

*The Camp
as it was and
will be*



EDINBURGH

R. M. CAMERON, 22 ST. GILES' ST.

Price One Penny.

PRICE PER 100, 6/3.

THE CAMP AS IT WAS
AND WILL BE,
AND CHRISTIANITY AS DISTINCT
FROM EITHER.

THE Scriptures read were Lev. xvi. 27, and Heb. xiii. 10-14.

Second Peter, chap. iii., gives us the outline of God's dealings with creation in three divisions. There are the heavens and the earth *that were*, which have been destroyed by water—the Flood; the heavens and the earth which are now, which are reserved unto fire; and the future, or the new heavens and the new

earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. These will last for ever.

We are not to speak of the heavens and the earth which have been, nor of those which are to be, but of the heavens and the earth which now are. With these we have specially to do, and we find them again divided into three distinct parts:—the camp that *was* established on earth, embracing the days of Judaism; the camp that will be, spoken of in Rev. xx. 9; and Christianity, which comes in between these periods. It is with it we have to do—not with the camp as it was, not as it will be. We are in the days of Christianity.

Scripture is most plain in defining these things, and if one is but simple and obedient he may know the truth and how to walk in it.

I will now seek to trace the establishment of the camp as it was, when God set it up at first—*i.e.*, of the system or order of things technically called Judaism (Gal. ii. 14). Leaving the false religious systems which man has built up may be mistaken for “going outside the camp;” but when the camp was first instituted, it was not a false human system, but a divine one. The camp was then the only right, the only blessed place on earth, so that the thought of leaving the systems of man for liberty of ministry or the like, does not necessarily touch the kernel of the truth. For you may leave all these and carry with you the spirit of the thing you profess to leave and rear it up again in your very midst. The camp was the proposition

by a God-given machinery for the improvement of the first man—man in the flesh. The camp was God's meeting-place with man in the flesh. Christ is now the only meeting-place between God and man; but it is with the Christian, and not with man in the flesh. The history of man in the flesh came to an end in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. God's dealings with Him are over, and it is unto Jesus we go forth—the man on the other side of death: who was in death, but is now in glory. God now only recognises Christ the second man. It is outside the camp you meet Him. He “suffered without the gate” (Heb. xiii. 12). Christianity has reference to Christ and to man *in the spirit*, not in the flesh in any way. The Apostle says, “Wherefore henceforth

know we no man after the flesh : yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more" (2 Cor. v. 16). The flesh therefore must be ignored by the one who goes forth unto Jesus outside the camp.

Let us look at the camp as instituted by God at the first. What was it then, and what has its history been? As instituted by God it was beautiful, but in man's hands it became horrible. It was the most beautiful place—a scene of beauty and order, and designed to be so by God. To prove this I refer you to Num. v. 2, 3, "Command the children of Israel that they put out of the camp every leper, and every one that hath an issue, and whosoever is defiled by the dead: that they defile

not their camps, *in the midst of which I dwell.*" Then in Deut. xxiii. 10 we have fuller instruction as to the character to be maintained in the camp, "If there be among you *any* man that is not clean, then shall he go abroad out of the camp, he shall not come within the camp; for the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, therefore shall thy camp be holy; that He see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee." If obedient to this, the Lord promised to deliver the children of Israel from their enemies (verses 9-14). The camp was the dwelling-place of God and His parade-ground. God walked there, so there must not be a speck of defilement in the camp; and if purity had been maintained, this Scripture tells what God would

have been to Israel. The camp was the place where God, so to speak, took man in hand, to train him, and prove if by a divine institution and His own commandments anything could be made of man. The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ tells what the result of this trial was. The Jews, spite of all these privileges, preferred the robber Barabbas to the Son of God.

The first break-down in the camp we find recorded in the 32d chapter of Exodus. When Israel made a calf of gold and worshipped it as God, Aaron, that he might be a popular man, fell in with the desire of the people. Man's will worked—that was the root of the evil: the foundation of everything went, and Israel dishonoured God *in toto*. Instead of the command, “Thou

shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve," the word went through the camp, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which *brought thee out of the land of Egypt.*" This was the break-down before God, and "the Lord plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made," but His mercy endured towards Israel, and Moses proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin;" and thus the system was kept going. God by this means kept the camp together in order to show that with man in the flesh nothing could be done. Corruption and failure went on till, in Amos iv.

