

Milk & Honey

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Spiritual Food and Encouragement for Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ

The Man of God

C. H. Macintosh

That the man of God may be perfect (complete), thoroughly furnished unto all good works. 2 Timothy 3:17

PART I: MAN IN NATURE

1. INTRODUCTION. The sentence which we have just penned occurs in Paul's Second Epistle to his beloved son Timothy – an Epistle marked, as we know, by intense individuality. All thoughtful students of Scripture have noticed the striking contrast between the two Epistles of Paul to Timothy. In the first, the Church is presented in its order, and Timothy is instructed as to how he is to behave himself therein. In the second, on the contrary, the Church is presented in its ruin. The house of God has become the great house, in the which there are vessels to dishonor as well as vessels to honor; and where, moreover, errors and evils abound – heretical teachers and false professors, on every hand.

It is in this Epistle of individuality, then, that the expression, "The man of God," is used with such obvious force and meaning. It is in times of general declension, of ruin and confusion that the faithfulness, devotedness, and decision of the individual man of God are specially called for. And it is a signal mercy for such an one to know that, in spite of the hopeless failure of the Church as a responsible witness for Christ, it is the privilege of the individual to tread as holy a path, to taste as deep communion, and to enjoy as rich blessings, as could be known in the Church's brightest days.

This is a most encouraging and consolatory fact – a fact established by many infallible proofs, and set forth in the very passage from which our heading is taken. We shall here quote at length this passage of singular weight and power: "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished

unto all good works." (2 Tim. 3:14–17) (The reader should be informed that the word which is rendered "perfect," in the above passage, occurs but this once in the entire New Testament. It is *artios* and signifies ready, complete, well fitted; as an instrument with all its strings, a machine with all its parts, a body with all its limbs, joints, muscles, and sinews).

Here we have "the man of God," in the midst of all the ruin and confusion, the heresies and moral depravities of the last days, standing forth in his own distinct individuality, "perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." And, may we not ask, what more could be said in the Church's brightest days? If we go back to the day of Pentecost itself, with all its display of power and glory, have we anything higher, or better, or more solid than that which is set forth in the words "perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works"?

And is it not a signal mercy for anyone who desires to stand for God, in a dark and evil day, to be told that, in spite of all the darkness, the evil, the error and confusion, he possesses that which can make a child wise unto salvation, and make a man perfect and thoroughly furnished unto all good works? Assuredly it is; and we have to praise our God for it, with full and overflowing hearts. To have access, in days like these, to the eternal fountain of inspiration, where the child and the man can meet and drink and be satisfied – that fountain so clear that the honest, simple soul can understand; and so deep that you cannot reach the bottom – that peerless, priceless volume which meets the child at his mother's knee, and makes him wise unto salvation; and meets the man in the most advanced stage of his practical career and makes him perfect and fully furnished for the urgency of every hour.

However, we shall have occasion, ere we close this paper, to look more particularly at "the man of God." and to consider what is the special force and meaning of this term. That there is very much more involved in it than is ordinarily understood, we are most fully persuaded.

There are three aspects in which man is presented in Scripture. In the first place, we have MAN IN NATURE; secondly, a MAN IN CHRIST; and thirdly, we have the MAN OF GOD. It might perhaps be thought that the second

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and third are synonymous; but we shall find a very material difference between them. True, I must be a man in Christ before I can be a man of God; but they are by no means interchangeable terms.

Let us then, in the first place, consider MAN IN NATURE.

2. THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF NATURAL MAN. This is a very comprehensive term indeed. Under this title, we shall find every possible shade of character, temperament, and disposition. Man, on the platform of nature, graduates between two extremes. You may view him at the very highest point of cultivation, or at the very lowest point of degradation. You may see him surrounded with all the advantages, the refinements and the so-called dignities of civilized life; or you may find him sunk in all the shameless and barbarous customs of savage existence. You may view him in the almost numberless grades, ranks, classes, and castes into which the human family has distributed itself.

Then again, in the self-same class, or caste, you will find the most vivid contrasts, in the way of character, temper, and disposition. There, for example, is a man of such an atrocious temper that he is the very horror of everyone who knows him. He is the plague of his family circle, and a perfect nuisance to society. He can be compared to a porcupine with all his quills perpetually up; and if you meet him once you will not wish to meet him again. There, on the other hand, is a man of the sweetest disposition and most amiable temper. He is just as attractive as the other is repulsive. He is a tender, loving, faithful husband; a kind, affectionate, considerate father; a thoughtful, liberal master; a kindly, genial neighbor; a generous friend, beloved by all, and justly so. The more you know him the more you must like him, and if you meet him once you are sure to wish to meet him again.

