**By What Authority?**

SW November 12, 1907

It was the last days of the Saviour's life on earth. The crucifixion was just at hand. But Jesus taught in the temple, “and the blind and the lame came to him,” and “he healed them.” Now “when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David, they were sore displeased.” “And they spake unto him, saying Tell us, by what authority doest thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority?” SW November 12, 1907, par. 1

Christ answered them by asking a question. “I also will ask you one thing,” he said, “which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?” SW November 12, 1907, par. 2

The priests and rulers were perplexed. “They reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.” SW November 12, 1907, par. 3

In his wonderful deeds of healing, Christ had answered the question of the priests and elders. He had given them evidence of his authority which could not be controverted. But it was not evidence that they wished. They were anxious that he should proclaim himself as possessing divine authority, that they might misapply his words, and stir up the people against him. They wished to destroy his influence and put him to death. SW November 12, 1907, par. 4

Christ knew that if this people could not recognize God in him, they would not believe his assurance that he was the Christ. They had seen the sick healed, and the dead raised to life. They had witnessed the resurrection of Lazarus after he had been in the grave four days. The moral supremacy of Christ was revealed in all his words, in every work of love and power, but they recognized it not. They thought to take him by guile, and cause him to speak something that they could use to his condemnation. But Christ not only evaded the issue they hoped to bring about, but turned the condemnation upon them. In the purity and self-denial of John's life, they had felt the power of God. Conviction had been sent to every soul. If they would not heed John's warning, they would not heed the words of Christ. SW November 12, 1907, par. 5

John had preached the coming of the Messiah. In trumpet tones the works of the forerunner of Christ had rung in their ears: “There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears; but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips, shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loin and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. SW November 12, 1907, par. 6

“He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him. For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak. According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompense to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompense. So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord.” SW November 12, 1907, par. 7

For ages the people of Israel had been separating themselves from God, and they had lost sight of precious truths which he had committed to them. Now they refused to do the work which God had appointed them in revealing Christ to an apostate world. They professed to be anxious to know the will of God, but they rejected the evidence that Jesus was the Messiah, which was given them in such abundance. SW November 12, 1907, par. 8

We have before us the example of the Jewish nation, who jealously cherished their self-righteousness. They had not that faith which works by love, and purifies the soul from all defilement. SW November 12, 1907, par. 10

The truths of the Bible have again become obscured by custom, tradition, and false doctrine. The erroneous teachings of popular theology have made thousands of skeptics and infidels. There are errors and inconsistencies which many denounce as the teaching of the Bible, that are really false interpretations of Scripture adopted during the ages of papal darkness. Multitudes have been led to cherish an erroneous conception of God, as the Jews, misled by the errors and traditions of their time, had a false conception of Christ. “Had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.” SW November 12, 1907, par. 11

Let those who hear the message God sends today beware lest they follow the example of the self-exalted Jews. It is ours to reveal to the world the true character of God. Instead of criticising the Bible, let us seek, by precept and example, to present to the world its sacred, life-giving truths, that we may “show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.” SW November 12, 1907, par. 12