10, we read, "I have made the stink of your camps to come up into *your* nostrils." It had done so in the nostrils of God in Ex. xxxii.; but in Amos iv. the wickedness is so great that it is abhorrent to the very people who corrupted it. There is no capacity in man to recover himself. You may put a fine gloss upon corruption, but that does not remove the root of the evil. It is there still. Man in the flesh is utterly bad; death must be his portion, through death recovery by Christ. The death of Christ has ended the history of the first man, and out of His death has arisen the man that can bear fruit to God. Israel's fall was complete, but they would not own it, nor turn to God. Had they done so, He would have

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had mercy on them and set them right. They were a stiff-necked people. He gave them laws, and said if they would do them they should live in them, but it was to no purpose. There was no good in man, nor any ability to do good. It is the same still; and if God has failed to improve man in the flesh, need we spend time trying to do so? Christianity begins with Christ the Second Man. His death ended the first man, and death must be written on the flesh and all its workings by those who believe in Him and go forth unto Jesus now.

But the camp will again be set up. Of this we read in Rev. xx. 9. Then the camp will stand and not fall as did the camp of Israel. Though even then it will not be a perfect

order of things, yet integrity will be maintained by the manifested glory of Christ, not by the beauty or perfection of man in the flesh. For a thousand years it will be so, and then Satan will again come and seek to destroy the camp. Speedily he carried his point in the camp of Israel, but when he comes with all the strength he can command against "the camp of the saints," he will himself be destroyed. The glory of Christ will be the victory that day.

There are two verses in Lev. xvi. which reveal to us the means by which God could keep the camp of Israel going, after it had broken down before Him. We should not have been able to tell their meaning had not the Spirit of God interpreted them for us in Heb. xiii. On the

great day of Atonement, Aaron offered the bullock and the goat for the sin-offering *without the camp*, and their blood was brought into the holy place. The verses I refer to are the 27th and 28th of Lev. collapsed from its first failure. It xvi., and but for this ordinance the whole Jewish system would have been a failing system, but kept together by virtue of that which took place *outside* the camp. This went on till the antitype of the bullock and goat of the sin-offering, the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; and as the saving ordinance, whose efficacy affected all the camp of Israel, was offered outside the camp, so the Lord Jesus, the antitype of this, "suffered outside the gate." That which preserved the camp in its existence,

was an act done outside its precincts, and it pointed to Him who should suffer the cursed death on the cross, that death which is to be the basis of everything when righteousness will reign in the camp of the saints, and the glory of the Second Man, the Lord from heaven, will be manifested. Am I then to go back to that system which has come to an end (Heb. ix. 26), or reintroduce principles and shadows which found their fulfilment in the cross *thereon* and the work of Christ? Heb. xiii. 12.

Christianity gives us a heavenly, not an earthly, order of things. The cross of Christ is the end of the system that was, and through it are introduced the things that now are. It puts me outside the camp and all

its types, but it puts me also inside the veil, where Jesus is, who died on the cross. It is with Christ, in the glory of God, I have to do. I am by the Holy Ghost linked up with Him.

You may try Revivalism, Teetotalism, anything you like, but these have to say to the first man. You will find all such things fail. Do not seek to recover the man God has ceased to deal with, on whom death is stamped, and not recovery. God went fully into all that which people are now in vain seeking to do. He used a divine system when He made trial of man, and it failed. Will you succeed better, when you have only human means at your command? You must fail, and the sooner you believe it the better. You must begin at the

cross of Christ, and from thence go on with Christ and Christianity.

Christianity begins with Him who glorified God on the cross, and by whom God was more glorified as to sin than if sin had never been in the world. As a Christian, I am outside the camp with Jesus, the One who suffered for sin without the gate. I must bear His reproach. There must be reproach. I must share Christ's fortunes. If I am linked with his glory, I must accept His rejection. From man, or for man in the flesh, I must seek nothing. But is this the spirit of the Church in general at this moment? The moral features of apostasy which crept into the Jewish camp until it reached the picture in Amos iv. 10 (2 Thess. ii.), are flagrant now in Christianity.

