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A table of contents for *The Bible Student* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_bible-student\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bible-student_01.php)

ment, the deliverance and blessings God purposed for His earthly people (Dan. 10:12). 'The prince of the kingdom of Persia',—not the earthly prince but the wicked spirit under Satanic control whose business was to further the interests of the Persian Empire—obstructed the Divine messenger in his mission, with the result that there was a delay of twenty-one days in the answer reaching Daniel (Dan. 10:13-14). Nowhere else do we have an explanation as to why we do not receive an immediate answer to some of our petitions. This Satanic activity, opposed to God, is doubtless responsible for national and international upheavals, and the rise and fall on earth of dictators who defy for a time the living God. Yet those who are called 'the salt of the earth' and 'the light of the world' can have the assurance at all times, 'If God be for us, who can be against us?'

'The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose  
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;  
That soul, though all hell should endeavour to shake,  
I'll never, no never, no never, forsake'.

## 'YE ARE . . . THAT YE MAY BE'

(1 Corinthians 5:7)

DR W. GRAHAM SCROGGIE

There is to be found in these words a threefold message: first, a warning against the subtle power of evil; second, a command to entirely break with evil; and, third, a motive for separation from evil. To each of these let us now turn our thoughts.

**I. A warning against the subtle power of evil.** 'Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?'

1. It is of the utmost importance to an understanding of the force of this warning that we know what are the use and meaning of leaven in Scripture, so let it be said at once that it is uniformly a symbol of evil. On the eve of the Passover all leaven was to be put away from the houses of the Israelites. It was prohibited

in all offerings made to the Lord by fire. Our Lord Himself warned the disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees and Herodians. In Galatians this very expression, 'Purge out the old leaven' is used of false doctrine, as in the text before us, it is used of evil practice.

There is only one passage in Scripture in which leaven might possibly be the symbol of what is good, but a consideration of its use there, in the light of the context, is against that interpretation. I refer to Matt. 13:33, where we read, 'Another parable spake He unto them, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened."' The leaven here has been interpreted as the Gospel which has come to the race, and which is to leaven or Christianize mankind until all are leavened or converted. But the companion parable in this chapter on the Grain of Mustard Seed makes it quite evident that this interpretation is incorrect, and that the leaven here, as everywhere, signifies that which is *evil*, and in this passage possibly the evil, alike of doctrine and of practice, which is to characterize this age toward its close. Let it then be clearly understood that leaven is everywhere a symbol of that which is evil.

2. The Apostle here would impress the Corinthians, and the people of God for all time, of how fatal is the power of tolerating evil. 'A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.' The ordinary leaven consisted of a lump of dough in a high state of fermentation, which was inserted into the mass of dough prepared for baking. Its prominent idea, and the one which applies equally to all the cases of prohibition, is connected with the corruption which leaven itself had undergone, and which it communicated to bread in the process of fermentation. The reference in this passage may be to the influence of the incestuous person (vv. 1-5), but more likely to the disastrous power of evil in any form or measure.

We should distinguish between evil indulged in and evil tolerated, for those who are not guilty of the former are often guilty of the latter. The message of our Lord to the church at Pergamos says, 'I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam . . . so hast

thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes.' You will mark that it does not say these people themselves held those doctrines, but that they had there and tolerated those who did. The sin of which they were guilty was compromise, and this charge, it is to be feared, must be laid at the doors of very many, alike with reference to doctrine and to practice. It cannot be insisted on too often or too strongly that evil tolerated, in any form or measure, will ultimately prove fatal. He who walks in the counsel of the ungodly will come to stand in the way of sinners, and ultimately to sit in the seat of the scornful, and the only way to make sure of escaping the consequences of evil is to entirely separate from the evil itself.

3. The Apostle begins his letter to the Corinthians by saying that they were in everything enriched by God in all utterance and in all knowledge, and yet he reminds them throughout this and the following epistle of the great danger of knowing without knowing. 'Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?' Their knowledge was theoretical and not experimental; it was carnal and not spiritual; it was the knowledge of the head and not of the heart.

