taught them that yonder is the true temple on Mount Zion in the heavenly Jerusalem. God dwelt in this temple on Mount Zion in Jerusalem, in Palestine; and by that he showed them that he dwelt yonder in the heavenly temple in Mount Zion, in the heavenly Jerusalem.

And he said also, - and this was true in both places and from both sides, - "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy

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place." Anywhere else? - "With him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit." When? We are reading away back yonder. When did he dwell "with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit," as well as "in the high and holy place?" Did he do this seven hundred years before Christ, when Isaiah spoke? - Yes. But did the Lord begin only then to dwell with him that is of a humble and contrite spirit, as well as in the high and holy place on Mount Zion? - No.

A thousand years before Christ, when David spoke, did he do it then? - Yes. Had he only begun it then? - No. Fourteen hundred years before Christ, when Moses wrote and taught the people, did God dwell then with him that is humble and contrite? - Yes. But had he only begun it then? - No. He always, eternally, dwells in both places - with the humble and contrite as well as on high.

Well, then, did not God, in that temple on the earth, teach them not only how he dwelt in that heavenly country, but how he dwelt in the temple of the heart also? - Most assuredly. There was the earthly Mt. Zion right before their eyes, representative of the heavenly Zion, which God would have right before their eyes of faith. There upon Mt. Zion, the high and lofty place in the earthly Jerusalem, was the temple, and God dwelling in the temple. And in this God would show that he dwelt not only there, but also in the temple of the heart, the sanctuary of the soul, of him that is of a contrite and humble spirit. And in putting his temple among sinful men, and dwelling therein himself, he was showing also how he would himself dwell in the temple of Christ's body, among sinful men, and in sinful flesh.

There, too, was a priesthood for the earthly temple on Mt. Zion in Jerusalem. There was a priesthood of the sanctuary at Shiloh, in the wilderness. That, it is true, represented the priesthood of Christ, but did that represent any priesthood of Christ before A. D. 1? Shall we say that that represented a priesthood of Christ that was afar off? - No. That priesthood in Jerusalem, in the sanctuary in the wilderness, represented a priesthood that was already in existence after the order of Melchisedek? - Thou shalt be a priest forever after the order of Melchisedek? - No, No. "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedek." Was not Melchisedek a priest in the days of Abraham? And is not the priesthood of Christ forever after the order of Melchisedek?

Do you not see, then, that this whole system of services given to Israel was to teach them the presence of the Christ then and there for the present salvation of their souls, and not for the salvation of their souls eighteen hundred years, or two thousand years, or four thousand years away? - Surely, surely, it is so.

O, it has always been Satan's deception, and has always been the working of his power, to get men, all men, to think that Christ is as far away as it is possible to put him. The farther away men put Christ, even those who profess to believe in him, the better the devil is satisfied; and then he will stir up the enmity that is in the natural heart, and set it to work in building up ceremonialism, and putting this in the place of Christ.

There was also circumcision. Was that a sign of something that was coming away off yonder? No. It was a sign of the righteousness of God which they obtained by faith, and which was there present in them who believed, and when they believed. It was that to Abraham, and God intended it to be that to every man. But instead of this they had taken it and made it a sign

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of righteousness, by circumcision itself, by works itself. Thus they left Christ all out, and put circumcision in his place. It was a sign of righteousness of faith. They did not have faith, and therefore they undertook to make it a sign of righteousness by some other means; and thus it became only a sign of selfishness.

God gave them his law - the ten commandments. Was it that they might obtain righteousness by that? - No, but that it might witness to the righteousness which they obtained by faith in Jesus Christ abiding in the heart. That is what the ten commandments were for, just as they are to-day.

So were not the sacrifices offered typical of Christ? - Yes. But it was typical of Christ present by faith. Was not Christ right there? Was not Christ the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world? Was not Christ a gift of God there before the world was? Then when he called on men from Adam unto all - as long as the sacrifices were offered in that way - when he taught them to offer those sacrifices, what was that but teaching them that that was a token of their appreciation of the great sacrifice that God had already made for them, and of which they were enjoying the benefit by having that gift in the heart, which was Jesus Christ?

Well, we need not go any farther. That is enough to illustrate it. Is it not plain, then, that everything that God gave to them in that day was intended to teach them concerning the personal, living Saviour, personally present with them, if they had only received him? And all they needed to do to receive him was to believe in him. The gospel was preached unto them. Heb.4:2: "But the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." How did they come short of it? How? - By not seeing Christ crucified present with themselves in the thing which they were doing.

Now when we read over those things, and study them, the sanctuary, for instance, and see only so many boards, and so many sockets, and so many curtains, and all these in type of something up yonder in heaven, and that all there is to it, and not see or know Christ in that in our own personal experience, wherein are we different from them? I do not say that is the way that it is done; but I say that if a person looks at it now in that way, then where is the difference between him and the Jews of old? - There is none. Is Christ away off still? - No; he is "not far from every one of us." What is "not far"? It does not say, He is not very far. No. It says, "He is not far." And as certainly as you get a definition of "not far," you have the word "near." He is near to everybody, to us; and he always has been. He was also near to them and he always was near. But by unbelief they could not see him near. And now, in all those services which he gave them, as well as those which he has given us, he wants us all to see the nearness of the living Christ dwelling in the heart and shining in the daily life. That is what he wants us all to see. And he wants us all to see it all. That is the way he wants us to look at it.

