

Monergism



# THE ARTHUR PINK

## ANTHOLOGY

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# The Arthur Pink Anthology

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## **1 John 2:2**

THERE is one passage more than any other which is I appealed to by those who believe in universal redemption, and which at first sight appears to teach that Christ died for the whole human race. We have therefore decided to give it a detailed examination and exposition.

"And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2). This is the passage which, apparently, most favors the Arminian view of the Atonement, yet if it be considered attentively it will be seen that it does so only in appearance, and not in reality. Below we offer a number of conclusive proofs to show that this verse does not teach that Christ has propitiated God on behalf of all the sins of all men.

In the first place, the fact that this verse opens with "and" necessarily links it with what has gone before. We, therefore, give a literal word for word translation of 1 John 2:1 from Bagster's Interlinear: "Little children my, these things I write to you, that ye may not sin; and if any one should sin, a Paraclete we have with the Father, Jesus Christ (the) righteous." It will thus be seen that the apostle John is here writing to and about the saints of God. His immediate purpose was two-fold: first, to communicate a message that would keep God's children from sinning; second, to supply comfort and assurance to those who might sin, and, in consequence, be cast down and fearful that the issue would prove fatal. He, therefore, makes known to them the provision which God has made for just such an emergency. This we find at the end of verse 1 and throughout verse 2. The ground of comfort is twofold: let the downcast and repentant believer (1 John 1:9) be assured that, first, he has an "Advocate with the Father;" second, that this Advocate is "the propitiation for our sins" Now believers only may take comfort from this, for they alone have an

"Advocate," for them alone is Christ the propitiation, as is proven by linking the Propitiation ("and") with "the Advocate!"

In the second place, if other passages in the New Testament which speak of "propitiation," he compared with 1 John 2:2, it will be found that it is strictly limited in its scope. For example, in Romans 3:25 we read that God set forth Christ "a propitiation through faith in His blood." If Christ is a propitiation "through faith," then He is not a "propitiation" to those who have no faith! Again, in Hebrews 2:17 we read, "To make propitiation for the sins of the people." (Heb. 2:17, R. V.)

In the third place, who are meant when John says, "He is the propitiation for our sins?" We answer, Jewish believers. And a part of the proof on which we base this assertion we now submit to the careful attention of the reader.

In Galatians 2:9 we are told that John, together with James and Cephas, were apostles "unto the circumcision" (i.e. Israel). In keeping with this, the Epistle of James is addressed to "the twelve tribes, which are scattered abroad" (1:1). So, the first Epistle of Peter is addressed to "the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion" (1 Pet. 1:1, R. V.). And John also is writing to saved Israelites, but for saved Jews and saved Gentiles.

Some of the evidences that John is writing to saved Jews are as follows. (a) In the opening verse he says of Christ, "Which we have seen with our eyes.... and our hands have handled." How impossible it would have been for the Apostle Paul to have commenced any of his epistles to Gentile saints with such language!

(b) "Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning" (1 John 2:7). The "beginning" here referred to is the beginning of the public manifestation of Christ—in proof compare 1:1; 2:13, etc. Now these believers the apostle tells us, had the "old commandment" from the



beginning. This was true of Jewish believers, but it was not true of Gentile believers.

(c) "I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known Him from the beginning" (2:13). Here, again, it is evident that it is Jewish believers that are in view.

(d) "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us" (2:18, 19).

These brethren to whom John wrote had "heard" from Christ Himself that Antichrist should come (see Matthew 24). The "many antichrists" whom John declares "went out from us" were all Jews, for during the first century none but a Jew posed as the Messiah. Therefore, when John says "He is the propitiation for our sins" he can only mean for the sins of Jewish believers.\*

In the fourth place, when John added, "And not for ours only, but also for the whole world", he signified that Christ was the propitiation for the sins of Gentile believers too, for, as previously shown, "the world" is a term contrasted from Israel. This interpretation is unequivocally established by a careful comparison of 1 John 2:2 with John 11:51, 52, which is a strictly parallel passage: "And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; And not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." Here Caiaphas, under inspiration, made known for whom Jesus should "die." Notice now the correspondency of his prophecy with this declaration of John's:

"He is the propitiation for our (believing Israelites) sins."

"He prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation."

"And not for ours only." "And not for that nation only."

"But also for the whole world"—That is, Gentile believers scattered throughout the earth.

"He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad."

In the fifth place, the above interpretation is confirmed by the fact that no other is consistent or intelligible. If the "whole world" signifies the whole human race, then the first clause and the "also" in the second clause are absolutely meaningless. If Christ is the propitiation for everybody, it would be idle tautology to say, first, "He is the propitiation for our sins and also for everybody." There could be no "also" if He is the propitiation for the entire human family. Had the apostle meant to affirm that Christ is a universal propitiation he had omitted the first clause of verse 2, and simply said, "He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world." Confirmatory of "not for ours (Jewish believers) only, but also for the whole world"—Gentile believers, too; compare John 10:16; 17:20.

In the sixth place, our definition of "the whole world" is in perfect accord with other passages in the New Testament. For example: "Whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the Gospel; which is come unto you, as it is in all the world" (Col. 1:5, 6). Does "all the world" here mean, absolutely and unqualifiedly, all mankind? Had all the human family heard the Gospel? No; the apostle's obvious meaning is that, the Gospel, instead of being confined to the land of Judea, had gone abroad, without restraint, into Gentile lands. So in Romans 1:8: "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world". The apostle is here referring to the faith of these Roman saints being spoken of in a way of commendation. But certainly all mankind did not so speak of their faith! It was the whole world of believers that he was referring to! In Revelation 12:9 we read of Satan "which deceiveth the whole world." But again this expression cannot be understood as a universal one, for Matthew 24:24 tells us that Satan

does not and cannot "deceive" God's elect. Here it is "the whole world" of unbelievers.

In the seventh place, to insist that "the whole world" in 1 John 2:2 signifies the entire human race is to undermine the very foundations of our faith. If Christ is the propitiation for those that are lost equally as much as for those that are saved, then what assurance have we that believers too may not be lost? If Christ is the propitiation for those now in hell, what guarantee have I that I may not end in hell? The blood-shedding of the incarnate Son of God is the only thing which can keep any one out of hell, and if many for whom that precious blood made propitiation are now in the awful place of the damned, then may not that blood prove inefficacious for me! Away with such a God-dishonoring thought.

However men may quibble and wrest the Scriptures, one thing is certain: The Atonement is no failure. God will not allow that precious and costly sacrifice to fail in accomplishing, completely, that which it was designed to effect. Not a drop of that holy blood was shed in vain. In the last great Day there shall stand forth no disappointed and defeated Saviour, but One who "shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied" (Isa. 53:11). These are not our words, but the infallible assertion of Him who declares, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure" (Isa. 64:10). Upon this impregnable rock we take our stand. Let others rest on the sands of human speculation and twentieth-century theorizing if they wish. That is their business. But to God they will yet have to render an account. For our part we had rather be railed at as a narrow-minded, out-of-date, hyper-Calvinist, than be found repudiating God's truth by reducing the Divinely-efficacious atonement to a mere fiction.

## **Another Gospel**

SATAN is not an initiator but an imitator. God has an only begotten Son—the Lord Jesus, so has Satan—"the son of Perdition" (2 Thess. 2:3). There is a Holy Trinity, and there is likewise a Trinity of Evil (Rev. 20:10). Do we read of the "children of God," so also we read of "the children of the wicked one" (Matthew 13:38). Does God work in the former both to will and to do of His good pleasure, then we are told that Satan is "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph 2:2). Is there a "mystery of godliness" (1 Tim. 3:16), so also is there a "mystery of iniquity" (2 Thess 2:7). Are we told that God by His angels "seals" His servants in their foreheads (Rev 7:3), so also we learn that Satan by his agents sets a mark in the foreheads of his devotees (Rev. 13:16). Are we told that "the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2:10), then Satan also provides his "deep things" (Greek—Rev. 2:24). Did Christ perform miracles, so also can Satan (2 Thess. 2:9). Is Christ seated upon a throne, so is Satan (Greek—Rev. 2:13). Has Christ a Church, then Satan has his "synagogue" (Rev 2:9). Is Christ the Light of the world, then so is Satan himself "transformed into an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14). Did Christ appoint "apostles," then Satan has his apostles, too (2 Cor. 11:13). And this leads us to consider: "The Gospel of Satan."

Satan is the arch-counterfeiter. The Devil is now busy at work in the same field in which the Lord sowed the good seed. He is seeking to prevent the growth of the wheat by another plant, the tares, which closely resembles the wheat in appearance. In a word, by a process of imitation he is aiming to neutralize the Work of Christ. Therefore, as Christ has a Gospel, Satan has a gospel too; the latter being a clever counterfeit of the former. So closely does the gospel of Satan resemble that which it parodies, multitudes of the unsaved are deceived by it.—

It is to this gospel of Satan the apostle refers when he says to the Galatians, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another, but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the

Gospel of Christ" (Gal. 1:6, 7). This false gospel was being heralded even in the days of the apostle, and a most awful curse was called down upon those who preached it. The apostle continues, "But though we, or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." By the help of God we shall now endeavor to expound, or rather, expose this false gospel.

The gospel of Satan is not a system of revolutionary principles, nor yet a program of anarchy. It does not promote strife and war, but aims at peace and unity. It seeks not to set the mother against her daughter nor the father against his son, but fosters the fraternal spirit whereby the human race is regarded as one great "brotherhood." It does not seek to drag down the natural man, but to improve and uplift him. It advocates education and cultivation and appeals to the best that is within—It aims to make this world such a comfortable and congenial habitat that Christ's absence from it will not be felt and God will not be needed. It endeavors to occupy man so much with this world that he has no time or inclination to think of the world to come. It propagates the principles of self-sacrifice, charity and benevolence, and teaches us to live for the good of others, and to be kind to all. It appeals strongly to the carnal mind and is popular with the masses, because it ignores the solemn facts that by nature man is a fallen creature, alienated from the life of God, and dead in trespasses and sins, and that his only hope lies in being born again.

In contradistinction to the Gospel of Christ, the gospel of Satan teaches salvation by works. It inculcates justification before God on the ground of human merits. Its sacramental phrase is "Be good and do good;" but it fails to recognize that in the flesh there dwelleth no good thing. It announces salvation by character, which reverses the order of God's Word—character by, as the fruit of, salvation. Its various ramifications and organizations are manifold. Temperance, Reform Movements, "Christian Socialist Leagues," Ethical Culture Societies, "Peace Congresses" are all employed (perhaps

unconsciously) in proclaiming this gospel of Satan—salvation by works. The pledge card is substituted for Christ; social purity for individual regeneration, and politics and philosophy, for doctrine and godliness. The cultivation of the old man is considered more practical than the creation of a new man in Christ Jesus; whilst universal peace is looked for apart from the interposition and return of the Prince of Peace.

The apostles of Satan are not saloon-keepers and white-slave traffickers, but are for the most part ordained ministers. Thousands of those who occupy our modern pulpits are no longer engaged in presenting the fundamentals of the Christian Faith, but have turned aside from the Truth and have given heed unto fables. Instead of magnifying the enormity of sin and setting forth its eternal consequences, they minimize it by declaring that sin is merely ignorance or the absence of good. Instead of warning their hearers to "flee from the wrath to come" they make God a liar by declaring that He is too loving and merciful to send any of His own creatures to eternal torment. Instead of declaring that "without shedding of blood is no remission," they merely hold up Christ as the great Exemplar and exhort their hearers to "follow in His steps." Of them it must be said, "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:3). Their message may sound very plausible and their aim appear very praiseworthy, yet we read of them—"for such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves (imitating) into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing [not to be wondered at] if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works" (2 Cor. 11:13–15).

In addition to the fact that today hundreds of churches are without a leader who faithfully declares the whole counsel of God and presents His way of salvation, we also have to face the additional fact that the

majority of people in these churches are very unlikely to learn the Truth themselves. The family altar, where a portion of God's Word was wont to be read daily is now, even in the homes of nominal Christians, largely a thing of the past. The Bible is not expounded in the pulpit and it is not read in the pew. The demands of this rushing age are so numerous, that multitudes have little time and still less inclination to make preparation for the meeting with God. Hence the majority who are too indolent to search for themselves, are left at the mercy of those whom they pay to search for them; many of whom betray their trust by studying and expounding economic and social problems rather than the Oracles of God.

In Proverbs 14:12 we read, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death." This "way" which ends in "death" is the Devil's Delusion—the gospel of Satan—a way of salvation by human attainment. It is a way which "seemeth right," that is to say, it is presented in such a plausible way that it appeals to the natural man: it is set forth in such a subtle and attractive manner, that it commends itself to the intelligence of its hearers. By virtue of the fact that it appropriates to itself religious terminology, sometimes appeals to the Bible for its support (whenever this suits its purpose), holds up before men lofty ideals, and is proclaimed by those who have graduated from our theological institutions, countless multitudes are decoyed and deceived by it.

The success of an illegitimate coiner depends largely upon how closely the counterfeit resembles the genuine article. Heresy is not so much the total denial of the truth as a perversion of it. That is why half a lie is always more dangerous than a complete repudiation. Hence when the Father of Lies enters the pulpit it is not his custom to flatly deny the fundamental truths of Christianity, rather does he tacitly acknowledge them, and then proceed to give an erroneous interpretation and a false application. For example: he would not be so foolish as to boldly announce his disbelief in a personal God; he takes His existence for granted and then gives a false description of His character. He announces that God is the spiritual Father of all

men, when the Scriptures plainly tell us that we are "the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26), and that "as many as received him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God" (John 1:12). Further, he declares that God is far too merciful to ever send any member of the human race to Hell, when God Himself has said, "Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the Lake of Fire" (Rev. 20:15). Again; Satan would not be so foolish as to ignore the central figure of human history—the Lord Jesus Christ; on the contrary, his gospel acknowledges Him to be the best man that ever lived. Attention is drawn to His deeds of compassion and works of mercy, the beauty of His character and the sublimity of His teaching. His life is eulogized, but His vicarious Death is ignored, the all-important atoning work of the cross is never mentioned, whilst His triumphant and bodily resurrection from the grave is regarded as one of the credulities of a superstitious age. It is a bloodless gospel, and presents a crossless Christ, who is received not as God manifest in the flesh, but merely as the Ideal Man.

In 2 Corinthians 4:3 we have a scripture which sheds much light upon our present theme. There we are told, "if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world [Satan] hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God should shine unto them." He blinds the minds of unbelievers through hiding the light of the Gospel of Christ, and he does this by substituting his own gospel. Appropriately is he designated "The Devil and Satan which deceiveth the whole world" (Rev. 12:9). In merely appealing to "the best that is within man," and in simply exhorting him to "lead a nobler life" there is afforded a general platform upon which those of every shade of opinion can unite and proclaim this common message.

Again we quote Proverbs 14:12—"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." It has been said with considerable truth that the way to Hell is paved with good intentions. There will be many in the Lake of Fire who commended life with good intentions, honest resolutions and exalted ideals—



those who were just in their dealings, fair in their transactions and charitable in all their ways; men who prided themselves in their integrity but who sought to justify themselves before God by their own righteousness; men who were moral, merciful and magnanimous, but who never saw themselves as guilty, lost, hell-deserving sinners needing a Saviour. Such is the way which "seemeth right." Such is the way that commends itself to the carnal mind and recommends itself to multitudes of deluded ones today. The Devil's Delusion is that we can be saved by our own works, and justified by our own deeds; whereas, God tells us in His Word: "By grace are ye saved through faith ... not of works lest any man should boast." And again, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us."

A few years ago the writer became acquainted with one who was a lay preacher and an enthusiastic "Christian worker." For over seven years this friend had been engaged in public preaching and religious activities, but from certain expressions and phrases he used, the writer doubted whether this friend was a "born again" man. When we began to question him, it was found that he was very imperfectly acquainted with the Scriptures and had only the vaguest conception of Christ's Work for sinners. For a time we sought to present the way of salvation in a simple and impersonal manner and to encourage our friend to study the Word for himself, in the hope that if he were still unsaved God would be pleased to reveal the Saviour he needed.

One night to our joy, the one who had been preaching the Gospel (?) for several years, confessed that he had found Christ only the previous night. He acknowledged (to use his own words) that he had been presenting "the Christ ideal" but not the Christ of the Cross. The writer believes there are thousands like this preacher who, perhaps, have been brought up in Sunday School, taught about the birth, life, and teachings of Jesus Christ, who believe in the historicity of His person, who spasmodically endeavor to practice His precepts, and who think that that is all that is necessary for their salvation. Frequently, this class when they reach manhood go out

into the world, encounter the attacks of atheists and infidels and are told that such a person as Jesus of Nazareth never lived. But the impressions of early days cannot be easily erased, and they remain steadfast in their declaration that they "believe in Jesus Christ." Yet, when their faith is examined, only too often it is found that though they believe many things about Jesus Christ they do not really believe in him. They believe with the head that such a person lived (and, because they believe this imagine that therefore they are saved), but they have never thrown down the weapons of their warfare against Him, yielded themselves to Him, nor truly believed with their heart in Him.

The bare acceptance of an orthodox doctrine about the person of Christ without the heart being won by Him and the life devoted to Him, is another phase of that way "which seemeth right unto a man" but the end thereof are "the ways of death." A mere intellectual assent to the reality of Christ's person, and which goes no further, is another phase of the way which "seemeth right unto a man" but of which the end thereof "are the ways of death," or, in other words, is another aspect of the gospel of Satan.

