

"DO ALL IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS"

*"Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." **Colossians 3 verse 17***

Whether he realizes it or not, each one who professes to be a Christian speaks and acts in the name of the Lord Jesus. The thought of our text therefore must be that we should endeavor to keep this fact continually before our minds, to the intent that our actions and words may properly represent our Lord and honor the name which he has permitted us to bear. Imagine a maiden from the lower strata of society married to a prince of royal blood. We can imagine a true wife under such circumstances extremely careful of her every word and action, seeking to have these as nearly as possible comport with her new station in life her new relationship. We can well imagine that from the moment of her espousal the thought of her husband's high position and of her responsibility as his helpmate and family representative, would lead her to guard particularly her every action and word. From the time that she assumes his name, or acknowledges that she is espoused to him, whatever she does or says must of necessity be either to the credit or the discredit of his name. Elsewhere the Apostle wrote respecting the Lord's people, likening them to a "chaste virgin

espoused to one husband, which is Christ;" hence this picture very accurately represents our present responsibilities to the great name which our heavenly Bridegroom has granted us permission to use as his espoused. What an honor to be his representatives in the world! and what a responsibility to bear his name!

Another scriptural illustration well represents the way our words and conduct, good or bad, are all done in the name of the Lord Jesus from the time we formally confess him. The Apostle's words are, we are "ambassadors for Christ," "who also hath made us able ministers of the New Covenant." (2 Corinthians 3 verse 6; 5 verse 20). The United States appoints ambassadors or ministers of state to foreign countries. These are all supposed to be persons of good, reputable character before they are chosen, but we can well suppose that the most honorable and discreet amongst them, after realizing the dignity of such an appointment, would feel doubly impressed with the responsibility of his position. Previously he acted in his own name, and because of his own self-respect and personal love of justice, truth, honor, etc., he was careful of his words and conduct; but now he has not only the same personal responsibility but, additionally, an appreciation of the fact that the nation he represents will be either honored or dishonored by his course. If he were careful about his language and conduct before, his carefulness would be increased many fold. And then, because of his official position as

the representative of a great nation, his words and actions would be more critically weighed than previously by those who know him to be the American ambassador; and we may be sure that morning, noon and night a realization of his position as representative of a great nation would be with him, prompting him to prudence. He would realize as never before that, whatsoever he said or did, all would be either to the credit or discredit of the nation whose general character and policy he represents in whose name he speaks and acts.

Footnote for the August 13th Manna, 2 Corinthians 5 verse 20

If it is an honorable matter to represent one great civilized nation of earth before another, how much more honorable it is to represent the heavenly Kingdom and its King of kings and Lord of lords before the "children of this world." If we as Christians could keep this thought always prominent before our minds what a dignity it would add to our character! what a transforming power, it would be! what assistance to the new nature in its battle with the low and groveling tendencies of the old nature now disowned by us and reckoned dead! "Our citizenship is in heaven," says the Apostle. "Ye are not of this world, even as I am not of this world," says our Master, Jesus. While still living in the world we are not of it but have transferred our allegiance and citizenship to the heavenly Kingdom,

set free through the merits of "him who loved us and bought us with his precious blood." And now as the appointees of our Kingdom, while still living in the world amongst aliens and strangers, we as representatives and ambassadors should feel both the dignity and the honor of the position and the weighty responsibilities, and ever keep in memory the Apostle's words, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed do all in the name of the Lord Jesus."

Another scriptural figure represents us as the "members of the body of Christ" under our Lord Jesus as our Head. "As he was so are we in this world." When Jesus was here in the flesh he suffered, the just for the unjust, that he might bring men to God. Since his exaltation according to the divine plan such of the redeemed ones as now enjoy the hearing ear and understanding heart, and as are in full sympathy with the Lord's great plan, are called to be joint-heirs with him in his Kingdom to be changed from human nature to spirit nature in a resurrection like that which highly exalted our great Head. But all such are called upon to demonstrate their loyalty to the Lord by walking in his footsteps. Because of their ignorance, super induced by the great Adversary, the world hated our Master, opposed him, said all manner of evil against him falsely; and he requires that those whom he shall ultimately recognize as members of the glorious Kingdom class shall now attest their loyalty by being so faithful to him, and to the principles of righteousness

for which he suffered, that they will draw upon themselves more or less of the same opposition of the world which he endured.