Further, you may meet on the platform of nature, a man who is false and deceitful to the very heart's core. He delights in lying, cheating, and deception. He is mean and contemptible in his thoughts, words and ways; a man to whom all who know him would like to give as wide a berth as possible. And, on the other hand, you may meet a man of high principle, frank, honorable, generous, upright; one who would scorn to tell a lie, or do a mean act; whose reputation is unblemished, his character unexceptionable. His word would be taken for any amount; he is one with whom all who know him would be glad to have dealings; an almost perfect natural character; a man of whom it might be said, he lacks but one thing.

Finally, as you pass to and fro on nature's platform, you may meet the atheist who affects to deny the existence of God; the infidel who denies God's revelation; the skeptic and the rationalist who disbelieves everything. And, on the other hand, you will meet the superstitious devotee who spends his time in prayers and fastings, ordinances, and ceremonies; and

who feels sure he is earning a place in Heaven by a wearisome round of religious observances that actually unfit him for the proper functions and responsibilities of domestic and social life. You may meet men of every imaginable shade of religious opinion, high church, low church, broad church, and no church; men who, without a spark of divine life in their souls, are contending for the powerless forms of a traditionary religion.

Now, there is one grand and awfully solemn fact common to all these various classes, castes, grades, shades, and conditions of men who occupy the platform of nature, and that is there is not so much as a single link between them and Heaven – there is no link with the Man who sits at the right hand of God – no link with the new creation. They are unconverted, and without Christ. As regards God, and Christ, and eternal life, and Heaven, they all – however they may differ morally, socially, and religiously – stand on one common ground; they are far from God – they are out of Christ – they are in their sins – they are in the flesh – they are of the world – they are on their way to hell.

There is really no getting over this, if we are to listen to the voice of Holy Scripture. False teachers may deny it. Infidels may pretend to smile contemptuously at the idea; but Scripture is plain as can be. It speaks in manifold places of a fire that never shall be quenched, and of a worm that shall never die.

It is the very height of folly for anyone to seek to set aside the plain testimony of the Word of God on this most solemn and weighty subject. Better far to let that testimony fall, with all its weight and authority, upon the heart and conscience – infinitely better to flee from the wrath to come than to attempt to deny that it is coming, and that, when it does come, it will abide forever – yes, forever, and forever, and forever! Tremendous thought! Overwhelming consideration! May it speak with living power to the soul of the unconverted reader, leading him to cry out in all sincerity, “What is to be done?”

Yes, here is the question, “What must I do to be saved?” The divine answer is wrapped up in the following words which dropped from the lips of two of Christ's very highest and most gifted ambassadors. “Repent and be converted,” said Peter to the Jew. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house,” said Paul to the Gentile. And again, the latter of these two blessed messengers, in summing up his own ministry, thus defines the whole matter, “Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

How simple! But how real! How deep! How thoroughly practical! It is not a nominal, rational head belief. It is not saying, in mere flippant profession, “I believe.” Ah! no; it is



something far deeper and more serious than this. It is much to be feared that a large amount of the professed faith of this our day is deplorably superficial, and that many who throng our preaching rooms and lecture halls are, after all, but wayside and stony ground hearers. The plough of conviction and repentance has not passed over them. The fallow ground has never been broken up. The arrow of conviction has never pierced them through and through. They have never been broken down, turned inside out – thoroughly revolutionized. The preaching of the gospel to all such is just like scattering precious seed on the hard pavement or the beaten highway. It does not penetrate. It does not enter into the depths of the soul; the conscience is not reached; the heart is not affected. The seed lies on the surface, it has not taken root, and is soon carried away.

Nor is this all. It is also much to be feared that many of the preachers of the present day, in their efforts to make the gospel simple, lose sight of the abiding necessity of repentance, and the essential necessity of the action of the Holy Spirit, without which so-called faith is a mere human exercise and passes away like the vapors of the morning, leaving the soul still in the region of nature, satisfied with itself, daubed with the untempered mortar of a merely human gospel that cries peace, peace, where there is no peace, but the most imminent danger.

All this is very serious, and should lead the soul into profound exercise. We want the reader to give it his grave and immediate consideration. We would put this pointed question to him, which we entreat him to answer, now, “Have you got eternal life? Say, have you?” “He that believeth on the Son of God hath eternal life.” Grand reality! If you have not got this, you have nothing. You are still on that platform of nature of which we have spoken so much. Yes, you are still there; no matter though you were the very fairest specimen to be found there – amiable, polished, affable, frank, generous, truthful, upright, honorable, attractive, beloved, learned, cultivated, and even pious after a merely human fashion. You may be all this, and yet not have a single pulsation of eternal life in your soul.