And now, where do you stand? Are you in the way which "seemeth right," but which ends in death; or, are you in the Narrow Way which leadeth unto life? Have you truly forsaken the Broad Road which leadeth to death? Has the love of Christ created in your heart a hatred and horror of all that is displeasing to Him? Are you desirous that he should "reign over" you? (Luke 19:14). Are you relying wholly on His righteousness and blood for your acceptance with God?

Those who are trusting to an outward form of godliness, such as baptism or "confirmation!" those who are religious because it is considered a mark of respectability; those who attend some Church or Chapel because it is the fashion to do so; and, those who unite with some Denomination because they suppose that such a step will enable them to become Christians, are in the way which "ends in death"—death spiritual and eternal. However pure our motives,

however noble our intentions, however well-meaning our purposes, however sincere our endeavors, God will not acknowledge us as His sons, until we accept His Son.

A yet more specious form of Satan's gospel is to move preachers to present the atoning sacrifice of Christ and then tell their hearers that all God requires from them is to "believe" in His Son. Thereby thousands of impenitent souls are deluded into thinking they have been saved. But Christ said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). To "repent" is to hate sin, to sorrow over it, to turn from it. It is the result of the Spirits making the heart contrite before God. None except a broken heart can savingly believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Again, thousands are deceived into supposing that they have "accepted Christ" as their "personal Saviour," who have not first received Him as their LORD. The Son of God did not come here to save His people in their sin, but "from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). To be saved from sins, is to be saved from ignoring and despising the authority of God, it is to abandon the course of self-will and self-pleasing, it is to "forsake our way" (Isa. 55:7). It is to surrender to God's authority, to yield to His dominion, to give ourselves over to be ruled by Him. The one who has never taken Christ's "yoke" upon him, who is not truly and diligently seeking to please Him in all the details of life, and yet supposes that he is "resting on the Finished Work of Christ" is deluded by the Devil.

In the seventh chapter of Matthew there are two scriptures which give us approximate results of Christ's Gospel and Satan's counterfeit. First, in verses 13–14, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Second; in verses 22–23, "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied [preached] in Thy name? and in Thy name cast out demons, and in thy name done many wonderful

works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." Yes, my reader, it is possible to work in the name of Christ, and even to preach in his name, and though the world knows us, the Church knows us, yet to be unknown to the Lord! How necessary is it then to find out where we really are; to examine ourselves and see whether we be in the faith; to measure ourselves by the Word of God and see if we are being deceived by our subtle Enemy; to find out whether we are building our house upon the sand, or whether it is erected on the Rock which is Jesus Christ. May the Holy Spirit search our hearts, break our wills, slay our enmity against God, work in us a deep and true repentance, and direct our gaze to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.

## **Anxiety**

"Be anxious for nothing." (Philippians 4:6)

WORRYING is as definitely forbidden as theft. This needs to be carefully pondered and definitely realized by us, so that we do not excuse it as an innocent "infirmity." The more we are convicted of the sinfulness of anxiety, the sooner are we likely to perceive that it is most dishonoring to God, and "strive against" it (Heb. 12:4). But how are we to "strive against" it?

First, by begging the Holy Spirit to grant us a deeper conviction of its enormity. Second, by making it a subject of special and earnest prayer, that we may be delivered from this evil. Third, by watching its beginning, and as soon as we are conscious of harassment of

mind, as soon as we detect the unbelieving thought, lift up our heart to God and ask Him for deliverance from it.

The best antidote for anxiety is frequent meditation upon God's goodness, power and sufficiency. When the saint can confidently realize "The Lord is My Shepherd," he must draw the conclusion, "I shall not want!" Immediately following our exhortation is, "but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your request be made known unto God." Nothing is too big and nothing is too little to spread before and cast upon the Lord. The "with thanksgiving" is most important, yet it is the point at which we most fail. It means that before we receive God's answer, we thank Him for the same: it is the confidence of the child expecting his Father to be gracious.

"Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought (anxious concern) for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:25, 33)

## **Bearing the Rod**

"Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward." (Job 5:7)

HOW can it be otherwise, living as he is in a world which is under the curse that Adam's sin entailed, and, what is worse, under God's judgment because of its casting out of His beloved Son. Yet the subject of "trouble" needs to be "rightly divided" if we are to properly

heed that exhortation, "Be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:17), an important part of which consists in understanding the meaning and message of our Father to us in all the "trouble" which we encounter and experience.

As we turn to the Holy Scriptures for light upon this subject of Trouble, Suffering, Affliction, Tribulation, Persecution etc., we discover two distinct and different lines of Truth thereon, running all through the Word. On the one hand we read that, "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22), parallel with which are such passages as Luke 6:26, 2 Timothy 3:12 etc. But on the other hand, we read that "the curse causeless shall not come" (Prov. 26:2), that God does not "afflict willingly" (Lamentations 3:33), and that "if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" (1 Cor. 11:31). Much of the "trouble" and "affliction" experienced by us, we bring upon ourselves, through our own folly. We see this plainly exemplified in the natural realm: how many are now suffering bodily ills through intemperate eating and drinking: how many are nervous wrecks as the result of "burning the candle at both ends!"

The same principle holds good in the spiritual realm: the chastening rod of God is upon many of His children because of their self-will and self-pleasing: some of them are passing through sore financial straits because their "sins have withholden" God's temporal mercies (Jeremiah 5:25); still others, who have been favored with clear and definite light from God as to a certain course of duty—e.g. separating themselves from religious associations which dishonor Christ—and because they have not walked therein, the Lord has "hedged up their way with thorns" (Hosea 2:6). Nevertheless, it would be a serious mistake to draw the inference that every time we see a suffering Christian, we behold one who has seriously displeased God, and therefore is now being severely chastised by Him. It would be wrong to form such a conclusion concerning every case, because trouble and suffering issue from other causes, and are sent by God for other purposes than the reproof of sin—sent sometimes to experimentally

fit the recipient for greater and higher usefulness in the service of Christ: compare 2 Corinthians 1:4.

Now from what has been pointed out above, it should be quite clear that real exercise of heart is called for from each one of us whenever painful trials come upon us; that we need to get down before God, and cry, "show me wherefore Thou contendedest with me" (Job 10:2). To take this attitude is the part of wisdom, for if God be dealing with us over something that has displeased Him, and we fail to humble ourselves before Him and learn of Him what it is which is now choking the channel of His highest blessing toward us, and obtain grace from Him to put right what is wrong, then the chastening "profits" us not, and further and increased chastisement must be our portion; for it is not until we are "exercised thereby," exercised in conscience, that we have any promise it will issue in "the peaceable fruit of righteousness" (Heb. 12:11).

If the "trouble" through which we are passing at any period of our lives be a reproof from God because of our sins or unfaithfulness, and instead of suspecting that He is displeased with us and taking our place in the dust before Him, begging Him to put His finger on the festering sore in our hearts: if instead, we proudly imagine that there is nothing wrong in our lives, that we have given God no cause to smite us, and complacently assume that we are suffering only for "righteousness' sake," and draw comfort from such promises as Matthew 5:11, 12, we are deceived by Satan, and are but "forsaking our own mercy" (Jonah 2:8). It is written, He that covereth his sins shall not prosper" (Prov. 28:13). Thus, whenever "trouble" comes upon a Christian it is always the safest policy to come to the Lord and say, "Teach me, and I will hold my tongue: and cause me to understand wherein I have erred" (Job 5:24).

From what has been said above, it will be seen that it often falls to the lot of God's servants to perform a duty which is most unpleasant to the flesh. When they come into contact with a Brother or Sister who is passing through deep waters, their natural desire is to

administer comfort, but in some instances (at least) to do so would be guilty of "healing also the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly:" and how is this done? The same verse tells us, by "saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace" (Jer. 6:14). That was what the 'false prophets' had done to Israel, and that was the very thing which carnal Israel desired: their demand was, "Prophesy not unto us right things, speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits" (Isa. 30:10); and human nature has not changed any since then!

It is a thankless task for any true servant of Christ today to be faithful to his Master, and faithful to the souls of those with whom he deals. Not that God requires him to think the worst of every case that comes to his notice, but that it is his burden duty to exhort each one to act on Job 10:2. But if he does do so, he may be assured at the beginning, that in the majority of cases he will be looked upon as harsh, hypercritical, unkind, like one of Job's censorious comforters; for there are few indeed who have an honest heart, are ready to know the worst about themselves, and are willing to be cut by the knife of God's Word. The great majority want only comfort, the "promises" of Scripture, the message of "Peace, peace.

But do not the Promises of God belong unto His children? Certainly they do: but here too "there is a season, and a time to every purpose" (Eccl. 3:1): there is a time when we may rightfully draw consolation and strength from the promises, and there is a time when we may not legitimately do so. When all is right between our souls and God, when every known sin has been confessed, and forsaken in sincere purpose of heart, then may we righteously draw milk from the breasts of Divine consolation. But just as there are times when it would be injurious for us to eat some of the things we do when we are well, so to take unto ourselves comfort from the Divine promises while sin is cherished in our hearts, is baneful and sinful.

The above (now slightly revised) recently sent by us in a letter to one passing through deep waters. It occurred to us that it might be a timely word for others. Many are now in the fiery furnace, and few



indeed are there capable of speaking to them a word in season. It is not sufficient to bid them "Trust in God," and assure them that brighter days are ahead. The conscience needs to be searched; the wound must be probed and cleansed, before it is ready for "the balm of Gilead;" we must humble ourselves "beneath the mighty hand of God" (1 Pet. 5:6), if we are to be exalted again by Him in "due time." May the Lord be pleased to bless the above unto some of "His own."

## **Chosen to Salvation**

"But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (2 Thessalonians 2:13)

THERE are three things here which deserve special attention. First, the fact that we are expressly told that God's elect are "chosen to salvation:" Language could not be more explicit. How summarily do these words dispose of the sophistries and equivocations of all who would make election refer to nothing but external privileges or rank in service! It is to "salvation" itself that God has chosen us. Second, we are warned here that election unto salvation does not disregard the use of appropriate means: salvation is reached through "sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" It is not true that because God has chosen a certain one to salvation that he will be saved willy-nilly, whether he believes or not: nowhere do the Scriptures so represent it. The same God who "chose unto salvation," decreed that His purpose should be realized through the work of the spirit and belief of the truth. Third, that God has chosen us unto

salvation is a profound cause for fervent praise. Note how strongly the apostle express this—"we are bound to give thanks always to God for you. brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation," etc. Instead of shrinking back in horror from the doctrine of predestination, the believer, when he sees this blessed truth as it is unfolded in the Word, discovers a ground for gratitude and thanksgiving such as nothing else affords, save the unspeakable gift of the Redeemer Himself.

## **Christian Fools**

"Then He said unto them, O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." (Luke 24:25)

THOSE of you who read the religious announcements in the newspapers of yesterday would see the subject for my sermon this evening is "Christian Fools." Possibly some of you thought there was a printer's error and that what I really meant to announce was "Professing Christian fools." The paper gave it quite correctly. My subject tonight is "Christian Fools." Probably some of you think that this is a most unsuitable title for a servant of God to give to his sermon, and yet I make no apology whatever for it. It fits exactly my subject for tonight: it expresses accurately what I am going to speak about: and—what is far more to the point—it epitomizes our text: "Then He said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken."

Those words were spoken by Christ on the day of His resurrection: spoken not to worldlings but to Christians. That which occasioned them was this. The disciples to whom He was speaking were lopsided

in their theology: they believed a certain part of God's truth and they refused to believe another part of the truth that did not suit them; they believed some Scriptures but they did not believe all that the prophets had spoken, and the reason they did not was because they were unable to harmonize the two different parts of God's truth. They were like some people today: when it comes to their theology; they walk by reason and by logic rather than by faith.

In the Old Testament there were many prophecies concerning the coming Messiah that spoke of His glory. If there was one thing the Old Testament prediction made plain, it was that the Messiah of Israel should be glorious. It spoke of His power, His honor, His majesty, His dominion, His triumphs. But on the other hand, there were many prophecies in the Old Testament that spoke of a suffering Messiah, that portrayed His humiliation, His degradation, His rejection, His death at the hands of wicked men. And these disciples of Christ believed the former set of prophecies, but they would not believe in the second: they could not see how it was possible to harmonize the two. If the coming Messiah was to be a glorious Messiah, possessing power and majesty and dominion: if He would be triumphant, then how could He, at the same time, be a suffering Messiah, despised, humiliated, rejected of men? And because the disciples could not fit the two together, because they were unable to harmonize them, they refused to believe both, and Christ told them to their faces that they were fools. He says, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken."

I suppose some of us have wondered how it was possible for these disciples, these followers of Christ, who had been privileged to be with Him during His public ministry and those who had been so intimate with Him, had been instructed by Him, had witnessed His wonderful miracles; how it was possible for such men to err so grievously and to act so foolishly. And yet we need not be surprised; the same thing is happening all around us today. Christendom tonight is full of men and women who believe portions of God's truth, but who do not believe all that the prophets have spoken. In

other words, my friends, Christendom tonight is full of men and women that the Son of God says are "fools" because of their slowness of heart to believe.

Now very likely, the sermon tonight will make some of my hearers angry: probably they are the ones who most need the rebuke of the text. When a servant of God wields the sword of the Spirit, if he does his work faithfully and effectively, then some of his hearers are bound to get cut and wounded: and, my friends, that is always God's way. God always wounds before He heals. And I want to remind you at the outset that this text is no invention of mine. These are the words of One who never wounded unnecessarily, but they are also the words of the True and Faithful Witness who never hesitated to preach the whole truth of God, whether men would receive it or whether they would reject it. I know it is not a pleasant thing to be called a fool, especially if we have a high regard for ourselves and rate our own wisdom and orthodoxy very highly—it wounds our pride. But we need to be wounded, all of us. We need to be humbled; we need to be rebuked; we need to have that word from the lips of Christ which is as a two-edged sword.

Now notice, dear friends, that Christ did not upbraid these disciples because they did not understand, but because of their lack of faith. The trouble with them was they reasoned too much. Very likely they prided themselves on their logical minds and said, Well, surely we are not asked to believe impossibilities and absurdities: both of these cannot be true; one is true and the other cannot be. Either the Messiah of Israel is going to be a glorious and a triumphant Messiah, or else He is going to be a rejected and a humiliated one: they cannot both be true. That is why Christ said to them—not because of their failure to understand, but because of their lack of faith—"O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken."

I am afraid that today there are many who only believe what they can understand, and if there is something else that they cannot understand, they do not believe it. If they have devised to themselves

a systematized theology (or more probably they have adopted someone else's system of theology), and they hear a sermon (no matter how much Scripture there may be in it) which they cannot fit into their little system of theology, they won't have it. They place a higher value on consistency than they do on fidelity. That is just what was the matter with these disciples: they could not see the consistency of the two things and therefore they were only prepared to believe the one.

The same thing, my friends, is true today with many preachers. There are multitudes of preachers in Australia tonight whose theology is narrower than the teaching of this Book. Then away to the winds with theology!—I mean human systems of theology which are narrower than Scripture. For example, there are men today who read God's Word, and they see that the gospel is to be preached to every creature, and that God commands all who hear that gospel to believe in Christ; then they come across some texts on election, predestination:—"Many are called but few are chosen," and they say, Well, I cannot harmonize this, I cannot see how it is possible to preach, unhampered, a gospel to every creature, and yet for election to be true. And because they cannot harmonize the two things, they neither believe the two nor will they preach both. They cannot harmonize election with a gospel that is to be preached to every creature, and so the Arminians preach the gospel but they leave out election.

Yes, but there are many Calvinists who equally come under the rebuke of our text. They believe in the sovereignty of God, but they refuse to believe in the responsibility of man. I read a book by a hyper-Calvinist only a few weeks ago, by a man whose shoe-latchet the present speaker in many things is not fit to stoop down and unloose—a man of God, a faithful servant of His, one from whom I have learned not a little—and yet he had the effrontery to say, that responsibility is the most awful word in the English language, and then went on to tirade against human responsibility. They cannot understand how that it is possible for God to fix the smallest and the

greatest events, and yet not to infringe upon man's accountability—men themselves choosing the evil and rejecting the good—and therefore because they cannot see both they will only believe in one.

Listen! If man were nothing more than clay in the hands of the Potter there would be no difficulty. Scripture affirms in Romans 9 that man is clay in the hands of the Potter, but that only gives you one aspect of the truth. That emphasizes the absoluteness of God's control over all the works and creatures of His hands; but from other Scriptures we learn that man is something more than lifeless clay. Man has been endowed with understanding; man has been given a will. Yes, I freely admit that his understanding is darkened; I fully allow that his will is in bondage; but they are still there; they have not been destroyed. If man was nothing more than a block of wood or a block of stone, it would be easy to understand how that God could fix the place that he was to occupy and the purpose that he was to fulfil; but, my friends, it is very far from easy to understand how that God can shape and direct all history and yet leave man fully responsible and not infringe upon his accountability.