They exist in the generation that is, as they did in the generation that is past (Ps. lxxviii.) You may call the people Jewish or Christian, it is all the same—you find similar principles at work. The professing Church has not set aside that which God judged on the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. The first man is rampant even in Evangelicalism: God's judgment on man in the flesh is not accepted by it as a system. The forgiveness of sins they are glad to have, and this gives peace of conscience—but this is not holiness. Nothing will give holiness but that which sets the flesh aside and brings in Christ. In Rom. v. you have forgiveness, but there is not a word about holiness; but in Rom. vi., where death with Christ is brought out, you find holi-

ness enforced. "He that is dead is freed from sin." "Let not sin reign in your mortal body." "Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead." "Yield your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." It is important to see that till death is accepted, and self seen to have no place, there cannot be holiness; happiness there may be, but Christianity is more than that. "It is *Holiness*, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. xii.) It does not say, without happiness. There should be happiness, but holiness is the thing that is sought. God looks for this in His people, and it is inseparably linked up with the acceptance of death on self and the workings of the flesh.

Let us now see how the Church departed from this line, and how failure came in.

In Acts xv. 5 there is manifestly the desire to bring in that which recognised the flesh as having place in the things of God. It was *believers* who did the mischief. "Then rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees *which believed*, saying that it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses." It was Gentile Christians upon whom those burdens were imposed; but how does the Apostle act with reference to the proposal? Verses 10 to 19 show. He treats it as seeking to subvert their souls. The departure began with the introduction of that which was Mosaic—adding Moses to Christ; and to add

thus was to spoil. This could not be tolerated by the Apostle; but mark, it was *believers* who did it, and it is believers to-day who are diverted from the simplicity that is in Christ. The Epistle to the Galatians shows how the evil worked, and in what strong language it was condemned. It is even called another gospel, this mixing up of Moses and Christ. It is this spirit we have to watch against in our own day. The little sprout soon grows into a luxuriant branch. You may say there is no fear, but there is every cause to fear. If you fear, then there is no fear; but if you do not fear, you will fall most certainly. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." "Our God is a consuming fire." Moses' God was not so pre-eminently. Hebrews xii.

22-29 does not end with the blood that speaketh better things than that of Abel, but it goes on to the shaking of all things and the consuming fire. He is set on the destruction of that which is sown in the flesh. "He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." It is the fashion in some places to give out that Christianity is for the sinner, and thus God is forgotten; but God has His part in Christianity. The sinner is blest most surely, but it is the goodness of God he is brought to share. It is the glad tidings of the love of God's heart that goes forth. The prodigal hears them, and he is brought to feed with God upon His food. It is God's food that is shared—God must not be forgotten. The whole of the fat, the excellent part

of the offering, was for God. Let us then take heed lest we spoil that which God looks for as His part in Christianity. It was the Pharisees who believed who led the vanguard of defection in Acts xv.; and in Gal. ii. it is an apostle who dissembled and led another to do the same. Peter had given up Judaism, and yet he sought to carry the Gentile converts back to it. Paul withstood him to the face. These early records of Christianity need not surprise us, for we see the same thing occurring now. It requires the continuous energy of the Spirit of God to go on. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." It may be a difficult thing to put right, but it is not less difficult to keep right. The enemy is ever on the watch, and we

are so unsteady, We get a glimpse of Christ for a moment, but strength lies in having Him ever as "the mark" before us. To this we are called. To have the eye ever and only on Christ. With the Apostle Paul it was so. "I press toward the mark for the prize of the calling on high" (Phil. iii.) Peter was losing this singleness of heart and aim, and he was leading others with him; but the reproof entered his soul. Paul stands out as the only one who maintained the glory of Christ against those who would have brought in with Him something else.

In Gal. iv. 9 we read, "How turn ye *again* to the weak and beggarly elements whereunto ye desire *again* to be in bondage?" (Gal. iv. 9.) It was to Gentiles who had professed

Christianity the Apostle spoke thus, "Why turn ye *again*?" but it was Gentileism they left! Now they were adding Jewish principles to their profession of Christ, and the Apostle classes it as a return to heathenism—"again—anew." "If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." The introduction of that which was of the camp into Christianity, or seeking to improve the first man, is that which forms the camp now which we have to beware of.