Now another thing: What was it that caused all that? What was it that caused them to put Christ afar off, and changed the sacred, living services of God into ceremonialism? - It was "the enmity." It was self, the enmity of self, that caused it all. And that self expressed itself in

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unbelief, because it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. That put a vail over their faces, so that they could not see to the end of that which was before their eyes.

They could not "look to the end of that which is abolished." 2Cor.3:13. Not that this end was so far off that they could not see from where they were, clear down to the end of it; that is not the thought at all. But they could not see the object of it. They could not see what was the intent of it, with themselves, at that time. We are too ready to give to that expression the thought that here was something which pointed to something else away down yonder, and they could not see from there clear down to the end of it. But that is all wrong. No, those things which were before their eyes were intended to point to something right close to them, and that was Christ himself personally present with them, and within their hearts at that time. That was the end of it, that was the object, the aim, the purpose of it.

Therefore, through the enmity, this unbelief which produced formality blinded their eyes, and put a vail over their faces, so they could not see the meaning, the object, of that which was abolished. Of course not; and as long as that enmity is in the heart of a man even to-day, it produces unbelief there, and it puts a vail over his face, so that he cannot see to the end of these things that were abolished. He cannot see that the object of these things was the living presence of Christ in the temple of the heart day by day, as the service was going on. It all means Christ, and he is not far; the object, the end, of all these things is right near, but they cannot see it. Why? - Let us read now that passage in the third chapter of second Corinthians, beginning with the first verse:-

Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of the stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart. And such trust have we through Christ to Godward: not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament, not of the letter -

Letter of what? - Of "the new testament." They had the letter of it, did they not? They had the letter of the new and the old both, but all they had was the letter, and was in the letter.

Who also hath made us able ministers not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth.

What letter kills? Letter of what kills? - Letter of the New Testament, as well as any other letter. Here is a book: There are some letters in it. Those are simply the forms which express ideas. Those letters are not the ideas, they are the forms that contain the ideas, and convey those ideas to us. Those things back there were the letter, the forms, that contained the ideas, the spirit, and the grace of God. That is true; but in it all they saw only the letter. Did they get the idea, the grace, the spirit? - No; they had only the form, the letter, even as we read in Rom.2:20: "Which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth." There is the law of God. Take

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it there as a man sees it in letters, that is the form - the perfect form, too - of knowledge and truth. Take it as it is in Jesus Christ, and we have the thing itself, the complete idea of it, and all the grace and the spirit of it.

That you may see this, I will read one of the finest expressions I have seen upon that subject: "The righteousness of the law was presented to the world in the character of Christ." In the letter of the law we have the form of it. As man looks at it, and sees it as it is in tables of stone, or on a leaf, he sees the form of knowledge and truth; but in Christ we have the perfect substance and idea itself. In the letter we have the perfect pattern, the perfect form, of knowledge and truth; yet it is only the form. In Christ we get the very substance and idea of knowledge and of truth expressed in the words, the letters, which are the form containing the truth. So then, while the letter killeth, "the spirit giveth life." Thank the Lord!

But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away; how shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? ... And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face.

Why was it necessary that he should put a veil over his face? Was it to keep them from seeing it? Was it to prevent their looking to the end of it? - No. It was because "their minds were blinded." Moses came down from the mount with his face radiant with the glory of God. But their sinfulness, which was the consequence of their unbelief, which was the consequence of the enmity, caused them to be afraid of the bright, shining glory of God, and they ran away. When Moses discovered why they did not come near, he put a veil over his face. And this veil was upon his face simply because of the veil that was upon their hearts, through unbelief. Do you see?

They could not see the object of that glory upon Moses's face. Why? - Because their minds were blinded. But were their minds blinded only then and at that time? - No; "until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away." Where? When? - "In the reading of the Old Testament," the veil is still there.

But O, when the heart "shall turn to the Lord, then the veil shall be taken away," because in Christ is abolished the enmity that created the unbelief.

Their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament; which veil is done away in Christ. but even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.

Upon how many hearts is the veil then? - Upon every natural heart; for the mind of the natural heart is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. "Now the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Where? - O, in Him in whom we find the abolition of this enmity, in whom we find the breaking down of all this formalism, in whom we find the annihilation of all ceremonialism, in whom we find life, the light, the bright, shining glory of Jesus Christ, - in him there is liberty. Now, in the Old

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Testament, in the services which he had appointed, in the rights and forms which he there gave, we shall see Christ; and in the performance of all that is appointed we shall see only the expression of the love of Christ that is in the heart already by faith.

We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

I am glad that Jesus Christ has abolished the formality. He has cleared away, broken down, and left in ruins, that middle wall of partition that was between men, and taken it out of the way, nailing it to his cross. When we in him and with him, are nailed to the cross, then we find the enmity abolished, the wall broken down, and we are all one in Jesus Christ; Christ is all in all; and all this, in order that God may be all in all.