Now there are some who have devised a very simple but a most unsatisfactory method of getting rid of the difficulty, and that is to deny its existence. There are Arminians who have presented the "free-will" of man in such a way as to virtually dethrone God, and I have no sympathy whatever with their system. On the other hand, there have been some Calvinists who have presented a kind of fatalism (I know not what else to term it) reducing man to nothing more than a block of wood, exonerating him of all blame and excusing him for his unbelief. But they are both equally wrong, and I scarcely know which is the more mischievous of the two. When the Calvinist says, All things happen according to the predestination of God. I heartily say Amen, and I am willing to be called a Calvinist; but if the Arminian says that when a man sins the sin is his own, and that if he continues sinning he will surely perish, and that if he perishes his blood is on his own head, then I believe the Arminian speaks according to God's truth; though I am not willing to be called

an Arminian. The trouble is when we tie ourselves down to a theological system.

Now listen a little more closely still. When the Calvinist says that faith is the gift of God and that no sinner ever does or can believe until God gives him that faith, I heartily say Amen; but when the Arminian says that the gospel commands all who hear it to believe, and that it is the duty of every sinner to believe, I also say Amen. What? you say, You are going to stand up and preach faith-duty-duty-faith? I know that is jolting to some of you. Now bear with me patiently for a moment and I will try and not shock you too badly. Whose is the gospel? It is God's. Whose voice is it that is heard speaking in the gospel? It is God's. To whom has God commanded the gospel to be preached? To every creature. What does the gospel say to every creature? It says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." It says, "Whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." It says, "The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth." God commands, not invites. God commands every man, woman and child that hears that gospel to believe it, for the gospel is true; therefore it is the duty of every man to believe what God has said. Let me give you the alternative. If it is not the duty of every sinner to believe the gospel, then it is his duty not to believe it—one or the other. Do you mean to tell me it is the duty of an unconverted sinner to reject the gospel? I am not talking now about his ability to believe it.

Some of you say, Well how can it be his duty to believe it, when he cannot do so? Is it his duty to do an impossibility? Well, listen! Is my duty, is my responsibility measured by my ability, by my power to perform? Here is a man who has ordered a hundred pounds' worth of furniture; he receives it, and he is given thirty days' credit in which to pay for it; but during the next thirty days he squanders his money, and at the end of the month he is practically bankrupt. When the firm presents their bill to him, he says, "I am sorry but I am unable to pay you." He is speaking the truth. "I am unable, it does not lie within my power to pay you." Would the head of that business house

say, "All right, that ends the matter then: sorry to hear that you do not have the power, but evidently we cannot do anything." No, my friend, ability does not measure our responsibility. Man is responsible to do many things that he is not able to do. You that are Christians are responsible to live a sinless life, for God says to you, "Awake to righteousness and sin not," and in the first Epistle of John we read, "These things write I unto you, that ye sin not." God sets before you and me a standard of holy perfection. There is not one of us that is capable of measuring up to it, but that is our responsibility, and that is what we are going to be measured by when we stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.

Now then there are many Arminian preachers who are afraid to preach sermons on certain texts of the Bible. They would be afraid to stand up and preach from John 6:44—"No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him." They would be afraid to stand up and preach from Romans 9:18—"Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth." Yes, and it is also true that there are many Calvinist preachers who are equally afraid to preach from certain texts of the Scriptures lest their orthodoxy be challenged and lest they be called Freewillers. They are afraid to stand up and preach, for example, on the words of the Lord Jesus:—"How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Or on such a verse as this:—"The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force;" or "Strive (agonize) to enter in at the Strait Gate." And to show you that I am not imagining things, I am just going to read you three lines. Listen! "At the meeting at ... [I will leave out the name] on January 15th last, the question was asked to the effect: Had not some of our ministers for the sake of orthodoxy abstained from preaching from certain texts, and the answer was in the affirmative." I am reading now from a Strict Baptist magazine! That was a meeting of Strict Baptist preachers and they were honest enough to admit, themselves, that because they were afraid of their orthodoxy being challenged,



they were silent on certain texts of Scripture. O may God remove from all of us the fear of man.

Some of you perhaps are thinking right now in your own minds, Well, Brother Pink, I do not see how you are consistent with yourself. My friends, that does not trouble me one iota, and it won't cause one hair in my head to go gray if I am inconsistent with any Calvinistic creed: the only thing that concerns me is to be consistent with the Holy Spirit, and to teach as the Holy Spirit shall enable, the whole counsel of God; to leave out nothing, to withhold nothing, and to give a proportionate presentation of God's truth. Do you know, I believe that most of the theological errors of the past have grown out of, not so much a denial of God's truth, as a disproportionate emphasis of it. Let me give you a simple illustration. The most comely countenance with the most beautiful features would soon become ugly if one feature were to grow while the others remained undeveloped. You can take the most beautiful baby there is in the world tonight and if that baby's nose were to grow while its eyes and its cheeks and its mouth and its ears remained undeveloped, it would soon become unsightly. The same is true with every other member of its face.

Beauty is mainly a matter of proportion and this is true of God's Word. It is only as truth is presented in its proper proportions that the beauty and blessedness to it are maintained in the hearts and lives of God's people. The sad thing is that almost everywhere today there is just one feature of truth being disproportionately emphasized.

And listen again! If God's truth is to be presented proportionately and effectively then each truth of God's Word must be presented separately. If I am speaking upon the humanity of Christ, if I am seeking to emphasize the reality of His manhood, how that He was made like unto His brethren in all things, how that He was tempted in all points as they were—sin excepted—I would not bring into my sermon a reference to His Godhood; and if you were to hear me preach the next twelve Sunday nights on the manhood of Christ and

never refer to His Deity in those sermons, I hope none of you brethren would be so foolish as to draw the conclusion, Oh dear me, Brother Pink no longer believes in the Godhood of our Savior.

Again, if I am preaching on the wrath of God, the holy hatred of God for sin and His vengeance upon it, I would be weakening my sermon to bring in at the close a reference to His tenderness, mercy and love, for in my judgment that would be to blunt the point of the special truth I was seeking to press on the unconverted. And, in the same way, if I am pressing on the unconverted their need, their duty and importance of seeking the Lord, calling upon, coming to and believing on Him for themselves, I would not bring in or explain the work of the Holy Spirit in conversion.

Each truth needs to be presented separately that it may have its clear outline presented to the heart and to the mind. And after all, my friends, we are not saved by believing in the Spirit, we are saved by believing in Christ. We are not saved by believing in the work of the Spirit within us (no man was ever saved by believing that); we are saved by trusting in the work of Christ outside of us. O may God help us to maintain the balance of truth. There is something more in this Book, brethren and sisters, beside election, particular redemption and the new birth. They are there, and I would not say one word to weaken or to repudiate them, but that is not all that is in this Book. There is a human side. There is man's responsibility. There is the sinner's repentance. There is the sinner's believing in Christ. There is the pressing of the gospel upon the unsaved; and I want to tell you frankly that if a church does not evangelize it will fossilize: and, if I am not much mistaken, that is what happened to some of the Strict Baptist Churches in Australia. Numbers of them that once had a healthy existence are now no more; and some others are already dead but they are not yet buried; and I believe one of the main reasons for that is this—they failed at the vital point of evangelism. If a church does not evangelize it will fossilize. That is God's method of perpetuating His work and of maintaining His churches. God uses means, and the means that the Holy Spirit uses in His work is the

preaching of the gospel to the unconverted, to every creature. True, the preaching will avail nothing without the Spirit's blessing and application. True, no sinner will or can believe until God has quickened him. Yet he ought to, and is commanded to.

Now I meant, if time had allowed me, to come back again to the text and give you a few striking examples of where many have failed in holding the balance of God's truth. Take for example the Unitarians. I have met numbers of Unitarians who believe this Book is God's word, and believe that they can prove their creed from this Book. They appeal to such Scriptures as Deuteronomy 6:4—"The Lord our God is one Lord." Their creed is the unity of God and they argue that if there be three divine persons there must be three Gods; they cannot harmonize them, they cannot reconcile three persons with one God; so what do they do? Well, they hold fast to the one and they let go the other. They say the two won't mix—either God is one or else He is three; He cannot be both. When they come to the Person of Christ they emphasize such passages as—"He grew in wisdom." Well, they say, if He was a divine person, how could He grow in wisdom? They emphasize such passages as "He prayed," and they say it is an absurdity to think of God praying to God. They say, He died—how could God die? No, He cannot be divine: He is a good man; He is a holy man; He is a perfect man; and because they cannot reconcile the two classes of Scriptures they believe the one and reject the other. And Christ says to them, Ye are fools because ye are slow of heart to believe all.

Take the Universalists. I have met numbers of Universalists—several here in Sydney. I was going to say that I have less suspicion of the reality of their own salvation than I have of some of yours. At any rate they seem to give such evidence in their daily walk that they commune with Christ that it really makes one wonder where they are. Well now, the Universalists are staggered by the doctrine of eternal punishment. They say "God is love." The mercy of God endureth forever." God is good: how can a merciful, loving God send any to eternal suffering? The Universalist say they cannot both be

true: if there is such a thing as eternal punishment, then God can't be love: if God is love, there cannot be such a thing as eternal punishment. You see what they are doing? They are reasoning: they are walking by logic: they have drawn up their own scheme and system of theology and that which they cannot fit exactly into that scheme, somewhere, well, away with it!

But the Unitarians and the Universalists and the Arminians are not the only ones who are guilty of that. I am sorry to say that it is equally true, in some respects, of many Calvinists. They are unsound when it comes to the gospel. They are all at sea when it comes to the matter of believing. I am not going to keep you very much longer, but listen closely now. There are many Calvinists who say, Believing is an evidence of our salvation, but it is not a condition or the cause of salvation. But, my friends, I make so bold as to say that those who so teach take issue with this Book. Now I want you to turn with me to four passages in the New Testament. I am not asking you to take my word for anything. You turn with me now to four passages in God's own word. First of all Romans 1:16–17—"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation." The power of God unto salvation to whom?—"the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth." Now I have no hesitation whatever in saying to every grown-up person in this room tonight, if you had read that verse just now for the first time in your life, and had never read a page of either Calvinistic or Arminian literature; if you read that verse without any bias one way or the other, it would only mean one thing to you.

Now turn to Romans 13:11—"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." The salvation that is spoken of there is the salvation of the body, the glorification of the believer, the final consummation of our redemption: but what I want you to notice is where the Holy Spirit Himself puts the starting point. "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." THAT is when it begins, so far as our actual experience is concerned.

Now turn to Hebrews 10:39, and you have one there that is plainer still—that is outside the realm of debate—that has no ambiguity about it: "But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." You cannot get around that if you live to be a thousand years old. "Them that believe to the saving of the soul." The sinner's believing does have something to do with his salvation: God says so! If you deny it you are taking issue with God. "Believe to the saving of the soul."

Now turn to Luke 7:50—"And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee." He did not say thy faith is an evidence that you have been saved. "Thy faith hath saved thee." Now in the light of those last two verses I make this assertion, that believing in Christ is the cause of the sinner's salvation. But listen closely to this qualification. It is neither the meritorious cause nor is it the effectual cause! You must put these three things together to get the complete thing. The blood of Christ is the meritorious cause of salvation; the regenerating work of the Spirit is the effective cause of salvation; but the sinner's own believing is the instrumental cause of his salvation. We believe to the saving of the soul. I repeat that. The blood of Christ is the meritorious cause: without that all the believing in the world could not save a soul. The regenerating work of the Spirit is the effectual cause: without this, no sinner would come or will believe with the heart. But the believing of the sinner in Christ is the instrumental cause—that which extends the empty hand to receive the gift that the gospel presents to him—and where there is no personal trust in Christ there is no salvation—"I did not say 'quickenings.' "

Now I want to make this very plain and I am going to weigh my words. If instead of you trusting in the sacrificial blood of Christ, you are trusting in something that you believe the Spirit has done in you, you are building your house upon the sand, which in time of testing will fall to the ground.

"On Christ the solid Rock I stand, All other ground is sinking sand."

If you are building your hope for eternity on what you think or feel that the Spirit of God has done in you, instead of putting your trust in what Christ did for sinners, you are building your house on the sand. And that may apply to some church-members here tonight. O my friends, the gospel of God does not invite you to look inside and pin your faith to what you think the Holy Spirit has done in you; the gospel of God commands you to look outside of yourself, away from all your feelings and frames, to what the Lord Jesus Christ did on the cross for sinners as sinners.

Now my last word tonight is directed to the unconverted, for my text also applies directly to them. Last Sunday evening I said a good deal about the necessity of being quiet, of standing still, of waiting upon God; but I want to supplement those remarks in concluding tonight by saying that those are all admonitions that are given to the converted, and that the Holy Scriptures speak in very different terms to those of you who are unconverted. The Bible does not bid you to sit still, to wait and be quiet; the Bible commands you to flee from the wrath to come. It bids you to strive to enter in at the strait gate. I am quoting Scripture now. It bids you seek the Lord. It bids you come unto Him. It bids you believe in Him, and if you do not you will be damned, whoever you are.

I am very much afraid that there are some here tonight who entertain the notion that all they have to do is just to sit still and wait until God comes and saves you. My friends, I do not know of a single promise of God that He will do so. I do not know of a single line in this Book that encourages you to continue in your sinful inactivity. I am going to speak very plainly now. The devil will tell you there is no cause for you to be concerned: there is not a bit of need for you to worry: if your name is in the Lamb's Book of Life you will be saved, whether you believe or no. That is the devil's lie! It is not God's truth. The devil will tell you that if you have been elected to salvation there is not a bit of need for you to be alarmed, disturbed or exercised; no need at all for you to seek and search after the Lord; that when God's good time comes He is going to do it all for you: not a bit of good for

you to read the Bible and cry out to Him: and if He has not elected you, well, there is no need for sure, for it's useless.

Yes, the devil will speak in those tones and terms and he will come quoting Scripture to you. But there is no salvation for the sinner apart from his believing in Christ. I close with this quotation—2 Thessalonians 2:13, "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through—Through what? "Sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." That is how God saves. That is how God carries out His purpose—by the sanctification of the Spirit and by your belief of the truth.

And my friends, I have not limited God. God could, if He so chose, make the fields to grow crops without the farmer plowing them and sowing the seed, but that is not His way; that is not the method He selects. God could keep us in health and strength without our taking any food at all or wasting time in sleeping if He so chose, but that is not His way. And God could save every sinner on earth tonight without them believing if He wanted to, but it is not His way! I am not limiting God, I am describing to you the plan and method that God Himself has set forth in His Word, and if you would be saved, sinner, you have got to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for yourself. I say it reverently: the Holy Spirit won't believe for you. The Holy Spirit may put it into your heart and give you the desire to believe. If you have the desire it is because He has put it there, but He won't believe for you: believing is a human act. It is the sinner himself, in all his wretchedness and need, coming to Christ, as a drowning man clutches a straw, and as the old hymn says—"Just as I am without one plea, But that thy blood was shed for me."

O sinner, Christ is saying to you tonight, "O fools and slow of heart to believe all." You do believe much as you sit there. There are some of you who believe that Jesus is the Son of God. There are some of you who believe that He is the only Savior who can save any sinner. You believe that, then why not believe all? Why not believe in Him for yourself? Why not trust His precious blood for yourself; and why not

tonight? God is ready to save you now if you believe on Him. The blood has been shed, the sacrifice has been offered, the atonement has been made, the feast has been spread. The call goes out to you tonight, "Come, for all things are now ready." And I say again, the devil will tell you as you are sitting there, "There is no need for me to come tonight; I will just wait till God gets ready to come and save me." How do you know that while you are waiting death may not come and smite you down. "Boast not thyself of tomorrow for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." The Holy Spirit saith, "Today if ye will hear His voice harden not your hearts." Yes, man can "harden" his heart: God says so; and God calls to you: "Harden not your heart." That is something you do yourself—not the devil—you do it. God is speaking to you through His Word tonight. O may His grace forbid that He shall say our text to any of you after you have left this room—O God forbid that you should be among those "fools" who believe not all. You do believe that Christ is God's appointed Savior for sinners, why not your Savior? O may the Spirit draw you by the cords of love to that One who has said, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out."

Preached by Arthur W. Pink in Sydney, Australia—1927.



## The Christian in Romans 7

IN this chapter the apostle does two things:

First, he shows what is not and what is the Law's relation to the believer—judicially, the believer is emancipated from the curse or penalty of the Law (7:1–6); morally, the believer is under bonds to obey the Law (vv. 22, 25). Secondly, he guards against a false inference being drawn from what he had taught in chapter 6. In 6:1–11 he sets forth the believer's identification with Christ as "dead to sin." (vv. 2, 7, etc.) Then, from verse 11 onwards, he shows the effect this truth should have upon the believer's walk. In chapter 7 he follows the same order of thought. In 7:1–6 he treats of the believer's identification with Christ as "dead to the law" (see vv. 4, 6). Then, from verse 7 onwards he describes the experiences of the Christian. Thus the first half of Romans 6 and the first half of Romans 7 deal with the believer's standing, whereas the second half of each chapter treats of the believer's state; but with this difference: the second half of Romans 6 reveals what our state ought to be, whereas the second half of Romans 7 (vv. 13–25) shows what our state actually is.