Two words are used in the New Testament to convey this distinction: *oida* points to the knowledge which is objective, and *ginoskō* to the knowledge which is subjective. It is terribly possible to give intellectual assent to truth without giving to it our moral consent, and this was the trouble at Corinth. They were enriched in all knowledge, and a reading of the Epistle will reveal in what directions, and in what measure, they were enriched: but their knowledge was outward, and not inward; on the surface, and not in the depths. This is a danger to which Christians are at all times exposed, and it is to be feared that there are still large numbers whose intellectual knowledge is the only measure of their spirituality. Orthodoxy with its proper accompaniments is essential to the fullest and truest life, but orthodoxy separated from ethics is a weight that will sink us, and it is still true of large numbers, 'Your glorying is not good'. May we in our time, and in the circumstances which characterize our day, hear and heed this solemn warning against the subtle power of evil tolerated.

II. But the passage does not stop at a warning, and so we have in the second place, a **command to entirely break with evil**. 'Purge out, therefore, the old leaven that ye may be a new lump as ye are unleavened'.

1. Consider first the nature of this command. We are bidden to be cleansed from all evil, as the Israelites were to get rid of all leaven on the eve of the Passover. There is a great deal of doctrine under cover of New Testament grammar, and the present passage is a good illustration of this fact. The verb here is in the imperative mood, and in the aorist tense and in the active voice, and this means that the command is urgent, that we must not wait, that we cannot afford to postpone or to procrastinate, but that we must act at once with reference to the evil referred to.

I have said that we must act, and the force of the tense here, peculiar to the Greek, is that what is done must be done by *an act*. There are instantaneous and there are progressive operations, but the operation to which we are here exhorted is instantaneous. We are called upon to purge out the old leaven in this hour and in this moment, and to do it with a thoroughness that will enable God to fulfil to us His promises of blessing. It is but added sin on our part to make that progressive which He has made instantaneous. The Apostle, writing to the Ephesians, says: 'let him that stole steal no more.' What would we think of an exhortation that ran: 'let him that stole steal less tomorrow, and less next week, until the habit of stealing is dropped.' Yet no more are we called upon to deal piecemeal with any evil than with the habit of stealing. Purge out the *old leaven*, and do it now, and by an act.

In the next place we have said that the verb is in the active voice. It is something that must be done by ourselves. Some operations belong only to God and some belong only to us. He only can cleanse us with blood, but we must cleanse ourselves with water, and it is to this that we are here exhorted. The progressive operation always rests upon and rises from the instantaneous operation. We read in 2 Cor. 7:1—'Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.'

'Let us cleanse ourselves', in this passage, is in the *aorist* tense, indicating an instantaneous operation: 'Perfecting holiness in the fear of God' is in the present progressive tense, indicating a progressive operation; and the *order* of the sentences indicates the relation of these truths to one another. It is not the process that moves toward the crisis, but it is the crisis that makes possible the process.

And so in the passage before us we are to purge out the old leaven, and that act on our part makes possible all that the feast meant to Israel. No doubt the reference in the text is to the expulsion of the incestuous person of whom the Apostle is writing; but beyond that, it is certainly a command to put away from our midst *all* evil, to do it *at once*, to do it *completely*, and to do it *ourselves*. Is it not true that we are constantly asking God to do for us what He has bidden us do for ourselves? I heard of a domestic servant who went to her minister and asked that he would unite in prayer with her concerning a matter. Asked what it was, she said she would have him pray that when the alarm clock rang in the morning she might be enabled to rise and not roll over and go to sleep again. She seemed greatly surprised when he emphatically declared that he would do nothing of the kind, 'for', he said to her, 'all you have to do is to put your feet on the floor!' God helps him who helps himself, and there is a strict economy of the Divine power. Heaven's resources are not drawn upon to do for us what it is possible for us to do for ourselves.