As his was a most honorable position as the ambassador and representative of the Father, so ours is the same, for he counts us as members of his body, his flesh and his bones. But he forewarns us not to expect worldly appreciation of the high standards of his teaching, but contrarywise, in proportion as we are faithful unto him and the heavenly Kingdom of light in proportion as we let our light so shine that men may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven we will, nevertheless, draw against ourselves the opposing forces of darkness. Our Lord explains this, saying, that the darkness and those who are of the darkness hate the light, and therefore oppose all who are children of the light in proportion as they are faithful representatives of it.

We see, then, that when the prophets spoke "beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow," those sufferings included not only the tribulations upon the Head, Christ Jesus, but those also to be endured by all the members of his body before the ushering in of the Kingdom glories before the change of all the members of the body to the spiritual nature before their shining forth as the sun in the Millennial Kingdom glory, for the blessing of all the

families of the earth with the true light and opportunity for return to harmony with God.

As ambassadors, therefore as representatives of the Lord Jesus, members of his body, bearers of his name we are not to expect under present conditions that our embassy will be highly esteemed among men; rather we should "marvel not if the world hate us, for we know that it hated him before it hated us." (John 15 verse 18; 1 John 3 verse 13). But we are also to remember that an ambassador of a hated government is more critically and unsympathetically watched than under other circumstances, and that such ambassadors would endeavor to be even more careful as respects their every word and action.

This subject may be viewed from still another standpoint. With some the tendency is that whatsoever they do, whether in word or deed, they shall do all in their own name for their own credit, for their own glory. This is a spirit and disposition contrary to those which the Lord is seeking, and he who maintains such a disposition will surely not be accounted worthy of any place in the Kingdom, whatever may be his ultimate end. The class which the Lord is seeking will be composed of those only who have such an appreciation of the Lord and his grace, manifested in their redemption and forgiveness of sins and call to fellowship with him in his suffering and subsequent glory, that they will take delight in crediting all the

honor, all the praise, to him. Not only their honor and praise for salvation, but additionally their credit for any kind deeds or benevolences or services they may be able to render to any. They will be glad to be able to do something in his name to the glory of him who did so much for them. Their sentiment of heart is well expressed in the Apostle's words: "We thus judge, that since one died for all, all were dead, and that we who live should not henceforth live unto ourselves but unto him who died for us" "doing all things in the name of the Lord Jesus."

Another erroneous custom amongst those who have named the name of Christ is that of ignoring his name in favor of some sectarian name. Such as are thus misled consecrate themselves, devote their lives, talents, etc., and spend these talents and opportunities in seeking to glorify the names of human institutions. One does all in the name of Methodism; another in the name of Presbyterianism; another in the name of Lutheranism; another in the name of Roman Catholicism, etc. This is all a mistake. None of these names were ever authorized by the Lord; and who can confidently depend upon it that even the best of works done in these names and for the upbuilding of these institutions, which the Lord and his apostles neither instituted nor authorized, will be accounted of the Lord as just the same as though his admonition through the Apostle had been heeded, "Do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus"?

Another view of the subject is this: many are unauthorizedly using the name of the Lord Jesus in combination with the name of some earthly institution. Mark the words: "Unto the wicked God says, What hast thou to do to take my name into thy mouth, seeing thou hates instruction and casts my words behind thee?" The wicked here are not the worldly wicked, but those who have a form of godliness and deny the power thereof those who draw nigh unto the Lord with their lips while their hearts are far from him. These covenant breakers are the wicked of this text. These the Lord reproves, telling them that they have no right to take his name to attempt to speak in his name and call themselves Christians, to advertise themselves before the world as his representatives and ambassadors, when as a matter of fact he disowns them.