The controversy which has raged over Romans 7 is largely the fruitage of the Perfectionism of Wesley and his followers. That brethren, whom we have cause to respect, should have adopted this error in a modified form, only shows how widespread today is the spirit of Laodiceanism. To talk of "getting out of Romans 7 into Romans 8" is excuseless folly. Romans 7 and both apply with undiminished force and pertinence to every believer on earth today. The second half of Romans 7 describes the conflict of the two natures in the child of God: it simply sets forth in detail what is summarized in Galatians 5:17; Romans 7:14, 15, 18, 19, 21 are now true of every believer on earth. Every Christian falls far, far short of the standard set before him—we mean God's standard, not that of the so-called "victorious life" teachers. If any Christian reader is read to say that

Romans 7:19 does not describe his life, we say in all kindness, that he is sadly deceived. We do not mean by this that every Christian breaks the laws of men, or that he is an overt transgressor of the laws of God. But we do mean that his life is far, far below the level of the life our Savior lived here on earth. We do mean that there is much of "the flesh" still evident in every Christian—not the least in those who make such loud boastings of their spiritual attainments. We do mean that every Christian has urgent need to daily pray for the forgiveness of his daily sins (Luke 11:4), for "in many things we all stumble" (Jas. 3:2, R. V.).

In what follows we shall confine ourselves to the last two verses of Romans 7, in which we read, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with flesh the law of sin" (vv. 24, 25).

This is the language of a regenerate soul, and it sums up the contents of the verses immediately preceding. The unregenerate man is wretched indeed, but he is a stranger to the "wretchedness" here expressed, for he knows nothing of the experience which evokes this wail. The whole context is devoted to a description of the conflict between the two natures in the child of God. "I delight in the law of God after the inward man" (v. 22), is true of none but born-again persons. But the one thus "delighting" discovers "another law in his members." This reference must not be limited to his physical members, but is to be understood as including all the various parts of his carnal personality. This "other law" is also at work in the memory, the imagination, the will, the heart, etc.

This "other law," says the apostle, warred against the law of his mind (the new nature), and not only so, it brought him "into captivity to the law of sin." (v. 23) To what extent he was brought into "captivity" is not defined. But brought into captivity he was, as is every believer. The wandering of the mind when reading God's Word, the issuing from the heart (Mark 7:21) of evil thoughts when we are engaged in

prayer, the horrid images which sometimes come before us in the sleep-state—to name no others—are so many examples of being "brought into captivity to the law of sin." "If the evil principle of our nature prevails in exciting one evil thought, it has taken us captive. So far it has conquered, and so far are we defeated, and made a prisoner" (Robert Haldane).

It is the consciousness of this warring within him and this being brought into captivity to sin, which causes the believer to exclaim, "O wretched man that I am!" This is a cry brought about by a deep realization of indwelling sin. It is the confession of one who knows that in his natural man there dwelleth no good thing. It is the mournful plaint of one who has discovered something of the horrible sink of iniquity which is in his own heart. It is the groan of a divinely-enlightened man who now hates himself—his natural self—and longs for deliverance.

This moan, "O wretched man that I am," expresses the normal experience of the Christian, and any Christian who does not so moan is in an abnormal and unhealthy state spiritually. The man who does not utter this cry daily is either so out of communion with Christ, or so ignorant of the teaching of Scripture, or so deceived about his actual condition, that he knows not the corruptions of his own heart and the abject failure of his own life.

The one who bows to the solemn and searching teaching of God's Word, the one who there learns the awful wreckage which sin has wrought in the human constitution, the one who sees the exalted standard of holiness which God has set before us, cannot fail to discover what a vile wretch he is. If he is given to behold how far short he falls of attaining to God's standard; if, in the light of the divine sanctuary, he discovers how little he resembles the Christ of God; then will he find this language most suited to express his godly sorrow. If God reveals to him the coldness of his love, the pride of his heart, the wanderings of his mind, the evil that defiles his godliest acts, he will cry, "O wretched man that I am." If he is conscious of his

ingratitude, of how little he appreciates God's daily mercies; if he marks the absence of that deep and genuine fervor which ought ever to characterize his praise and worship of that One who is "glorious in holiness;" if he recognizes that sinful spirit of rebellion, which so often causes him to murmur or at least chafe against the dispensations of God in his daily life; if he attempts to tabulate not only the sins of commission but the sins of omission, of which he is daily guilty, he will indeed cry, "O wretched man that I am."

Nor is it only the "back-slidden" Christian, now convicted, who will mourn thus. The one who is truly in communion with Christ, will also emit this groan, and emit it daily and hourly. Yea, the closer he draws to Christ, the more will he discover the corruptions of his old nature, and the more earnestly will he long to be delivered from it. It is not until the sunlight floods a room that the grime and dust are fully revealed. So, it is only as we really come into the presence of Him who is the light, that we are made aware of the filth and wickedness which indwell us, and which defile every part of our being. And such a discovery will make each of us cry, "O wretched man that I am!"

"But," inquires someone, "does not communion with Christ produce rejoicing rather than mourning?" We answer, It produces both. It did with Paul. In verse 22 of our chapter he says, "I delight in the law of God." Yet only two verses later he cries, "O wretched man that I am!" Nor does this passage stand alone. In 2 Corinthians 6 the same apostle says, "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing" (v. 10). Sorrowful because of his failures, because of his daily sins. Rejoicing because of the grace which still bore with him, and because of the blessed provision which God has made even for the sins of His saints. So again in Romans 8:1 after declaring, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus," and after saying, "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (vv. 16–17); the apostle adds, "But ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan

within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body." (v. 23) Similar is the teaching of the apostle Peter, "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations" (1 Pet. 1:6). Sorrow and groaning, then, are not absent from the highest spirituality.

In these days of Laodicean complacency and pride, there is considerable talk and much boasting about communion with Christ, but how little manifestation of it do we behold! Where there is no sense of utter unworthiness, where there is no mourning over the total depravity of our nature, where there is no sorrowing over our lack of conformity to Christ, where there is no groaning over being brought into captivity to sin; in short, where there is no crying, "O wretched man that I am," it is greatly to be feared that there is no fellowship with Christ at all.

When Abraham walked with the Lord, he exclaimed, "Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes." (Gen. 18:27) When Job came face to face with God, he said, "Behold I am vile" (40:4), and again, "I abhor myself." (42:6) When Isaiah entered the divine Presence, he cried, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips." (Isa. 6:5) When Daniel had that wondrous vision of Christ (Dan. 10:5–6), he declared, "There remained no strength in me: for comeliness was turned in me into corruption." (v. 8) And in one of the last epistles by the beloved apostle to the Gentiles, we read, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1 Tim. 1:15). These utterances proceeded not from unregenerate men, but came from the lips of God's saints. Nor were they the confessions of back-slidden believers: rather were they voiced by the most eminent of the Lord's people. Where, today, shall we find any who are fit to be placed along side of Abraham, Job, Isaiah, Daniel and Paul? Where indeed! And yet, these were the men who were so conscious of their vileness and unworthiness! saying, "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (vv. 16–17); the apostle adds, "But ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body." (v. 23) Similar is the teaching of the apostle Peter, "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations" (1 Pet. 1:6). Sorrow and groaning, then, are not absent from the highest spirituality.

"O wretched man that I am." This then is the language of a regenerate soul. It is the confession of the normal (undeceived and undeluded) Christian. The substance of it may be found not only in the recorded utterances of Old and New Testament saints, but as well, in the writings of the most eminent Christians who have lived during the last five hundred years. Different indeed were the confessions and witnessings borne by eminent saints of the past from the ignorant and arrogant boastings of modern Laodiceans! It is refreshing to turn from the present-day biographies to those written long ago. Ponder the following excerpts:

Mr. Bradford, of holy memory, who was martyred in the reign of bloody queen Mary, in a letter to a fellow-prisoner in another penitential, subscribed himself thus: "The sinful John Bradford: a very painted hypocrite: the most miserable, hard-hearted, and unthankful sinner, John Bradford." (1555 A.D.)

Godly Rutherford wrote, "This body of sin and corruption embitters and poisons our enjoyment. Oh that I were where I shall sin no more." (1650 A.D.)

Bishop Berkeley wrote, "I cannot pray, but I sin; I cannot preach, but I sin; I cannot administer, nor receive the holy sacrament, but I sin. My very repentance needs to be repented of: and the tears I shed need washing in the blood of Christ." (1670 A.D.)

Jonathan Edwards, in whose home died that remarkable man Mr. David Brainerd (the first missionary to the Indians, and whose devotion to Christ was witnessed to by all who knew him), and with whom he was intimately acquainted, says in his "Memoirs of Mr. Brainerd," "His religious illuminations, affections, and comfort, seemed to a great degree to be attended with evangelical humiliation; consisting in a sense of his own utter insufficiency, despicableness, and odiousness; with an answering disposition and frame of heart. How deeply affected was he almost continually with his great defects in religion; with his vast distance from that spirituality and holy frame of mind that become a child of God; with his ignorance, pride, deadness, barrenness! He was not only affected with the remembrance of his former sinfulness, before his conversion, but with the sense of his present vileness and pollution. He was not only disposed to think other saints better than he; yea to look on himself as the worst and least of saints; but, very often, as the vilest and worst of mankind."

Jonathan Edwards himself, than whom few men have been more honored of God, either in their spiritual attainments or in the extent to which God has used them in blessing to others, near the end of his life wrote thus: "When I look into my heart and take a view of its wickedness, it looks like an abyss infinitely deeper than hell. And it appears to me, that, were it not for free grace, exalted and raised up to the infinite height of all the fulness and glory of the great Jehovah, I should appear sunk down in my sins below hell itself; far below the sight of everything, but the eye of sovereign grace, that alone can pierce down to such a depth. And it is affecting to think how ignorant I was, when a young Christian [alas, that so many older Christians are still ignorant of it.—A.W.P.], of the bottomless depths of wickedness, pride, hypocrisy and deceit left in my heart" (1743 A.D.).

Augustus Toplady, author of "Rock of Ages," wrote thus in his private diary under December 31, 1767—"Upon a review of the past year, I desire to confess that my unfaithfulness has been exceeding great; my sins still greater; God's mercies greater than both." And again,

"My short-comings and my misdoings, my unbelief and want of love, would sink me into the lowest hell, was not Jesus my righteousness and my Redeemer."

Listen to the words of that godly woman, the wife of that eminent missionary A. Judson: "Oh how I rejoice that I am out of the whirlpool! Too gay, too trifling, for a missionary's wife! That may be, but after all, gaiety is my lightest sin. It is my coldness of heart, my listlessness, my want of faith, my spiritual inefficiency and inertness, by love of self, the inherent and every-day pampered sinfulness of my nature, that makes me such a mere infant in the cause of Christ—not the attractions of the world."

John Newton, writer of that blessed hymn, "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me; I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see;" when referring to the expectations which he cherished at the outset of his Christian life, wrote thus: "But alas! these my golden expectations have been like South Sea dreams. I have lived hitherto a poor sinner, and I believe I shall die one. Have I, then, gained nothing? Yes, I have gained that which I once would rather have been without! Such accumulated proof of the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of my heart, as I hope by the Lord's blessing has, in some measure, taught me to know what I mean when I say, Behold, I am vile ... I was ashamed of myself, when I began to seek it, I am more ashamed now.

James Ingliss (Editor of *Waymarks in the Wilderness*) at the close of his life, wrote Mr. J.H. Brookes, "As I am brought to take a new view of the end, my life seems so made up of squandered opportunities, and so barren of results, that it is sometimes very painful; but grace comes in to meet it all, and He will be glorified in my humiliation also" (1872). On which Mr. Brookes remarked, "How like him, and how unlike the boastings of those who are glorying in their fancied attainments!"



One more quotation: this time from a sermon by the late C. H. Spurgeon. Said the prince of preachers, "There are some professing Christians who can speak of themselves in terms of admiration; but, from my inmost heart, I loathe such speeches more and more every day that I live. Those who talk in such a boastful fashion must be constituted very differently from me. While they are congratulating themselves, I have to lie humbly at the foot of Christ's Cross, and marvel that I am saved at all, for I know that I am saved. I have to wonder that I do not believe Christ more, and equally wonder that I am privileged to believe in Him at all—to wonder that I do not love Him more, and equally to wonder that I love Him at all—to wonder that I am not holier, and equally to wonder that I have any desire to be holy at all considering what a polluted debased, depraved nature I find still within my soul, notwithstanding all that divine grace has done in me. If God were ever to allow the fountains of the great deeps of depravity to break up in the best man that lives, he would make as bad a devil as the devil himself is. I care nothing for what these boasters say concerning their own perfections; I feel sure that they do not know themselves, or they could not talk as they often do. There is tinder enough in the saint who is nearest to heaven to kindle another hell if God should but permit a spark to fall upon it. In the very best of men there is an infernal and well-nigh infinite depth of depravity. Some Christians never seem to find this out. I almost wish that they might not do so, for it is a painful discovery for anyone to make; but it has the beneficial effect of making us cease from trusting in ourselves, and causing us to glory only in the Lord."

Other testimonies from the lips and pens of men equally pious and eminent might be given, but sufficient have been quoted to show what cause the saints of all ages have had for making their own these words, "O wretched man that I am." A few words now on the closing verse of Romans 7.

"Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" "Who shall deliver me?" This is not the language of despair, but of earnest desire for help from without and above himself. That from which the

apostle desired to be delivered is termed "the body of this death." This is a figurative expression for the carnal nature is termed "the body of sin," and as having "members." (Rom. 7:23) We therefore take the apostle's meaning to be, Who shall deliver me from this deadly and noxious burden—my sinful self!

In the next verse the apostle answers his question, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." It should be obvious to any impartial mind that this looks forward to the future. His question was, "Who shall deliver me?" His answer is, Jesus Christ will. How this exposes the error of those who teach a present "deliverance" from the carnal nature by the power of the Holy Spirit. In His answer, the apostle says nothing about the Holy Spirit; instead, he mentions only "Jesus Christ our Lord." It is not by the present work of the Spirit in us that Christians will be delivered "from this body of death," but by the yet future coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for us. It is then that this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruption shall put on incorruption.

But, as though to remove all doubt that this "deliverance" is future, the apostle concludes by saying, "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." Let every reader note carefully that this comes after he had thanked God that he would be "delivered." The last part of verse 25 sums up what he had said in the second part of Romans 7. It describes the Christian's dual life. The new nature serves the law of God; the old nature, to the end of history, will serve "the law of sin." That it was so with Paul himself is clear from what he wrote at the close of his life, when he termed himself "the chief of sinners" (1 Tim. 1:15). That was not the exaggeration of evangelical fervor, still less was it the mock modesty of hypocrisy. It was the assured conviction, the felt experience, the settled consciousness of one who saw deeply into the depths of corruption within himself, and who knew how far, far short he attained to the standard of holiness which God set before him. Such, too, will be the consciousness and confession of every other Christian who is not blinded by conceit. And the outcome of such a

consciousness will be to make him long more ardently and thank God more fervently for the promised deliverance at the return of our Savior and Lord, when He shall "change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. 3:21); and having done so, He will "present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24). Hallelujah, what a Savior!

It is remarkable that the only other time the word "wretched" (the only other time in the Greek too) is found in the New Testament occurs in Revelation 3:17, where to the Laodiceans Christ says, "and knowest not that thou art wretched!" Their boast was that they had "need of nothing." They were so puffed up with pride, so satisfied with their attainments, that they knew not their wretchedness. And is not this what we witness on every hand today? Is it not evident that we are now living in the Laodicean period of the history of Christendom? Many were conscious of the "need," but now they fancy they have received "the second blessing," or "the baptism of the Spirit," or that they have entered into "victory;" and, fancying this, they fondly imagine that their "need" has been met. And the proof of this is, they are the very ones who "know not" that they are "wretched." With an air of spiritual superiority they will tell you that they have "got out of Romans 7 into Romans 8." With pitiable complacency they will say that Romans 7 no longer depicts their experience. With smug satisfaction they will look down in pity upon the Christian who cries, "O wretched man that I am," and like the Pharisee in the temple, they will thank God that it is otherwise with them. Poor blinded souls! It is to just such that the Son of God here says, "And knowest not that thou art wretched." We say "blinded" souls for mark it is to these Laodiceans that Christ says, "Anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest SEE!" (Rev. 3:18) It is to be observed that in the second half of Romans 7 the apostle speaks in the singular number. This is striking and most blessed. The Holy Spirit would intimate to us that the highest attainments in grace do not exempt the Christian from the painful experience there

described. The apostle portrays with a master pen—himself sitting for the picture—the spiritual struggles of the child of God. He illustrates by a reference to his own personal experience the ceaseless conflict which is waged between the antagonistic natures in the one who has been born again.

May God in His mercy so deliver us from the spirit of pride which now defiles the air of modern Christendom, and grant us such an humbling view of our own uncleanness that we shall join the apostle in crying with ever-deepening fervor, "O wretched man that I am!" Yea, may God vouchsafe to both writer and reader such a view of their own depravity and unworthiness that they may indeed grovel in the dust before Him, and there praise Him for His wondrous grace to such hell-deserving sinners.

## **Christian Liberty**

IN the opening article of this series, ("The Law and the Saint") we affirmed that the unregenerate sinner is, in heart and practice, and Antinomian; that is, one who is opposed to the Law of God. Proof of this is furnished by Rom. 8:7, which tells us, "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be." It needs to be remembered that the "carnal mind" still remains in the believer. It is true that the Christian has a new mind (2 Tim. 1:7), which is part of the new nature—a mind which "serves the Law of God" (Rom. 7:25); and it is this, alone, that explains the conflict waged daily within every saint. But the presence of the carnal mind within, reveals the urgent need there is for the "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). This can be

accomplished only as the believer yields his members (not only the members of his body, but every "member" of his complex personality) "servants to righteousness unto holiness" (Rom. 6:19).