2. Let us look now at the ground of this command. 'Purge out, therefore, the old leaven that ye may be a new lump as ye are unleavened.' By transposing the two expressions in this verse we get the words, 'Ye are . . . that ye may be.' This is a truth constantly taught in the New Testament. For instance, we read in Eph. 3:8, 'By grace are ye saved through faith;' and in Phil. 2:12, 13, we read, 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.' The first is something that is done and complete, from which nothing can be taken, and to which nothing can be added. It points to the crisis of conversion, to the hour of regeneration; but the second is the process that proceeds from that crisis. We

cannot evolve what is not first involved, but we are bidden to work out what God is working in, and that is a process which should and must continue until the day of our final salvation. In other words, we are to become what we are.

Then again in Hebrews 10, we read, 'By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all,' and in almost the same breath the writer says, 'For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are being sanctified.' Here again we have related to one another the instantaneous and the progressive operations. Once more in 1 Cor. 1:2, we learn that we *are* holy, and yet in 1 Peter 1:15, 16, we are bidden to *become* holy. So in the passage before us it is declared that we as Christians are 'unleavened,' and that is made the ground of the exhortation to us to be 'unleavened.' This is a distinction that must be clearly made and borne in mind if we are to understand, on the one hand, many apparently contradictory passages in the New Testament, and, on the other hand, many strange anomalies in the life of Christians. It is, in fact, the distinction which must be drawn between our standing in Christ and our walk in the Spirit; between what is judicial and what experimental; between what Christ has done for us and what He is willing to do in us; between the work of the Blood and the work of the Word; between union and communion. Nothing can affect our standing in Christ, or alter the judicial relation we bear to God through Christ's atoning work, or destroy in any way the significance of what Christ has done for us, or render less sure the work of His blood, or interfere with our union with Him; yet of all this we may be perfectly sure, and never go on to know on the experimental side what is His great and gracious purpose for us, by the action of the Word and the operation of the Spirit bringing us into holy and happy fellowship with Himself. By this distinction the prevalent discrepancy between the profession and the practice of many Christians is accounted for. The whole philosophy of Christian living consists in our becoming what we are.

III. Look now in the third place at **the motive for separation from evil**. 'Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the Feast.'

1. It is most important to understand the typical significance of the Feast. This Feast of unleavened bread commemorated the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, and its spiritual equivalent commences with and commemorates our deliverance from the kingdom of Satan. The Feast lasted for seven days. This is the number of completeness and typifies our whole life course here below.

2. What, then, was and is the relation of the Passover to the Feast? A careful examination of Ex. 12, and relative passages, will give us to see that it was the occasion and strength of the Feast. Redemption is the basis of holiness. There is no Feast where there is no Passover. There is no holy life where there is no Cross. As the Feast began on the day the lamb was slain, so the new and true life dates only from that time when we come under shelter of the Blood, and we should understand that not to keep the Feast is to deny or despise the Passover.

3. How then is the Feast to be observed? 'Not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth'. That is, by living a holy life, and by separation from all evil. For not keeping the Feast as ordained, we shall be held answerable to God. The observance of the Feast is not in order to obtain our salvation, but because we are saved, and if we do not keep the Feast our security is not affected but our fellowship is. Salvation is by our being under the Blood; communion is by our being 'unleavened'. Here, then, is a message of the most urgent importance to the people of God. On every hand we see laxity, alike of doctrine and of practice, which is most alarming, an indifference to the claims of Christ and a widespread ignorance of the implications of our Christian profession, and it is this that sufficiently explains our ineffectiveness in the service of Christ. We must be clean, for we are the vessels of the Lord. We must faithfully and fearlessly deal with all known evil, alike in our hearts, and homes, and churches, and businesses, and all our prayer for revival will be worse than useless unless we come to grips with that which hinders God's pouring out His blessing upon us. But this once done, there is no good which He will withhold.