



**Smithsonian Institution**

*National Museum of African American History and Culture*

## **The Teacher Vol. 52 No. 1**

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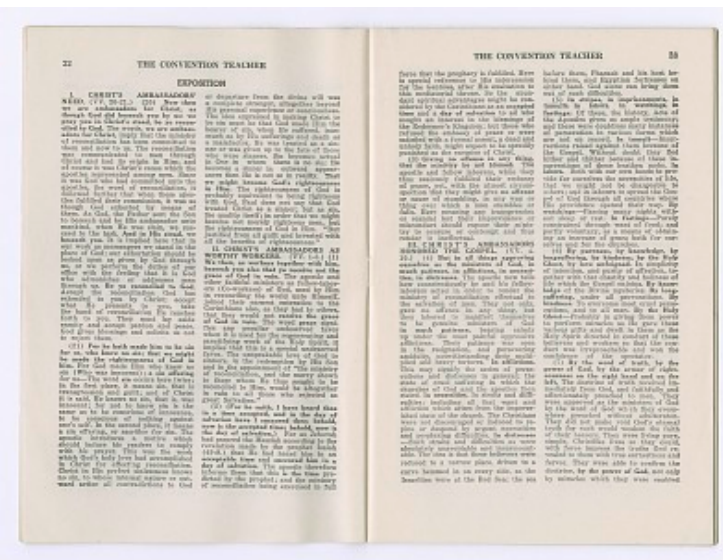
## THE CONVENTION TEACHER

## EXPOSITION

I. CHRIST'S AMBASSADORS' NEED. (VV. 20-21.) (20) Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. The words, we are ambassadors for Christ, imply that the ministry of reconciliation has been committed to them and now to us. The reconciliation was communicated to men through Christ and had its origin in Him; and of course it was Christ's cause which the apostles represented among men. Since it was God who had committed unto the apostles, the word of reconciliation, it followed further that when those apostles fulfilled their commission, it was as though God exhorted by means of them. As God, the Father sent the Son to beseech and be His ambassador unto mankind, when He was slain, we succeeded to the task. And in His stead, we beseech you. It is implied here that in our work as messengers we stand in place of God; our exhortation should be looked upon as given by God through us, or we perform the duties of our office with the feeling that it is God who admonishes or addresses men through us. Be ye reconciled to God. Accept the reconciliation God has extended to you by Christ; accept what He presents to you, take the hand of reconciliation He reaches forth to you. They must lay aside enmity and accept pardon and peace. God gives blessings and solicits us not to reject them.

(21) For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. For God made Him who knew no sin (Who was innocent); a sin offering for us -- The word sin occurs here twice; in the first place, it means sin, that is transgression and guilt; and of Christ it is said, He knows no sin, that is, was innocent; for not to know sin is the same as to be conscious of innocence, to be conscious of nothing against one's self. In the second place, it means a sin offering, or sacrifice for sin. The apostle introduces a motive which should induce his readers to comply with his prayer. This was the work which God's holy love had accomplished in Christ for effecting reconciliation. Christ in His perfect sinlessness knows no sin, to whose internal nature or outward action all contradictions to God or departure from the divine will was a complete stranger, altogether beyond His personal experience or consciousness. The idea expressed in making Christ to be sin must be that God made Him the bearer of sin, when He suffered, inasmuch as by His sufferings and death as a malefactor, He was treated as a sinner or was given up to the fate of those who were sinners. Sin becomes actual in One in whom there is no sin; He becomes a sinner in outward appearance then He is not so in reality. That we might become God's righteousness in Him. The righteousness of God is probably equivalent to being righteous with God. Paul does not say that God treated Christ as a sinner; but as sin, the quality itself; in order that we might become not merely righteous men, but the righteousness of God in Him. "But justified from all guilt and invested with all the benefits of righteousness."