But does not this expression "yielding or members as servants to righteousness" savor of legality, and is not that entirely at variance with Christian liberty? And here we reach, perhaps, what has seemed a real difficulty to many who have read the previous articles.\* Probably our readers have felt the force of what has been set before them. The various scriptures cited are so plain that their meaning is not open to question. The binding obligations of the Law of God upon every Christian has, we trust, been unequivocally established. But now the question naturally arises, What, then, of Christian liberty? Did not the Lord Himself promise, "If the Son therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36)? Did not the apostle Paul, under the Holy Spirit, write, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5:1)? How are we to understand these statements? Are they to be evacuated of all meaning. If not, how is it possible to fairly and satisfactory harmonize them with the affirmation that Christians are under bonds to obey the Ten Commandments?

In seeking an answer to the above questions several things need to be borne in mind. First, we may be fully assured that the Holy Scriptures contain no contradictions. Second, we need to be very careful in defining our terms: and to define them correctly we must make a patient and through search of the Word. In the third place, whatever true Christian liberty is, certainly, obedience to God does not conflict with it. It was to men whom He had already "made free" that the Son said, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). And it was to those who were in the enjoyment of Christian liberty that one of His Apostles was moved to write, "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him because we keep His commandments" (1 John 3:22). Thus, it is evident that we must distinguish sharply between Christian liberty and lawlessness.

The term "Christian liberty," like many another, is used very loosely by our moderns. We greatly fear that to many, who though bearing the name of Christians have never been born again, Christian liberty means license to do as one pleases. We are far from affirming, or even insinuating, that this is true of all those who deny that believers are under obligations to "serve the Law of God." With many their hearts are better than their heads: their lives superior to their creeds. But, nevertheless, it cannot be gainsaid, that to the popular mind Law and liberty are opposing terms. Many of the Lord's own people are being taught that legal restrictions are incompatible with true Christian liberty, and this in the face of the words of the Saviour—"teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:20).

It is now being proclaimed on almost every side that grace rules out all Law. Nor is this to be wondered at, for Christ plainly foretold that lawlessness should abound (Matt. 24:12). But though it is not to be wondered at, it is to be deeply deplored that some, whom we have good reasons to look upon as the Lord's servants, should be found lending themselves to forwarding this incoming tide of spiritual anarchy. The Word of truth declares that "grace reigns 'through righteousness' " (Rom. 5:21), not at the expense of it; and there can be no righteousness apart from law. Righteousness is right doing; and right doing is conformity to law. The only other alternative is what the writer of the book of the Judges speaks of, namely, "Every man doing that which was right in his own eyes" (21:25), which is a state of anarchy.

Liberty and license are as far apart as the poles. True liberty is subjection to Law, paradoxical as that may sound. To the unregenerate mind the terms of Christian life must appear to abound in paradoxes. "When I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:10), will seem a contradiction in terms to one who is devoid of spiritual intelligence. But is it meaningless to the real Christian? We trow not. Whether he understands it or not, he knows full well that it is the inspired declaration of God's Word. Equally foolish must it appear to

the unbeliever to read, that, When a man becomes the slave of Christ, then is he free! Nevertheless, that is what God's Word affirms, and it is what Christian experience confirms. Little as the mind of the flesh may be able to grasp it, is it not nevertheless a fact that, when we are the most elevated spiritually we take the lowest place before God? that when we are the holiest we are most conscious of our sinful defilements? Equally so is it true that we enjoy the greatest spiritual freedom when we are most in subjection to God's Law. What saith the Scriptures? This: "I will walk at liberty, for I seek Thy precepts" (Psa. 119:45). The natural man imagines that to be subject to God's "precepts" is to be confined to a narrow place; but the mine illuminated by the Holy Spirit will acknowledge, "Thy commandment is exceedingly broad" (Psa. 119:96).

After these preliminary considerations we shall now attempt to define the scriptural import of Christian liberty. Not that we profess to give here a complete or exhaustive definition, nevertheless, we believe it will include the primary elements and aspects of it.

1. Christian liberty is deliverance from the Wrath of God. The relation which the Christian, before conversion, stood to God (because of sin) was that of a condemned criminal. By nature he was a child "of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:3). By birth he belonged to a race which is under the curse of God. In Adam he sinned, and upon him rested the righteous condemnation of a sin-hating God (Psa. 58:3). Because of this he was together with all others of Adam's race, looked at as a criminal in prison, awaiting execution. But, all praise to His peerless name, it was to deliver such that the Son of God became incarnate. He was sent "to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound" (Isa. 60:1). This is the first ministerial utterance (see Luke 4:16–18). Nor was this to be confined to Jewish sinners. Of old the Lord declared, I will "give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles. To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house." (Isa. 42:6, 7).

The Gospel, then, proclaims "liberty to the captives" (Isa. 61:2), and the one who believes its joyous message is immediately and forever freed from that awful prison in which he lay as a culprit condemned. The Gospel tells him how this could be righteously accomplished. Another took his place; a Substitute suffered in his stead. And of Him it is written, "He was taken from prison and from judgment" (Isa. 53:8). He entered, for His people, the place of condemnation, and from it He was taken to judgment—that is one reason why He was crucified between two "malefactors," to show us more plainly the place He took! Only thus could we be liberated. When the judge delivers the culprit to the officer and he is "cast into prison," the Divine sentence is, "Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing" (Matt. 5:25, 26). And because we had "nothing (with which) to pay" (Luke 7:42), and the Lord Jesus paid the full redemption price for us, by suffering in our stead "the whole of wrath Divine." In consequence of this we are delivered. No longer prisoners, but free men are we. No longer under God's righteous wrath, but delivered from all condemnation (Rom. 8:1). Here, then, is the first aspect of Christian liberty: deliverance from the wrath of God. The disobedient are "spirits in prison" (1 Pet. 3:19); but those who have obeyed God's command to believe on His Son have been "made free" (John 8:36), free from the sentence of condemnation.

2. Christian liberty is deliverance from the Power of the Devil. Christians in their unregenerate state, "walked according to the course of this world, according to the Prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2). The ungodly are the slaves of Satan. Said our Lord to the Pharisees, "Ye are of your father the Devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do" (John 8:44). Men are "taken captive by him (the Devil) at his will" (2 Tim. 2:26).

Now the Gospel is God's appointed agency for delivering men from their awful bondage to the Devil. When the Lord commissioned the apostle Paul to go unto the Gentiles, He sent him "to open their eyes,



and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God" (Acts 26:18). Christians are a people who have been delivered from "the Power of darkness (Satan) and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son" (Col. 1:13). Heb. 2:14, 15 tells how this was made possible for us: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also likewise took part of the same; that He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Here, then is the second aspect of Christian liberty: believers in Christ have been delivered from that bondage to which they had been, all their lifetime, subject. Consequently, to them the promise now is "Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

3. Christian liberty is deliverance from the bondage of sin. The unregenerate are the slaves to sin: "Whosoever committeth sin is the bondsman to sin" (John 8:34). So completely are the wicked under the domination of sin they cannot of themselves think a godly thought, beget a godly aspiration, or perform a godly deed. They cannot come to Christ (John 6:44). They cannot hear His Word (John 8:43). They cannot believe (John 12:39). They cannot receive the Holy Spirit (John 14:17). They cannot please God (Rom. 8:8). And in each case the reason why they cannot is because they are bondslaves of sin. And in that condition they will remain unless the Son shall "make them free."

That the natural man is ignorant of this bondage only evidences how completely he is under the dominion of sin. His understanding is darkened. That he boasts of being a free-agent only demonstrates the derangement of his mind. The same men who call darkness light, and light darkness; who term wisdom folly, and deem folly to be wisdom; also regard true freedom as bondage; and consider their bondage, freedom. Ever since man drank at that deadly poison, "Ye shall be as God" (Gen. 3:5), his descendants have affected a dominion over themselves, and have disregarded the Lordship of their Maker. Their boast is, "With our tongue we will prevail; our lips are our own; who

is lord over us?" (Psa. 12:4). They suppose that the only true liberty is to be at the command and under the control of none above themselves. They think that to live according to their own heart's desire is to assert their free agency. But that is bondage and thralldom of the worst kind.

The natural man may cherish the delusion that he is not hampered by the bonds which restrict the liberty of the saints. He may think himself free to go where he wills, and free to do as he pleases, untrammelled by Divine restraints. But this only proves that the god of this world (Satan) has "blinded his mind" (2 Cor. 4:4). Instead of being free he "serves divers lusts" (Titus 3:3). Instead of carving his own career, he is simply walking "according to the Prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2). Instead of being master of himself, he is doing the desires of his father, the Devil (John 8:44). And little as he knows it, God Himself "restrains" him (Psa. 76:10). The truth is, that the most awful punishment which God ever inflicts upon men in this world is to abandon them to themselves. "So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels" (Psa. 81:12).

But believers have been delivered from the dominion of sin: "Being then made free from sin" (Rom. 6:18). Christians have been emancipated from their former bondage: "Sin shall not have dominion over you" (Rom. 6:14) is now the Divine promise to them. It is not that the sinful nature has been removed from them, but that its sovereign power has been broken. Sin may harass them but they are no more its slaves. Believers may fall but they shall not be utterly cast down (Psa. 37:24). Here, then, is the third aspect of Christian liberty: believers have been delivered from the bondage of sin, and if they will but avail themselves of God's all-sufficient grace, they will find that full provision has been made for them to enjoy complete deliverance from the servitude of sin. That we do not enjoy this is entirely our fault.

4. Christian liberty is deliverance from the Authority of Man. The Christian belongs to Christ. He has been bought with a price. He is "the Lord's freeman" (1 Cor. 7:22). Consequently no man and no set of men have any right to impose any restraints on his conscience. No man and no set of men have any right to tell the Christian what he must believe or what he must do (his civic life excepted). For the State to interfere in connection with spiritual things is iniquitous tyranny. If the State were to demand my subscription to a man-made creed, that would be an attack upon my Christian freedom. If the State were to demand that my children should be baptized and join some church, that would be an unlawful infringement of my Christian liberty. The Lord's people in the United States cannot be sufficiently thankful to God for the religious liberty which is granted them in this favored land. And the least they can do in return is to earnestly pray the Lord for His blessing to rest on the President and the members of Congress, that such privileges may be continued.

It is this particular aspect of Christian freedom which the apostle pressed upon the Galatian saints. They had been harassed by certain Judaizers who demanded that they be circumcised; and it was in view of this (and of this alone) that the apostle said to them, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (5:1). He hereby reminds them that to submit to the demand of the Judaizers would be to repudiate the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free. Mark that Paul is not here addressing Jewish believers, but Gentile believers. Proof of this is found in the very next verse: "If ye be circumcised."

From what, then, had the Galatian believers been "made free" by Christ? The answer is, from the requirements and commandments, from the rituals and ceremonies of man-made religions. "When ye knew not God," said the apostle, "ye did service ("ye were in bondage," Bagster's Interlinear) unto them which by nature are no gods" (4:8). They had been slaves to human traditions and authority. In principle, then, these Judaizers un-authorized by God, were

seeking to drag them back again into that form from which they had been delivered. Hence, continues the apostle, "after that ye have known God or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggerly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" (Gal. 4:9). To submit to circumcision at the hands of men, was not better than a return to their heathen rites. Therefore said the apostle, "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Distain these Judaizers. Refuse to heed them. Do not allow them to rob you of your Christian liberty. They have no right to issue commandments nor impose ordinances. You belong to Christ: heed His commandments and submit to His ordinances.

Our comments above on Gal. 5:1 are confirmed by what we read in 5:11–13: "And I, brethren, yet if I preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? Then is the office of the Cross ceased. I would they were even cut off which trouble you. For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty." Thus it is clear that the "liberty" of which the apostle treats in this epistle is emancipation from all human authority in religious matters, for it is not the moral Law but circumcision that these Judaistic "troublers" were pressing upon these Galatian saints.

It is this particular aspect of Christian freedom which the apostle also pressed on the Colossian saints. The Colossian church had been troubled by the Gnostics, who sought to impose their system of asceticism upon the Lord's people. They had drawn up a series of prohibitions which the apostle summarizes in the words, "Touch not; taste not; handle not, which are all to perish with the using" (Col. 2:21, 22). With these saints the apostle expostulates: "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, after the commandments and doctrines of men?" (vv. 20, 22). His argument here is parallel with the one he used with the Galatians. You belong to Christ, he reminds them ("dead with Him"), why then descend from this privileged place and heed the rules of men. Such rules,

admits the apostle, "have indeed a show of wisdom in all worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body," etc. But a "show" is all they have, for they are "to perish with the using." Well would it be if many of our moderns would study these verses, for there are not a few today who are seeking to impose their own "commandments and doctrines" of "touch not; taste not; handle not." Insofar as Christians heed them they are robbed of their liberty. When a man believes the Gospel, with enlightened faith, he accepts Christ as the alone Lord of his conscience, faith and conduct. "One is your Master, even Christ" (Matt. 23:8), therefore, should he refuse to allow any man (or any woman) to dictate to him what he should touch or taste or handle. Let him give himself, unreservedly, to learning the mind of Christ and responding to it, and leave others to be brought into bondage to "the commandments and doctrines of men" if they are so determined. Let others "neglect" their "bodies" if they wish to; for our part, we believe that "Every creature of God is good and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving" (1 Tim. 4:4); and we desire grace to use them all to God's glory.

5. Christian liberty is deliverance unto the service of God. Thus far we have considered only the negative side—what Christians have been delivered from. Now we take up the positive—what Christians are delivered unto. True liberty is not the right to live as we please, but the power to live as we ought. It is being delivered from the bondage of condemnation, Satan, sin, and men, so that the Christian is now free to serve God. Regeneration effects a change of masters. The one who before was a captive of Satan and the slave of sin is now free to serve God. The lawless rebel has become a loyal subject. This is the central truth in the second half of Rom. 6. We confine ourself now to vv. 16–18 and 22, and as these are so pertinent we give a brief, but clause by clause, exposition:

Verse 16. "Know ye not:" I appeal to a common fact of observation. "That to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey." If I see a number of laborers working in a field, I at once conclude they are the servants of the proprietor of that

field. This illustrates the principle which the apostle here develops and applies. If men are doing the work of Satan, they must be his servants; if they are engaged in the work of God, they must be His servants. Sin is here personified, and sinners are termed its "slaves." "Whether sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness." Death is the wages which sin pays its servants. "Obedience" is also personified here.

V. 17. "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine whereto ye are delivered." Those who had formerly been slaves of sin were now the servants of righteousness, and for this the apostle returns thanks to God. They had obeyed "from the heart," for Christian obedience is spontaneous and cordial, not constrained by fear or produced by force. "That form of doctrine whereto ye were delivered." The Greek words here refer to the moulding of metal. When the melted metal is transferred to a mould, it obeys or conforms to its form. So believers respond to and take their form of character from the mould of Divine doctrine.

V. 18. "Being then made free from sin." In their unregenerate state, God's saints were the slaves of sin; but the Gospel has emancipated them. This emancipation is an intrinsic part of their freedom, though it is far from signifying a state of sinless perfection, or even entire deliverance from the influence of sin. "Ye became the servants of righteousness." Servants of righteousness are men obedient to righteousness.

V. 22. "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." Believers have been emancipated from the state of sin's slavery, and have become the bond-slaves of God. There has been a complete change of masters. The subjection of a slave is absolute and continuous. The slave does not obey his own will, but that of his master. He is under an influence which secures obedience. This is true in spiritual as in natural and external relations. But there is this

vital difference: the slaves of sin are in the most direful bondage; whereas the bond-slaves of God enjoy true liberty. The slave of sin is the helpless victim of his depraved nature; but the bond-slave of God serves freely—his obedience is from the heart!\*

"Christians are free in reference to God. They are 'the Lord's freeman' (1 Cor. 7:22). By this we do not mean that they are not under the strongest obligations to conform their minds and wills to the mind and will of God, and to regulate the whole of their temper and conduct according to the revelation of that mind and will revealed in His Word. They are not free in the sense of being without law to God; to be so, would be the reverse of a privilege; they are 'under the law to Christ' (1 Cor. 9:21)" (Dr. John Brown).

In a word, then, Christian liberty is the freedom of children in contrast from the bondage of prisoners, and just as children are (normally) subject to the government of their parents, so are God's children subject to His government; and the Law is for the regulation of their conduct.

But one more question needs to be faced ere we conclude, namely, If we are under the Law as a rule of life, are we not then subject to its curse? If we break it, must not its curse, necessarily, come upon us? Decidedly not, is our answer. And why? Because Christ suffered its "curse" in the stead of His people (Gal. 3:13). David, Elijah, Daniel were "under the Law" (not for salvation, but governmentally), and they broke it. Were they, then, under its curse? Surely not. On what principle, then (governmental principle) does God act towards His children who break the Law? A pertinent question, and one to which a clear scriptural answer may be returned. Let the reader turn to Psalm 89 and there he will read, "If his children forsake My Law and walk not in My judgments; if they break My statutes, and keep not My commandments; Then I will visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes, Nevertheless My lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer My faithfulness to fail" (vv. 30–33)!