This may sound harsh and severe. But it is true; and you will find out its truth sooner or later. We want you to find it out now. We want you to see that you are a thorough bankrupt, in the fullest sense of that word. A deed of bankruptcy has been filed against you in the high court of Heaven. Here are its terms, “They that are in the flesh cannot please God.” Have you ever pondered these words? Have you ever seen their application to yourself? So long as you are unrepentant, unconverted, unbelieving, you cannot do a single thing to please God – not one. “In the flesh” and “on the platform of nature” mean one and the same thing; and so long as you are there, you cannot please God. “You must be born again”

– must be renewed in the very deepest springs of your being; unrenewed nature is wholly unable to see, and unfit to enter, the kingdom of God. You must be born of water and of the Spirit – that is by the living Word of God and of the Holy Spirit. There is no other way by which to enter the kingdom. It is not by self-improvement, but by new birth we reach the blessed kingdom of God. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh” and “the flesh profiteth nothing,” for “they that are in the flesh cannot please God.”

How distinct is all this! How pointed! How personal! How earnestly we desire that the unawakened or undecided reader should, just now, take it home to himself, as though he were the only individual upon the face of the earth. It will not do to generalize – to rest satisfied with saying, “We are all sinners.” No; it is an intensely individual matter. “You must be born again.” If you again ask, “How?” hear the divine response from the lips of the Master Himself, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

Here is the sovereign remedy, for every poor broken-hearted, conscience-smitten, hell-deserving sinner – for everyone who owns himself lost – who confesses his sins, and judges himself – for every weary, heavy laden, sin-burdened soul – here is God’s own blessed promise: Jesus died, that you might live. He was condemned, that you might be justified. He drank the cup of wrath, that you might drink the cup of salvation. Behold Him hanging on yonder cross for thee. See what He did for thee. Believe that He satisfied, on your behalf, all the claims of justice before the throne of God. See all your sins laid on Him – your guilt imputed to Him – your entire condition represented and disposed of by Him. See His atoning death answering perfectly for all that was or ever could be brought against you. See Him rising from the dead, having accomplished all. See Him ascending into the Heavens, bearing in His divine Person the marks of His finished atonement. See Him seated on the throne of God, in the very highest place of power. See Him crowned with glory and honor. Believe in Him, and you will receive remission of sins, the gift of eternal life, the seal of the Holy Spirit. You will pass off the platform of nature – you will be “A MAN IN CHRIST.” *To be continued next month.*

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SPREAD THE WORD IS MOVING

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September, 2006

Moving!

Lord willing, in October we will be relocating several miles away in Dover, PA. That town might sound familiar! It was the Dover school board who wanted to put a statement into the Biology class concerning “intelligent design” being an alternative to evolution. It eventually wound up in the Pennsylvania Supreme Court and ruled against under the idea that it was bringing religion into the classroom. (Not sure what the judge and the opponents think Darwinism is.)

Our current home has served us well over the last eighteen years, and we thank the Lord for the good memories we will take with us. The York Bible Study Program met here for fifteen years before moving to the North York Gospel Chapel’s new building. We have had up to ninety people in our home for a study and usually had 50-60 each month.

It is now time to downsize and our new home will be smaller and on a smaller property, and also with a smaller office for Spread The Word. We do not anticipate any change in operations, and if there is a brief period of adjustment we trust you will understand. Our new address will be 2400 Admire Springs Dr., Dover, PA 17315-4684. **Continue to send mail to current address and use telephone number until further notice.**

York Bible Study Program

Sept 9 Bob Gessner Rom. 12:1-2

Bruce Hulshizer “In Christ”

Starts 10 AM - Coffee at 9:30 AM

(717) 767-2900 for information

Copy The Fishes

From an original copy of
The Messenger of Peace, August 1884

“Can you tell me what becomes of the fishes during a storm?” asked an old Christian man of some children one day. It seemed they had never thought of them in that time, and though rather struck by the question, were unable to find an answer.

He then told them that however wild the storm at sea, there was always an under-current of peaceful water (as it was only the surface which got troubled), and the fishes went down into it, and hid in the rocks beneath.

He drew from this little story a beautiful picture of Christians, who, however great their trials and difficulties, could always be at peace, even amid the “storms,” while trusting the Lord Jesus, the “Rock of Ages.”

How comparatively few, though, do *rest in Him*, but, on the contrary, go with the tide of their difficulties, and so get crushed beneath the storm. Would that every one knew the sweetness of “casting all their burdens upon Him who acres for us,” and who would have His people without carefulness; and having committed their way unto the Lord in things small as well as great, find what it is to “be *still* and know that He is God. * *Author Unknown*

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2 *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;*

3 *Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.*

4 *But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. James 1:2-4*