II. CHRIST'S AMBASSADORS AS WORTHY WORKERS. (VV. 1-3.) (1) We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. The apostle and other faithful ministers as fellow-laborers (Co-workers) of God, used by Him in reconciling the world unto Himself, joined their earnest entreaties to the



Corinthians also, as they had to others, that they would not receive the grace of God in vain. The word grace signifies any peculiar undeserved favor when it is used for the regenerating and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, it implies that this is a special undeserved favor. The unspeakable love of God to sinners, in the redemption by His Son and in the appointment of "the ministry of reconciliation, and the mercy shown to those whom He thus sought to be reconciled to Him, would be altogether in vain to all those who rejected so great Salvation."

(2) (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee; behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.) For as Jehovah had assured the Messiah according to the revelation made by the prophet Isaiah (49:8.) that He had heard him in an acceptable time and succored him in a day of salvation. The apostle therefore informs them that this is the time predicted by the prophet; and the ministry of reconciliation being exercised in full

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force that the prophecy fulfilled. Here is special reference to His intercession for the Gentiles, after His exaltation to this mediatorial throne. So the abundant spiritual advantages might be considered by the Corinthians as an accepted time and a day of salvation to all who sought an interest in the blessings of the Redeemer's Kingdom; but those who refused the embassy of peace or were satisfied with a formal assent, a dead and unholy faith, might expect to be speedily punished as the enemies of Christ.

(3) Giving no offense in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed: The apostle and fellow laborers, while they thus zealously fulfilled their embassy of peace, yet, with the utmost circumspection that they might give no offense or cause of stumbling, in any way or thing over which a man stumbles or falls. Here meaning any transgression or scandal lest their improvidence or misconduct should expose their ministry to censure or contempt and thus render it ineffectual.

(III.) CHRIST'S AMBASSADORS HONORED THE GOSPEL. (VV. 4-10.)

(4) But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses. The apostle now tells how conscientiously he and his fellow laborers acted in order to render the ministry of reconciliation effectual to the salvation of men. They not only, gave no offence in any thing, but they labored to manifest themselves to be genuine ministers of God in much patience, bearing calmly up under the most painful oppressive afflictions. Their patience was seen in the resignation, and persevering assiduity, notwithstanding their multiplied and heavy tortures. In afflictions. This may signify the series of persecutions and distresses in general; the state of cruel suffering in which the churches of God and the apostles then stated. In necessities. In straits and difficulties; including all that want and affliction which arises from the impoverished state of the church. The Christians were not discouraged or induced to repine or despond by urgent necessities and perplexing difficulties. In distresses -- Such traits and difficulties were absolutely unavoidable and insurmountable. The idea is that these believers were reduced to a narrow place, driven to a curve

hemmed in on every side, as the Israelites were at the Red Sea; the sea before them, Pharaoh and his host behind them, and Egyptian fortresses on either hand. God alone can bring them out of such difficulties.

(5) In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings; Of these, the history, Acts of the Apostles gives us ample testimony; and there were doubtless many instances of persecution in various forms which are not on record. In tumult -- Insurrections raised against them because of the Gospel. Without doubt they fled hither and thither because of these insurrections of these heathen mobs. In labors. Both with our hands to provide for ourselves the necessities of life, that we might not be chargeable to others; and in labours to spread the Gospel of God through all countries where His providence opened their way. By watchings -- Passing many nights without sleep or rest. In fastings -- Purely constrained through want of food; and partly voluntary, as a means of obtaining an increase of grace both of ourselves and for the churches.

(6) By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned. In simplicity of intention, and purity of affection, together with that chastity and holiness of life which the Gospel enjoins. By knowledge of the Divine mysteries. By longsuffering, under all provocations. By kindness. To overcome most cruel persecutions, and to all men. By the Holy Ghost -- Probably in giving them power to perform miracles as He gave these various gifts and dwelt in them as the Holy Spirit directed in conduct of these believers and workers so that the conduct was irreproachable and won the confidence of the spectator.

(7) By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, The doctrine of truth received immediately from God, and faithfully and affectionately preached to men. They were approved as ministers of God by the word of God which they everywhere preached without adulteration. They did not make void God's eternal truth for such would weaken the faith of their hearers. They were living pure, simple, Christlike lives so they could, with force impress the truths God revealed to them with true earnestness and fervor. They were able to confirm the doctrine, by the power of God, not only by miracles which they were enabled

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