In closing, let us repeat, that Christian liberty is not only emancipation from sin and Satan, but it is deliverance unto the service of God: "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God ... he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant," that is, "bond-slave" (1 Cor. 7:19–22). Freedom that does not issue in "keeping the commandments of God" is a delusion. "As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the bondslaves of God" (1 Pet. 2:16). The greatest freedom is enjoyed by him who is most subject to the Law of God which is "holy and just and good." That is why God's Law is termed "the Law of liberty" (James 2:12), an expression which must be utterly unintelligible to the carnal mind, but one that is perfectly simple to the man who is controlled by the Holy Spirit. Anything short of this complete subjection to the Law is bondage. Let us not be deceived, then, by those who promise a spurious liberty, for "they themselves are the slaves of corruption" (2 Pet. 2:19). Let us not be found "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness" (Jude 4). Rather let us heed that word of the apostle Paul, "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another" (Gal. 5:13). Be these the breathings of our soul: Lord, my sweetest liberty is obedience to Thee; my highest freedom wearing Thy yoke; my greatest rest bearing Thy burden. O, how love I Thy Law after the inward man! I delight to do Thy will, O my God! The Lord grant unto us that we "being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all their days of our life" (Luke 1:75, 75).

## **The Christian Sabbath**



IS there such a thing as a Christian "Sabbath?" Some of the leading Bible teachers of the day answer emphatically, There is not. They say that such an expression is a contradiction in terms. They challenge us to find the words anywhere in the Bible. And because this cannot be done, many people rashly conclude that there is no such thing as a Christian Sabbath. And yet, these same people speak frequently of "Christian baptism." What will happen when we declare that nowhere in the Bible is that expression to be found! Will that prove there is no such thing as Christian baptism? In like manner, we read nowhere in the New Testament of the Christian dispensation, of the Christian life, or of the Christian anything. The fact is that the word "Christian" as an adjective is never used once in God's Word. Therefore, the absence of such an expression as "the Christian Sabbath" proves nothing, one way or the other.

But if "the Christian Sabbath" is a non-scriptural expression are we justified in using it? Does not the fact that man has coined the term prove, or at least go far to show, that that for which it stands is also a human invention? Not necessarily. "Christian baptism" is a non-scriptural term, but does this forbid our use of it? Certainly not. How, then, are we to decide on such matters? Is each man to be a law unto himself? Is it to be left to an arbitrary decision? Surely not. What, then, is the principle which is to determine the legitimacy of such non-scriptural expressions? Plainly it is this: Does the thing which we designate "Christian" have an objective existence in the New Testament? We speak of "the Holy Trinity," of "the Divine Incarnation," of "the substitutionary work of Christ," yet none of these expressions are found in Scripture. Nevertheless, the realities are; and it is this which justifies our use of them. To speak of Christian baptism is perfectly in order, because the New Testament describes baptisms, under Divine authority, after the Christian dispensation had commenced.

Our inquiry, then, narrows itself down to this: Does God require His people to keep a "Sabbath" during this Christian dispensation? If He does, then such a Sabbath is, necessarily, a Christian Sabbath. If He

does not, then that is the end of the matter. The issue is very simple. It is not an academic one, where a knowledge of Hebrew and Greek are essential to the settlement of it. It is not a matter of terms at all, and those who seek to make it such are simply evading the real issue. Nor does our fundamental inquiry concern which particular day of the week is to be set apart for rest and worship, though that phase of our subject will be carefully examined in its proper place. No, we repeat, it is simply a question as to whether or not God requires those living today to keep the Sabbath holy. And those who have read carefully our booklet "The Saint and the Law," ought to have no difficulty in anticipating the scriptural answer.

The question as to whether or not God requires those living today to keep the Sabbath day holy is only a part of a larger question, namely, Has the moral Law of God been abolished, or is it still in force? Are the Ten Commandments now binding on all who live during this Christian dispensation? In our booklet above referred to we have shown that God still imposes the obligation of conformity to the demands of His moral Law on all rational creatures, inasmuch as that Law has never been revoked. Hence, it follows that the keeping of the Sabbath is still a moral obligation resting on all alive on earth today, for the fourth of those commandments expressly says, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." There is only one possible way by which our previous arguments on the perpetuity of the Law, now applied to the Christian Sabbath, could be overthrown; and that is by pointing to some verse in the New Testament in which we read that the fourth commandment of the Decalogue has been repealed. And this we confidently affirm cannot be done. The New Testament may be read diligently from cover to cover, but it will be searched in vain to find one single categorical declaration that the Sabbath Law has been abrogated. As, then, the fourth commandment has not been repealed, and as the New Testament teaches explicitly, again and again, that the moral Law is binding on Christians, then it follows of invincible necessity that there is a "Christian Sabbath," and that Christians are under bonds to keep it holy.

And right here we might rest our case, fully assured that none can successfully assail it from Scripture. But as the New Testament does not leave the matter at the point we have now reached, neither shall we. We propose, therefore, to show that not only does the New Testament contain no word which declares the Sabbath has been abolished, but that it does teach the Sabbath remains for this dispensation. But before examining the New Testament Scriptures, we shall go first to the Old Testament, principally for the purpose of showing how entirely erroneous are the oft-made assertions that the Sabbath was never designed for any but Israelites and that the Sabbath Law was first promulgated at Sinai.

## **I. The Institution of the Sabbath**

"And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made" (Gen. 2:2, 3). This passage records the institution of the Sabbath. Lest any should wish to cavil because the word "Sabbath" is not found in Gen. 2:2, 3, we call attention to the fact that in Ex. 20:11 Jehovah Himself expressly terms that first "seventh day" the "Sabbath day:" "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."

The second chapter of Genesis opens with the words, "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them." And then, the very next thing we read of is the institution of the Sabbath rest. Thus, to institute the Sabbath was God's first act after the earth had been made fit for human habitation! Let us now point out four things in connection with this first scripture in which the Sabbath is referred to.

1. The primal Sabbath was a rest day. Emphasis is laid upon this feature by the repetition in thought which is found in the two parts of

Gen. 2:2. First, on the seventh day "God ended His work which He had made;" second, "And He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made." Therefore the prime element and basic truth connected with the Sabbath is rest. Before raising the question as to why God "rested," let us offer a few words upon the nature of His rest.

It has been said repeatedly by a certain class of expositors, that this rest of God consisted of His satisfaction in the work of His hands; that it was God looking out in complacency over His fair creation. But, we are told, that this "rest" of God did not last for long: it was rudely broken by the entrance of sin, and ever since man fell God has been "working:" John 5:17 being appealed to in proof. That such a definition of the "rest" of God in Gen. 2:2 should have been received by a large number of the Lord's people, only goes to show how few of them ever do much thinking or studying for themselves. It also proves how the most puerile interpretations of Scripture are likely to be accepted, providing they are made by reputable teachers, who on other matters are worthy of respect. Finally, it demonstrates what a real need there is for every one of us to humbly, prayerfully, and diligently bring everything we read and hear to a rigid examination in the light of Holy Scripture.

That God's "rest" in Gen. 2:2 was not the complacency of the Creator prior to the entrance of sin, is unequivocally evidenced by the fact that Satan had fallen before the time contemplated in that verse. How could God look abroad upon creation with Divine contentment when the highest creature of all had become the basest and blackest of sinners? How could God find satisfaction in all the works of His hands when the anointed cherub had apostatized, and in his rebellion had dragged down with him "the third part" of the angels (Rev. 12:4)? No; this is manifestly untenable. Some other definition of God's "rest" must therefore be sought.

Now we need to pay very close attention to the exact wording here (as everywhere). Gen. 2:2 does not say (nor does Ex. 20:10) that God

rested from all work, for that was not true. Gen. 2:2 is careful to say, "On the seventh day God ended His work which He had made," and "He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made." And this brings out and calls attention to the basic feature and primal element in the Sabbath: it is a resting from the activities commonly pursued during the six working days. But the Sabbath day is not appointed as a day for the cessation of all activities—to remain in bed and sleep through that day would not be spending the Sabbath as God requires it to be spent. What particular works are required and are permissible, we shall show later; but what we now press upon the reader is the fact that, according to Gen. 2:2, the Sabbath rest consists of resting from the labors of the working week.

Gen. 2:2 does not state that on the seventh day God did no work, for, as we have said, that would not have been true. God did work on the seventh day, though His activities on the seventh day were of a different nature from the ones in which He had been engaged during the preceding days. And herein we see not only the marvellous accuracy of Scripture, but the perfect example God here set before His creatures, for as we shall yet see there are works suited to the Sabbath. For God to have ceased all work on that first seventh day in human history, would have meant the total destruction of all creation. God's providential working could not cease, or no provision would be made for the supply of His creatures' wants. "All things" needed to be "upheld" or they would have passed back into non-entity.

Let us fix it firmly in our minds that rest is not inertia. The Lord Jesus has entered into "rest" (Heb. 4:10), yet is He not inactive, for He ever liveth "to make intercession." And when the saints shall enter their eternal rest, they shall not be inactive, for it is written, "And His servants shall serve Him" (Rev. 22:3). So here with God. His rest on that first day was not a rest of total inactivity. He rested from the work of creation and restoration, but He then began (and has never ceased) the work of Providence—the providing of supplies for His myriad creatures.

But now the question arises, Why did God rest on the seventh day? Why did He so order it that all the works recorded in Gen. 1 were completed in six days, and that then He rested? Certainly it was not because the Creator needed rest, for "the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary" (Isa. 40:28). Why, then, did He "rest," and why is it so recorded on the top of the second page of Holy Writ? Surely there can be only one answer: As an example for man! Nor is this answer merely a logical or plausible inference of ours. It rests on Divine authority. It is based directly upon the words of none other than the Son of God, for He expressly declared, "The Sabbath was made for man" (Mark 2:27): made not for God, but for man. Nothing could be plainer, nothing simpler, nothing more unequivocal.

2. The next thing that we would carefully note in this initial reference to the Sabbath is, that Gen. 2:3 tells us this day was blessed by God: "And God blessed the seventh day." The reason why God blessed the seventh day was not because it was the seventh, but because "in it He had rested." Hence, when the Sabbath law was written upon the tables of stone, God did not say, "Remember the seventh day to keep it holy," but, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." And again, He did not say, "He blessed the seventh day and hallowed it" but "He blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."

But why should He? Why single out the seventh day thus? Young's Concordance defines the Hebrew word for "blessed" here as "to declare blessed." But why should God have "declared" the seventh day blessed for there is no hint that He pronounced any of the other days blessed. Surely it was not for the mere day's sake. Only one other alternative remains: God declared the seventh day blessed because it was the Sabbath day, and because He would have every reader of His Word know, right at the beginning, that special Divine blessing marks its observance. This at once refutes a modern heresy and removes an aspersion which many cast upon God. The Sabbath was not appointed to bring man into bondage. It was not designed to be a burden, but a blessing! And if history demonstrates anything, it

demonstrates beyond a peradventure that the family or nation which has kept the Sabbath day holy, has been markedly blest of God; and contrariwise, that the family or nation which has desecrated the Sabbath, has been curst of God. Explain it as we may, the fact remains.

3. Gen. 2:3 teaches us that the Sabbath was a day set apart for sacred use. This comes out plainly in the words, "And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it" "And God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it" (R. V.). The prime meaning (according to its scriptural usage) of the Heb. word rendered "sanctified" and "hallowed," is "to set apart for a sacred use." This shows that here in Gen. 2:3 we have something more than a historical reference to the resting of God on the seventh day, and something more, even, than God setting an example before His creatures. The fact that we are told God "sanctified" it, proves conclusively that here we have the original institution of the Sabbath, the Divine appointment of it for man's use and observance. As exemplified by the Creator Himself, the Sabbath day is separated from the six preceding days of manual labor.

4. Let us call attention to a notable omission in Gen. 2:3. If the reader will turn to Gen. 1 he will find that at the close of each of the six working days the Holy Spirit says "And the evening and the morning were," etc.—see Gen. 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31. But here in Gen. 2:2, 3 we do not read, "And the evening and the morning were the seventh day;" nor are we told what took place in the eighth day. In other words, the Holy Spirit has not mentioned the ending of the "seventh day." Why is this? There is a reason for every omission in Scripture, a Divine reason: and there is a reason why the Holy Spirit omitted the usual formula at the close of the seventh day. We suggest that this omission is a silent but most significant intimation that the observance of the Sabbath never would end—it was to be perpetuated as long as time should last.

Before we proceed further, let it be said that Gen. 2 contains nothing whatever which enables us to determine which day of our week this

primal "seventh day" was. We have absolutely no means of knowing whether that original seventh day fell on a Saturday, a Sunday, or any other day of the week; for the simple reason that we are quite unable to ascertain on which day that first week began. All we do know, and it is all which is necessary for us to know, is, that the seventh day was the day which followed six days of manual work. As to which day of the week is the Christian Sabbath will be considered later.

Ere passing from Gen. 2 let us duly weigh the fact that this notice of the Divine institution of the Sabbath is placed almost at the very beginning of Holy Writ. Nothing takes precedence save the brief announcement in the first two verses of Gen. 1 and the description of the six days' work of creation and restoration. This at once impresses us with the great importance which God Himself places upon the Sabbath and its observance. Before a single page of human history is chronicled, before a single act of Adam is described, the Holy Spirit places before us the institution of the Sabbath! Does not this signify, plainly, that the observance of the Sabbath—the sanctifying of a seventh day—is a primary duty! More over, are we not thereby plainly warned that failure to keep the Sabbath day holy is a sin of the first magnitude! Let us consider next,

## **II. The Primitive Observance of the Sabbath**

By the primitive observance of the Sabbath we refer to the recognition and keeping of a Sabbath before the formal proclamation of the Decalogue at Sinai. It is frequently asserted that the Sabbath Law originated at the time when Jehovah wrote the Ten Commandments on the two tables of stone. But as we have already shown, this is an error. The Sabbath was instituted before the fall. It is one of the two things (the marriage tie and the Sabbath) which come to us out of Eden. But in this second section we are to discuss the primitive observance of the Sabbath.



Is there any inspired record of men keeping the Sabbath before Israel reached Sinai? In seeking an answer to this, we have to turn to the book of Genesis and the first eighteen chapters of Exodus, and ere we consult them, it is well to remember their general character. No less than twenty-five hundred years of human history are covered by those first sixty-eight chapters of the Bible. Thus it is evident at once that the Holy Spirit has seen fit to give us little more than a fragmentary account of what transpired during the infancy of our race. Therefore, we must not expect to find here anything more than a few references to the Sabbath, and these of the briefest nature. The same will apply to almost any other theme. If we confined ourself to the first sixty-eight chapters of the Bible, and took up the study of the Person of the Holy Spirit, the light possessed by believers on what lies beyond death, the subject of prayer, angels, temperance, or any other moral virtue, while we should find something said about each of these subjects, we should not find very much, in fact, little more than hints and occasional notices. So it is in connection with the Sabbath. There are unmistakable references to the Sabbath, but they are few in number and incidental in character.

1. We ask the reader to turn to Gen. 4:3 and note thoughtfully the marginal reading—which, as usual, is to be preferred to the reading in the text. "And at the end of days it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord." Here the Holy Spirit has seen well to call our attention to the time when Cain (and Abel likewise: see Gen. 4:4, "And Abel he also," etc.) brought his offering to the Lord. The bringing of offerings by Cain and Abel was the formal recognition of God. It was an act of worship. Now, why has the Holy Spirit told us that the sons of Adam and Eve worshipped God at "the end of days," if it is not to intimate that they worshipped at the Divinely appointed season? And when was that? What is signified by "the end of days?" Surely the unprejudiced reader who comes to the Scriptures in child-like simplicity, desiring to learn the mind of God, will form only one conception here. Surely he will naturally say, Why, the end of days must be the end of the week, and that, of course, is the Sabbath. Very ingenious, says the

objector; but altogether lacking in proof. Not so, is our reply; for in this article we shall not base our appeal upon anything that is not backed up by clear Scripture proof.

What is meant by "the end of days?" We have suggested above, that it signifies the end of the week, that is, the end of the work-days. How can this be proven? In a very simple way: by an appeal to the context. If the first three chapters of Genesis be read through, it will be found they mention one "end" and one only, and that is in Gen. 2:2. There we read, "And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made." Thus the only "ending" referred to in the context is the ending of the six days' work. Now, as Scripture ever interprets Scripture, as it defines its terms by the way they are used in other passages, and as the law of the context is what ever fixes the meaning of any given clause, so here in Gen. 4:3; the "end of days" means, and can only mean, the end of the working week; therefore, it was on the Sabbath day, that Cain and Abel, according to Divine appointment, brought their offerings to the Lord as an expression of their worship. We say by Divine appointment, and we appeal to Heb. 11:4 in proof. It was "by faith" that Abel offered unto God, and as faith "cometh by hearing" (Rom. 10:17), Abel must have heard what God required and when He required this formal recognition and worship of Himself.

Here, then, in Gen. 4:3 we have a scripture which proves four things: first, that previously to the days of Cain and Abel a Sabbath had been instituted. Second, that this Sabbath came at the end of a week of work. Third, that it was recognized by the sons of Adam and Eve. Fourth, that it was set apart for sacred use, namely, the worship of God.