If a sharply dividing line were drawn in the Church, which would place on the one side the sincere believers in the precious blood, begotten of the holy Spirit, and thus recognized of God as his ambassadors, and on the other side of the line all those who are merely nominal Christians and without either ability or authority to act as representatives of the heavenly Kingdom, what a small number it would leave on the Lord's side amenable to the Apostle's words in our text and ready to be influenced by the presentation of them we are here making! There are some who are anxious to get the worldly to sing the song of Zion, to get the worldly to name the name of Christ in religious

profession: but we are not of these. We are anxious to recognize as brethren in the Lord all who hold "the faith once delivered to the saints" faith in the Lord and in the salvation which he is yet to bring to us at his revelation and who on the strength of such faith have presented their bodies living sacrifices to God, and are therefore commissioned of the Lord to be his representatives and to bear his name; but we would be glad indeed to see all others than these discard the precious name which they misrepresent.

Would it seem like a great falling away? We answer that it would affect only the "tare" class, and that all the true "wheat" would be much better off separate from the "tares." It is only the holy class the Lord recognizes as his, anyway. The great mass of professors have neither part nor lot in his present grace. The sooner we learn that at the present time the Lord is choosing out of the world a peculiar people, zealous for his name and delighting to do his will, and that the hope of all others lies in the Millennial Kingdom, with its chastisements and corrections of righteousness and uplifting influences, the greater will be the benefit to ourselves who are seeking to make our calling and election sure to a place in that Kingdom.

Footnote for the November 8th Manna, Exodus 20 verse 7

One of the ten commandments given to the Jews forbade their taking the name of the Lord in vain; and although this commandment was not given to spiritual

Israel, we can readily see how the spirit of it comes to us. The spirit of that commandment applied to us would not relate to profane swearing, cursing, etc., but rather to a misappropriation of the Lord's name. We have taken the name of Christ as our name. We are counted as members of the body of Christ. The holy name of the Head belongs to all the members of the body. The honored name of the Bridegroom belongs to his espoused. What carefulness the thought of this should give us, and how appropriately we should say to ourselves: "I must see to it that I have not taken the Lord's name in vain, that I appreciate the honor, dignity and responsibility of my position as his representative and ambassador in the world. I will walk circumspectly, seeking as far as possible to bring no dishonor to that name, but contrariwise to honor it in every thought and word and deed."

Nothing in this should be understood to mean that our Lord expects from us absolute perfection. He merely expects us to do all in our power to glorify him "in our bodies and our spirits which are his." Nor are we to consider the Apostle to mean that whatsoever things we do, in word or in deed, are all to be done in the name of the Lord Jesus with the hope that by thus doing things well we shall obtain salvation. The thought is really the reverse of this. Those whom the Apostle is addressing are the "saints at Colosse," and the words are applicable today only to a similar class "saints." Only the "saints" are authorized to take the Lord's

name and act as his ambassadors and representatives. And this honorable position came to them because their sins had already been forgiven by the grace of God through faith in the precious blood; and because on the strength of this forgiveness of sins they had been called to membership in the body of Christ which is the Church; and because they had accepted this invitation and presented their bodies living sacrifices to the Lord.

Having thus properly, legally, officially taken the name of Jesus upon us, and having been acknowledged by having had his Spirit shed abroad in our hearts, and having been promised in addition the completion of this work of grace at the close of this age, we seek to speak and to act to his name and to his glory, not in hope of obtaining forgiveness of sins, but because we have obtained divine favor and because we appreciate the same and love him who first loved us. This loving devotion to him whose name we bear must with all "saints" be the power of God, working in us to will and do his good pleasure; to honor his name and to serve his cause to the best of our ability. And the best of our ability, thank God! is accepted in the Beloved as perfection. How gracious are the divine providences! The more we realize these things the more careful and circumspect they will make us, that whatsoever we do, in word or deed, it shall all be done in the name of Jesus and to his glory.