Col. ii. 1 shows how earnestly the Apostle desired the saints might be preserved from all that savoured of the camp, and grow up fully into the full truth of Christianity, "I would ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea; that their hearts might be comforted, being

knit together in love, and unto all riches of the *full assurance of understanding*, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, *in which* are hid *all* the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." They had doubtless the full assurance of faith and of hope; but what they needed, that they might stand in the truth of Christianity, was the *full assurance of understanding*, the full knowledge of the mystery of God—*i.e.*, the present connection of the saint with Christ. It is the knowledge of the mystery alone that will keep one out of evil now. In the 2nd chapter of Colossians we find that by which we may be carried off the true ground of Christianity, or, as it is expressed, "made a spoil of." When the sportsman has made the game

his own, he takes it off the field and carries it home, and so the enemy of Christ now seeks to lead souls from simple occupation with Christ. Thus they become his prey, and are taken from the ground of Christianity, and that ends in apostasy and infidelity.

There are two highways which lead from the profession of Christianity to that of open infidelity. These are Rationalism and Ritualism—or, in other words, the philosophy of the mind of man in the flesh, and the religiousness of his nature. These two will bring in the apostasy of the last days. There are many Christians, and true believers too, who have not the knowledge of the “mystery.” They have been made a spoil of, and are not really on the ground of Christianity. Clever men

there are amongst them, who can lecture well and preach beautifully ; but it is the mind and wisdom of the first man that is at work in all that is short of Christianity. It is not Christ simply, nor the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, which are hid in the mystery of God. *All* real knowledge, all spiritual teaching, is linked up with the truth of the mystery. That which is popular to-day is not coupled with bearing His reproach who suffered outside the gate. It is unto Jesus, *outside* the camp, we are to go forth. The spirit of the camp cannot be added to Christ. The shadows which pointed to Him must not again be brought in. Now we have the substance — “The body is of Christ.” We no longer need the shadow : the

fulfilment is ours in Him who is the Head in heaven of His body, of which we are on earth the members. To know the connection between the members of His body with Christ the Head in heaven, and to walk as such, was the truth which the Colossian saints were in danger of losing. We stand in danger now of letting it slip from us. The word of God must be allowed to judge us, and not the reason of man. "Let no man judge you," says the Apostle. Do not be made a spoil of. Let not the enemy carry you off divine ground. Christ the Head in heaven, and man in the Spirit, is the truth you have to maintain. Seek grace to walk in the power of that. What characterised Judaism is that which we must avoid. "Beware lest your minds should be cor-

rupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." If dead with Christ, you *are* out of the old thing—you *are* risen with Christ, and you must not revive that which has now no place in the Divine presence. Your standing is in Christ in heaven, and in the Spirit on earth. You have now to do with the things where Christ is, and to "walk in newness of life."

From 2 Thess. ii. we learn that there is to be an apostasy, and not a wide-spread reception of the gospel of Christ. There will be the abandonment of even the profession of Christianity before the ushering in of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, or, in other words, before the establishment of the millennium. Such is not the general belief, but it is what Scripture plainly

teaches. "That day shall not come except there be a falling away first" (2 Thess. ii. 3). What, then, are we to do? Verse 15 tells us—"Stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle." Remember what the Apostle Paul has said. Hold to the truth of the mystery, and to "the full assurance of understanding therein."

In Ezekiel we see, chap. xliii., the camp will again be reinstated on the earth; and you ask, what about the sin-offering then? It will be offered, but not *outside* the camp, as in Lev. xvi. Christ will then be the centre of all things. "In the dispensation of the fulness of times, He (God) will gather together in one all things in Christ." The camp will be under

the sway of the Lord Jesus, then the acknowledged Messiah of Israel, and the savour of His name will spread to earth's utmost bounds.

Divine order in the camp will be maintained by the presence of the glory of Christ; and the bullock and goat of the sin-offering, *commemorative* of Him who suffered the sacrifice for sin outside the gates of Jerusalem, will be offered *in* the house, outside the most holy place, in the appointed place (Ezek. xliii. 21).

This seems in keeping with the place Christ will then have as Head and Centre of all things. Still even the millennium is not a final and perfect order of things. It belongs only to the second great division of 2 Pet. iii. The new heavens and new earth are beyond it; and so, it would seem,

the sin-offering, while offered *in* the house, is still without the sanctuary. In Rev. v. 6 we get further on, for the Lamb, as it were slain, is in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts and of the elders. The centre and support of the whole system of divine glory is Himself, my title to be there.

The pillar and support of the millennial camp will be the Divine glory of the Lord Jesus Christ; but we are in the days of Christianity, and it is unto Jesus, who suffered without the gate, that we go forth. In fellowship with His rejection, we bear His reproach.

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