2. We turn next to Gen. 5:29: "And he called his son Noah (rest), saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed." Let it be said that we do not base any argument on this verse, nor do we adduce it as one of our proof texts for the primitive observance of the Sabbath. We simply call attention to it as scripture of interest in this

connection; though personally, the writer regards it as one of significance and as one that contains more than a hint that there was a Sabbath instituted and recognized long before the time of Moses.

The verse just quoted above gives us the reason why Lamech named his son "Noah." The fact that the Holy Spirit has recorded this at all at once shows there must be some good reason for it. Names were not given in those early days at the idle caprice of the parents. They were pregnant with meaning; they were frequently given under Divine guidance, and they often memorialized some event of importance. Plainly this was so in our present instance. Lamech belonged to the godly line. He was the son of Methuselah (whose name was certainly given under Divine impulse);\* the grandson of Enoch. Now Lamech called his son Noah, which means rest, and his avowed reason for thus naming him was, "This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands." In the light of Gen. 2:2, 3 is not this profoundly suggestive? Was there not here a reference to the weekly Sabbath? Did not Lamech, in the name given his son, express his gratitude to the great Creator for having provided a weekly Sabbath, as a rest from "work" and "toil!" It was a pious heart looking forward to the Rest of which the weekly Sabbath was both the type and pledge.

3. "And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth" (Gen. 7:10, margin). This verse records the beginning of the great deluge. It is all the more noteworthy because in the next verse we read, "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, in the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up and the windows of heaven were opened." Now surely the Holy Spirit has some good reason for giving us both of these time-marks. He tells us that the flood commenced in the six hundredth year of Noah's life, which was on the seventeenth day of the second month. This is clearly an historic reference. Nothing could be more definite. Why, then, has He also told us, first, that the waters of the flood were on the earth "on the seventh day?" Clearly, because the reference

here is a moral one. It is an explanatory word. It gives us to see one of the reasons, perhaps one of the chief ones, why God visited the earth in such sore judgment. And it conveys a solemn message to us. The flood began on the Sabbath day! Is not the inference inescapable. Is there not only one conclusion we can possibly draw from this? Was it not an act of, what men term, poetic justice? Or, to use a figure of Scripture, were not the antediluvians now commencing to reap what they had sown? Without a doubt, they had flouted the Sabbath institution, as they had every other law of God. They had desecrated the holy day. Therefore, when God visited them in judgment, it was on the Sabbath day that the flood commenced!

4. "And he stayed yet other seven days ... and he stayed yet other seven days" (Gen. 8:10, 12). These references (and to them may be added Gen. 29:27) afford further proof that back in Noah's days the division of time into weeks was a recognized custom. This fact has not received the attention it deserves. How was it, why was it, and when originated this division of time? We quote here from the late Dr. B. H. Carroll, President of the S. W. Baptist Seminary:—

"I ask you to notice this strange historical fact, that for all other divisions of time we have a reason in the motions of the heavenly bodies. The revolution of the earth around the sun marks the division of time into years. The moon's revolution around the earth gives us the month. The day comes from the revolution of the earth upon its axis. But from what suggestion of nature do you get the division of time into weeks? It is a positive and arbitrary division. It is based on authority. The chronicles of the ages record its recognition. But how did it originate?"

"Here in the oldest book, in the first account of man, you will find its origin and purpose. Noah twice recognized it in the ark, when he waited seven days each time to send out his dove. Jacob in the days of his courtship, found it prevalent when he looked for satisfaction in the laughing eyes of Rachel, and the stern father said, 'Fulfill her week.' Why a week? How did he get it? It was God's division of time."

Yes, it was God's division of time; and there is only one way of accounting for it, and that is, the Maker of man set apart one seventh of his days for the worship of the Lord Almighty. And while time shall last—and it shall never end—this will not be changed. Even when this earth has passed away, and there has been created the new earth, wherein righteousness shall dwell, and in which no trace of sin shall be found, the same division of time into weeks will obtain (Isa. 66:23, 24).

5. We ask the reader to turn now to Ex. 16, from which we may learn several things of importance concerning the Sabbath. This chapter records the sending of the manna, as Israel's daily food while they were in the wilderness. Ex. 16 treats of a point in Israel's history prior to their arrival at Sinai. This cannot be gainsaid. And yet, in this very chapter, the Sabbath is expressly mentioned!

Look first at vv. 4 and 5: "Then said the Lord unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in My law or no. And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily." These verses plainly anticipate what is said later in vv. 22 and 23. God was about to give Israel a daily supply of manna. But on the sixth day the supply would be a double one "twice as much" because on the seventh day none would be sent. In this respect Ex. 16 is parallel with Gen. 2:2, 3, inasmuch as once more God condescends to be the Exemplar of His people. Jehovah evidenced His respect for the Sabbath, by withholding the manna on that day. "We may here observe that three miracles in honor of the Sabbath, and to secure it against desecration, were wrought every week before the promulgation of the Law at Sinai. Double the quantity of manna fell on the sixth day. None fell on the Sabbath. The manna preserved for that day did not corrupt" (Robert Haldane).

In the second place, observe carefully God's avowed purpose in thus withholding manna from Israel on the seventh day. His express design was, "to prove them, whether they will walk in My law, or no." And mark it, this was said to Moses before they had reached Sinai! There was, then, a "Law" of God in existence before the Ten Commandments were inscribed on the tables of stone! And, unequivocally, the observance of the Sabbath was part of that Law! In no other way can these words of God to Moses be explained. How this exposes the widely received error of our day, that the Ten Commandments were given at Sinai for the first time, is evident—see Gen. 18:19 and 26:5.

In the third place, let us ponder v. 23: "And he said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, Tomorrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye shall bake today, and seethe that which ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning." Note, Moses did not say, "This is that which the Lord will say," but "This is that which the Lord hath said." What was it, then, that the Lord had said? This: "Tomorrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord." These words repeat the three primal features of the Sabbath: first, it is designed for "rest;" second, it is "holy"—set apart from the six working days; third, it is to be kept "unto the Lord;" that is, it is a day for Divine worship.

In the fourth place, note carefully vv. 27 and 28: "And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep My commandments and My laws?" Here we have illustrated the universal rebellion of the human heart. Here we have exemplified the common tendency to desecrate God's holy day. Even after the most explicit instructions to rest on the seventh day (v. 23), some of the people went out "for to gather." And mark God's response—"How long refuse ye to keep My commandments and My laws?" This was not the first time Israel had profaned the Sabbath. The words "How long" prove this! They also confirm what we said

above on v. 4: "long" before Sinai was reached. Israel had God's "commandments" and "laws!" Jehovah Himself says so, and the man who denies, no matter what his standing or reputation, is guilty of the awful sin of making God a liar. "How long refuse ye" looks back to the wicked conduct of Israel while in Egypt. Let the reader consult Lev. 17:7; Josh. 24:14; Ezek. 20:8.

Finally, observe how v. 29 supplies one more proof that Sabbath-observance was no new thing at this time: "See, for that the Lord hath given you the Sabbath, therefore He giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day." Mark the careful distinction observed in the verbs here: "The Lord hath given you the Sabbath, therefore He giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days." What excuseless ignorance, then, is betrayed by those who affirm that the Sabbath was first instituted at Sinai. It is either ignorance or wilful perversion of the Scriptures, and charity requires us to conclude that it must surely be the former.

### **III. The Sabbath During the Mosaic Economy**

1. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: But the seventh day\* is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day, wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it" (Ex. 20:8–11). These words form part of the Decalogue, and, as shown in our booklet "The Saint and the Law," that Decalogue is lastingly binding on every member of the human race. Before commenting upon the fourth commandment let us first offer a few brief remarks upon the Decalogue as a whole.

In the first place, let the reader note carefully the words with which Exodus 20 opens: "And God spake all these words." Observe it is not

"The Lord spake all these words," but "God spake." This is the more noticeable because in the very next verse He says, "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt," etc. Now the Divine titles are not used loosely, nor are they employed alternately for the purpose of variation. Each one possesses a definite and distinct signification. "God" is the creatorial title (see Gen. 1:1). "Lord" is God in covenant relationship, that is why it is "Lord God" all through Gen. 2. In Gen. 1 it is God in connection with His creatures. In Gen. 2 it is the Lord God in connection with Adam, with whom He had entered into a covenant—see Hosea 6:7, margin. The fact, then, that Ex. 20 opens with "And God spake all these words," etc., proves conclusively that the Ten Commandments were not and are not designed solely for Israel (the covenant people), but for all mankind. The use of the title "God" in Ex. 20:1 is the more forceful because in vv. 2, 5, 7, 10, 11, 12 "the Lord" is named, and named there because Jehovah was Israel's covenant God.

In the second place, the Ten Commandments, and they alone, of all the laws Jehovah gave to Israel, were promulgated by the voice of God, amid the most solemn manifestations and tokens of the Divine presence and majesty.

In the third place, the Ten Commandments, and they alone, of all Jehovah's statutes to Israel, were written directly by the finger of God, written upon tables of stone; and written thus to denote their lasting and imperishable nature.

In the fourth place, the Ten Commandments were further distinguished from all those laws which had merely a local application to Israel, by the fact that they alone were laid up in the ark. A tabernacle was prepared by the special direction of God, and within it an ark was placed, in which the two tables of the Law were deposited. The ark, formed of the most durable wood, was overlaid with gold, within and without. Over it was placed the mercy-seat, which became the throne of Jehovah in the midst of His people. Not until the tabernacle had been erected, and the Law placed in the ark,



did Jehovah take up His abode in Israel's midst. Thus did the Lord signify to Israel that the moral Law was the basis of all His governmental dealings with them.

"The fourth commandment is closely connected with the other commandments. But so far from having any Jewish origin, it is the first and only commandment announced in the opening of the sacred record, and was imposed on our first parents in their state of uprightness and innocence. It thus stands in a peculiar manner at the head of all the commandments, and involves in its breach the abandonment equally of the first and second tables of the decalogue. It is placed at the end of the first table, as the tenth is at the end of the second, as the safeguard of all the rest. It stands between the two tables of our duty to God and our duty to man, as the great foundation and cornerstone binding both together—its observance supporting and conducing to our obedience to the whole" (Robert Haldane).

A few words now concerning the fourth commandment, itself. The commandment opens with the word "Remember." This intimates two things: first, this commandment was not here given for the first time—the word "remember" looks back to Gen. 2:2, 3; second, there is more danger of forgetting this commandment than any of the ten. Then follows a description of how the Sabbath is to be kept: in it no work is to be done. This is not to be taken absolutely, but is modified by other scriptures. What works are permissible we shall see later. In v. 11 a reason is given why the Sabbath must be kept holy: it memorializes God's work of creation. It recognizes Him as earth's Proprietor and owns Him as man's Sovereign.

2. The next time the Sabbath is mentioned is in Ex. 31:13, 14. "Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily My sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep the Sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever

doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people." Two things are to be noted here. First, the Sabbath was God's appointed "sign" between Himself and Israel throughout their generations. The meaning of this is very simple. At the time when God entered into covenant relations with Israel, all other nations had been given up by God (Rom. 1). Not liking to retain Him in their knowledge, they had abandoned themselves to idolatry. For this cause, God had given them up to a reprobate mind. The heathen nations, therefore, kept no Sabbath, and, by this time, in all probability knew not that their Creator required them to. But to Israel, God had made known His laws. He had favored them with a written revelation of His will. He had blessed them in many other ways. And now He tells them the "sign" or "token" (as the Hebrew word is frequently rendered) that they were His people—a people separated from all others (note "sanctify you" in v. 13)—would be their observance of His Sabbath. Thus, by singling out from all of the Ten Commandments the fourth, and making obedience to it the "sign" of Israel's privileged relation to Jehovah, God once more signified (as in Gen. 2, and Ex. 16) the supreme importance He attaches to the keeping holy of the seventh day!

The second point we would note in this passage from Ex. 31 is, that God here attached the death penalty to the desecration of the Sabbath. Now in connection with this there are several things which need to be carefully borne in mind. First, this was not a part of the Decalogue, which, as we have seen, is binding on all men. Second, this death penalty was attached to the Sabbath only as that Sabbath was a "sign" between Jehovah and Israel! Third, this death penalty, therefore, is not a part of the moral Law proper, and consequently, does not apply to Gentiles or Christians who are guilty of disobedience to the fourth commandment. To show that this is no invention of ours to dispose of a difficulty, we ask the reader to note carefully the contents of Lev. 20:10: "And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death." Now, "Thou shalt not commit adultery" was

one of the Ten Commandments engraven upon the tables of stone, but no death penalty was attached to it there. That it was so here shows, again, that this was peculiar to Israel. "Marriage was an ordinance of God from the beginning, coeval with that of the sanctification of the seventh day; but marriage had some peculiarities among the Jews such as the marrying the brother's wife, which is done away. Shall we say, because these peculiarities are done away, that the ordinance of marriage which was established in the garden of Eden, is also done away?" (Robert Haldane). Once it is clearly perceived that it is not the Mosaic Law which is binding on men today, but the moral Law, inscribed on the tables of stone, many (if not all) difficulties will vanish like mists before the sun.

There is no need for us to examine now every scripture in the Old Testament where the Sabbath is mentioned, for most of the references pertain to that which was peculiar to Israel. What we are here concerned with is the Sabbath as an intrinsic part of God's moral Law, which is of perpetual force and binding upon all. We shall, therefore, confine ourselves to passages bearing more or less directly on our present inquiry.

3. "Thou camest down also upon Mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: And madest known unto them Thy holy Sabbath" (Neh. 9:13, 14). These words formed part of Nehemiah's address to the remnant of the Jews who had returned to Jerusalem after their captivity in Babylon. Here Nehemiah reviews Jehovah's past dealings with their fathers. Observe closely a distinction which he drew between the Sabbatic Law and the other laws. He says, "Thou ... gavest them right judgments, and true laws," etc.; and then declares, "And madest known unto them Thy holy Sabbath." This supplies us with another proof that the Sabbath was not newly appointed when promulgated at Sinai. It proves that the Sabbath had been previously instituted, or why distinguish it thus from the commandments "God gave" at Sinai? It shows there was a need for God to say, "Remember the Sabbath day." It evidences the

fact that the Sabbath had been forgotten, yea, lost to Israel, during their four hundred year sojourn in Egypt. It reveals the fact that God now restored to Israel their full knowledge of it.

It is indeed a sad commentary on human nature to read in this same book of Nehemiah the lack of respect some of those Israelites paid to the fourth commandment. "In those days, saw I in Judah some treading winepresses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. There dwelt men of Tyre there also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the Sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that you do, and profane the Sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath" (13:15–18).

As we pass along, it is interesting to note that the inscription to Ps. 92 is, "A Song for the Sabbath Day." It contains instruction upon the way in which we should occupy ourselves on the holy Sabbath.

4. "Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil" (Isa. 56:2). Here the Lord pronounces the man "blessed" that polluteth not His holy day. Therefore, by necessary implication, the one who defiles it is cursed.

5. "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day,—and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken

it" (Isa. 58:13, 14). Notice carefully the words, "Call the Sabbath a delight." How this rebukes the blasphemies of men, who, today, speak of the Sabbath as a yoke of bondage, a burden grievous to be borne!

#### **IV. Christ and the Sabbath**

What attitude did the incarnate Son of God take to the Sabbath? How did He act in regard to it, and what was His teaching concerning it? We answer, unhesitatingly, He honored it; He kept it; He upheld its claims upon men. First, He was Himself "made under the Law" (Gal. 4:4); therefore, did He keep it perfectly, in thought and word and deed. Second, nowhere did Christ so much as hint at the repeal of the Sabbath, instead, He expressly declared, "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill" (Matt. 5:17). Thus, did He "magnify the Law and make it honorable" (Isa. 42:21). But to consider His attitude to the Sabbath in detail:

1. "And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day" (Luke 4:16). This is the first passage, chronologically. It casts light on the pre-ministerial life of Christ. It shows that, before He entered upon His great mission, that it had been His custom to attend the synagogue on the Sabbath day. Therefore, it informs us how Christ had been wont to spend the Sabbath during those quiet years in Nazareth, before His public work commenced. It proves that He honored the Sabbath. And mark it carefully, this is recorded not in Matthew, the distinctively Jewish Gospel; but in Luke, the distinctively Gentile Gospel. Not simply as "Son of David" did He honor the Sabbath, but as "Son of man." Nor was it only during His official ministry as the Minister of the Circumcision, that He thus observed the Sabbath; but before He presented Himself to Israel as their Messiah. Another clear intimation is this that the Sabbath is binding not only upon Jews, but upon all men!

2. "At that time Jesus went on the Sabbath day through the corn; and His disciples were an hungered, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto Him, Behold, Thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath day" (Matt. 12:1, 2). This is one of several passages which record the criticism which the Saviour encountered from His enemies. And it is instructive and important to note the different answers He gave in self-vindication. Here, He reminded His detractors that the Scriptures furnished examples—in the case of David and of the priests in the Temple—that works of necessity were permissible. Those works which are required in order to supply real human wants are not a violation of the Sabbath law. Similarly, in Matt. 12:11, 12 we read, "And He said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days." These words of the Son of God affirm that works of mercy performed on the Sabbath day are "lawful."

Thus, we have scriptural authority for saying that, the words "In it thou shalt not do any work" in Ex. 20:10, are not to be taken absolutely, but are to be understood in the light of these qualifications of Christ. All works which are not works of mercy and works of absolute necessity for man's well-being are Divinely forbidden. But those acts which are essential for the good of ourselves and others, are sanctioned by the example and teaching of the Law-giver Himself. In the application of these two qualifications to our lives, each one must seek Divine guidance for himself. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God" (James 1:5). Works done in the seeking of pleasure are plainly sinful. Cooking food on Sunday is unnecessary, and is, therefore, a breach of the Sabbatic law. Travelling in trains or on street cars is not an absolute necessity, and hence, when used on the Sabbath, is wrong. Writing business letters on Sunday—no matter how important—is a desecration of the Lord's day. The reading of Sunday newspapers is a "polluting" of the Sabbath. But there is no need to enter further into details.

3. "He said unto them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27, 28). There are three points in this passage we desire to emphasize. First, our Lord declares, "The Sabbath was made for man." This at once refutes those who say that the Sabbath was designed for none but Israel. The Sabbath was made for man's blessing. The Sabbath was made for man, that he might be a man in the highest sense of the word—something nobler than a beast of burden; something more than a cash register. The Sabbath was made for man because he needed it: his body needs it, his soul needs it. "His mind is finite; his body mortal. His powers of endurance and of persistent application are limited. He cannot work unceasingly. He needs regular periods of rest for his body and his mind. He must also have stated periods for enjoying and worshipping God, that his soul may be fed and nourished" (Dr. Carroll).

In the second place, note well the force of the "therefore"—"Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." It signifies that since the Sabbath is made not merely for Israel, but for man, that consequently "the Son of Man," not "the Son of David," is it's Lord. Because Jesus was more than a Jew, because in becoming incarnate He touched all humanity, then, as "Son of man" He is "Lord also" of the Sabbath.

In the third place, mark how Christ here speaks of Himself in relation to the Sabbath. He says that He is "Lord," not the "Destroyer" of the Sabbath but "Lord of the Sabbath." He is not the Repealer or the Abolisher of the Sabbath, but its Sovereign. He is its "Lord" because He instituted it—John 1:1–3 proves this: He was the Creator. As the Creator, then, He instituted the Sabbath "for man," that is, for his benefit, to be a blessing to him. And this supplies another unanswerable argument which proves that the Sabbath originated not at Sinai, but in Eden. We may state it thus: The Sabbath was made for man: it was made for man because he needed it: therefore, it would have been unmerciful if the Maker of man had

withheld it for twenty-five hundred years! This argument may be avoided, but it cannot be answered.

4. "But pray that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day" (Matt. 24:20). These words were uttered by Christ at the close of His public ministry. "The earliest possible period to which this direction can refer, is the siege of Jerusalem—a period at least forty years after the ascension of Christ, that is, after the full establishment of the Gospel dispensation, and after 'the Gospel of the kingdom had been preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations' (v. 14 and cf. Col. 1:6). At such an advanced period in the Gospel age, and in a season, too, of unparalleled distress, the disciples were, by the direction of their Lord, to make it a matter of special prayer that they might not need to take their flight on the Sabbath day.... It is impossible to entertain due respect to Christ as an infallible teacher, without admitting it to be His clear intention in this passage, that the weekly Sabbath should continue after the Gospel dispensation was fully set up" (F. Fairbairn).

## **V. Christianization of the Sabbath**

It should be apparent that the particular day of the week on which the Sabbath is to be observed, resolves itself into what Covenant we do walk under before God. If the Sinaitic covenant has been disannulled, then of necessity the Day of rest has been changed. On the other hand, to insist that the Sabbath as given to the Jews is not abolished, requires us to perpetuate the whole system of Mosaic ordinances which sound on the same bottom with it. That this is not simply an inference or dogmatic assertion of ours, that it is actually a scriptural proposition, is clear from the whole argument of Heb. 7–10. "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law" (Heb. 7:12). "The covenant being changed, the rest which was the end of it being changed, and the way of entering into God's rest being changed, a change of the day of rest must of necessity thereon ensue" (John Owen). With these



introductory remarks we now proceed to offer proofs for the first day of the week being the Christian Sabbath.

First, it was plainly adumbrated in O. T. times. This change in the weekly Day of rest from the last to the first day of the week, that is, from the seventh to the eighth, as everything pertaining to the Christian era, was intimated under various types and shadows. The work of creation was finished in six days, and on the seventh God rested from His work, which completed a week, or the first series of time. The eighth day, then, was the first of a new series, and on that day Christ rose as the Head of a new creation. The eighth day is accordingly signalized in the O. T., pointing in a manner the most express to the day when Christ entered into His rest, and when in commemoration thereof His people are to rest.

Circumcision was to be administered unto children on the eighth day (Gen. 17:12). On the eighth day, but not before, animals were accepted in sacrifice (Lev. 22:27). On the eighth the consecration of Aaron as high priest, and his sons, after various ceremonies, was completed (Lev. 9:1). On the eighth was the cleansing from issues, emblematic also of sin (Lev. 15:29). On the eighth day atonement was made for the Nazarite who was defiled (Num. 6:10). When the sheaf of the first fruits was brought to the priest, it was to be accepted on the eighth day (Lev. 23:11)—a distinctive type of the resurrection of Christ. The eighth day was sanctified at the dedication of the Temple (2 Chron. 7:9), and in its sanctification at the time of Hezekiah (2 Chron. 29:17).

Now can any spiritual mind suppose for a moment that this repeated signalization of the eighth day, in connection with the most solemn services of God's ancient people and in a manner so conspicuous, was without a special purpose? Did not the wisdom of God single out that day for some very important end? intimating thereby an antitypical new beginning? The eighth day corresponds with the first day of the week, on which according to all those appointments, Christ was received as the Firstborn from the dead, His sacrifice

accepted, and on which, as the great High Priest He was "consecrated for evermore," having made atonement for His people, by which they are cleansed from all sin. That purpose of God is fully developed in the N. T. where He who is Lord of the Sabbath, without in the slightest degree changing the obligation to observe a seventh day, appropriated to Himself the first instead of the last day of the week.

Second, this change is clearly intimated by what is recorded of the first day in the N. T. The alteration in the day of Sabbath rest and worship was emphasized by Christ's personal visitations to His assembled disciples on the first of the week. After His appearing to the travellers to Emmaus, the Saviour was seen no more until His mysterious and blessed manifestation in the upper room. "Then the same day at evening, being the first of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you" (John 20:19). What is the Holy Spirit's object here in mentioning the particular day of the week? Was it not to inform us that this is now a particular day? Jews would understand at once what was signified by the notice that a religious "assembly" occurred on the seventh day, and Christians are to equally understand what is denoted by such an allusion to the first day.

The next detail to be noticed in the above passage is "the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews." What is indicated by those words? Let it be remembered that the Lord had already "opened their understandings that they might understand the Scriptures" (Luke 24:45), which must mean that, in a measure at least, they now knew the types had given place to the reality. We also know that "He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments unto the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs" (Acts 1:2, 3). What other conclusion, then, can be drawn, but that the disciples now observed the Sabbath on the first day of the week, and that they therefore took the precaution of fastening the doors because they

knew how incensed the Jews would be for their departure from the ancient observance of the Sabbath on the seventh day?

Thomas was absent on the above occasion, and when he learned of its marvels, expressed strong unbelief. Throughout the week the Lord Jesus did not re-appear. But when the disciples assembled again on the first day of the next week, Thomas being present with them, He stood once more in their midst and said, "Peace be unto you" (John 20:26). Is there nothing marked by that interval of time? His other interviews with them are not thus dated! Surely the fact that Christ was not seen by His disciples for a whole week, and that He then appeared to them again on the first day when they met for special worship, clearly signifies His definite sanction of this as the appointed day of meeting with His disciples. And is not this most expressly confirmed by the Holy Spirit's advent at Pentecost? Most assuredly the Spirit's descent on the first day of the week crowned this ordinance and ratified the newly-instituted Christian Sabbath.

Third, the first day of the week was celebrated by the early Church. That this was how the apostles understood the matter appears from their custom, for they assembled together for the breaking of bread and the preaching of the Word "on the first day of the week" (Acts 20:7). Are we not compelled to conclude that what the apostles did, and what the churches did under their supervision, must have been done in accord with the revealed will of their Divine Master? But it will be objected, If God requires the Sabbath to be duly observed on the first day of the week during this Christian dispensation, why has He not given a definite command through His apostles to that effect in the Epistles? To this question we make three replies. In the first place, it savors strongly of impiety: a taking it upon ourselves to say how God is to make known His pleasure to us—He has other ways of declaring His will besides through express precepts.

In the second place, such a question loses sight altogether of the situation in which many of the early Christians found themselves—a situation very different from that which generally obtains today. In

the first generation of the Christian era it was quite impossible for the Sabbath to be kept with the same sacred strictness with which the Jewish Sabbath had been observed. So long as the Christian Church was confined to the boundaries of Palestine, and its members were made up of Jewish believers and proselytes, as it was for some time, it was required of all the converts to continue in an exact observance of the Jewish Sabbath in compliance with the law of the land. They did, in addition, observe the Lord's day so far as that was possible privately; but they had it not in their power to render the first day one of holy rest for all their fellows.

When the Christian Church enlarged her borders and converts from the Gentiles were added thereto, the Christian Sabbath had to encounter most formidable obstacles and was met by almost constant opposition. Let it also be carefully borne in mind that many of the early Gentile converts were the slaves of heathen masters, and it will at once appear how impossible it was for the Church to secure anything approaching Sabbath observance, so far as that implies the setting apart of the first day from all secular interests and the devoting of it solely unto Divine worship. It was therefore most merciful on God's part to lay not upon them a burden which they could not have borne. Nevertheless there is clear evidence that those early Christians devoted at least a part of the first day to special worship so far as their distressed and persecuted state rendered possible.

But in the third place we ask, Is it true that no Divine command for the sanctification of the first day is to be found in the Epistles? And we reply, No, it is not. "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come" (1 Cor. 16:1, 2). "I have given order" is certainly the language of authority, and cannot be regarded as anything less than an apostolic command. It is to be duly noted that Paul "gave order" concerning not only the principle of systematic Christian giving (for the relief of

indigent saints), but also stipulated the time when such collections were to be made, that being appointed for "the first day of the week." Nor was such a regulation peculiar to the church at Corinth, as is intimated by his "so I teach everywhere in every church" (4:17), "so ordain I in all the churches" (7:17). Moreover, he expressly tells us "the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14:27).

"In view of this important verse, we may remark: there is here clear proof that the first day of the week was observed by the church at Corinth as holy time. If it was not, there can have been no propriety in selecting that day in preference to any other in which to make the collection. It was the day which was set apart to the duties of religion, and therefore an appropriate day for the exercise of charity and the bestowment of alms. There can have been no reason why this day should have been designated except that it was a day set apart to religion, and therefore deemed a proper day for the exercise of benevolence towards others. This order extended also to the churches in Galatia, proving also that the first day of the week was observed by them, and was regarded as a day proper for the exercise of charity towards the poor and afflicted. And if the first day of the week was observed, by apostolic authority, in those churches, it is morally certain that it was observed by others. This consideration, therefore, demonstrates that it was the custom to observe this day, and that it was observed by the authority of the early founders of Christianity" (A. Barnes).

It is abundantly clear, then, from this passage that, the first day of the week was by Divine authority appointed for Divine worship, for this "collection" was an act of Christian fellowship. Ere passing on, it should be pointed out that the Greek which is here rendered "the first (day) of the week" is the very same expression that is employed by the four Evangelists in connection with the resurrection of Christ (Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:1; Luke 24:1; John 10:1), also in John 20:19 when He appeared to the disciples in the upper room. The word used is "Sabbaton," which means both "week" and "Sabbaths." Literally,

then, it reads "the first of the Sabbaths," the Holy Spirit using this particular term to denote the beginning of a new series. Thus we need not have the slightest hesitation in speaking of "The Christian Sabbath."

The Christian Sabbath was most strikingly honored by Christ Himself in His glorious appearing on the Isle of Patmos and the prophetic revelation which He there made to His servant John. In narrating the wondrous visions which he there received, the apostle describes the time when they were given to him as "on the Lord's day" (Rev. 1:10). Now all the days of the week are the Lord's, but that one of them should be singled out and thus designated to distinguish it from the others, shows that this day is His in a peculiar sense, as specially devoted to His honour. It is called "the Lord's day" for precisely the same reason that the holy feast is called "the Lord's supper" (1 Cor. 11:20)—the one as a memorial of His death, the other of His resurrection. This particular designation supplies further proof that He is "Lord of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:28).

From the beginning God determined that the ruination of the old creation should be followed by the producing of a new creation, with a new law of that creation, a new covenant, and a new Sabbath rest, unto His own glory by Jesus Christ. The renovation of all things by the Mediator was Divinely foretold (Acts 3:21); it was to be a "time of reformation" (Heb. 9:10). From the Epistles we learn that this renovation of all things has been accomplished by Christ: "old things are passed away," etc. (2 Cor. 5:17)—the old covenant, the old order of worship, the judaical Sabbath. "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, which are in heaven and which are on earth; in him" (Eph. 1:10); only those things pertaining to the Mosaic economy remain which are useful to our living unto God, and they abide not on their old foundation, but on a new disposition of them in Christ: cf. 1 Cor. 9:21.

Thus it is with the Holy Sabbath: it remains, yet it has undergone a decided renovation. As the incarnation of God's Son affected the chronology of the world (for all civilized time is, by common consent, dated from the year of His birth), His death and resurrection terminated the old covenant and ratified the new, and this necessarily resulted in a change of the weekly day of rest.

Fourth, this change is explicitly taught in Heb. 4. "For if Joshua had given them rest then would he not afterward (through David) have spoken of another day" (v. 8). What this other "day" is, may be unequivocally ascertained from the context: it is the Holy Sabbath—"God did rest the seventh day from all his work" (v. 4). So too immediately after mentioning "another day" (that is, another or different one from the "seventh") the apostle went on to say, "There remaineth therefore a Sabbath-keeping to the people of God" (v. 9). In proof of this and also to identify this "another day" he declared, "For he (not 'they,' but 'he,' which is Christ) that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his" (v. 10).

What has just been pointed out is quite simple and easy to understand, but in order to grasp the force of the apostle's argument we need to gird up the loins of our minds and attend very closely to his chain of reasoning. First, we must observe that here in chap. 4 he is continuing what he had said in chap. 3. There he gave an exhortation unto faith, obedience and perseverance (3:1–6), and this he enforced by a quotation from Ps. 95, which contained a pointed exhortation and a solemn warning taken from the case of those who fell under Divine wrath because they were guilty of the sin contrary to the duties of faith, obedience, and perseverance (3:7–11). This he at once follows by making application of the warning unto the Hebrews, and by expounding certain expressions in this quotation which he had made from the Psalmist (3:12–19).

Because the words of Ps. 95 contain not only a warning applicable to N. T. saints, and more especially because those words also had

interwoven in them a prophecy (note "promise" in 4:1) concerning the rest of God in Christ by the Gospel and our duty thereon, Paul proceeded to enlarge upon and confirm his exhortation in 3:12, 13, still using the language of Ps. 95 for that end. First, he propounds the duty which he aimed to press on the Hebrews (4:1, 2). Second, he established the foundation of his exhortation, by showing that the "rest" mentioned by David was still future when he wrote Ps. 95 (v. 3). Third, he enters into a careful discussion of and differentiates between the various "rests" of God (vv. 4–10). Fourth, he concludes by returning to and repeating his original exhortation (v. 11).

Let it be clearly grasped that the apostle's design in Heb. 4:4–11 was to confirm what he had laid down in vv. 1–3, which we paraphrase thus: There is under the Gospel a promise of entering into the rest of God, left or remaining unto believers, and they do enter into that rest by mixing the promise of it with faith. It was the more necessary to press this upon the Hebrews: that notwithstanding their ancient and present enjoyment of the land of Canaan, yet their fathers fell short of entering into God's rest because of their unbelief, and that now they (their children) were under a new trial or test, a new rest being proposed unto them in the promise. This he proves by a testimony out of Ps. 95, whereof he had previously treated in Heb. 3.

Now the application of Ps. 95 to the case of the Hebrews was liable to a serious objection: the "rest" mentioned there by David seemed to be one long since past. If that were the case, then these Hebrews could have no new or fresh concern in it, and therefore could be in no danger of coming short of it. It was to remove such an objection, and to confirm what he had previously advanced, that the apostle occupied himself in what follows, and this he does by a direct appeal to Ps. 95, showing from the proper signification of its words, from the time when it was written, and from the persons there addressed, that no other "rest" was there intended than what was here being proposed by him unto them, namely, the rest of God and His people in the Gospel.



The general argument insisted upon by the apostle to support his design and to establish his purpose, consists in an enumeration of all the various "rests" of God and His people mentioned in the O. T. From the consideration of them all, he proves that no other rest could be intended by the language of David in Ps. 95 than the rest of the Gospel, whereinto all who believe do now enter. This he arrives at, most logically, by a process of elimination. First, the "rest" "promised" (4:1) in Ps. 95 was neither the rest of God from the works of creation, nor the Sabbath rest which ensued thereon (4:4–6). Second, nor was it the rest of Canaan, which Joshua brought the people into (4:7, 8). No, it was a spiritual rest which remained or subsisted for believers to enjoy now (vv. 8–10).

"For if Jesus had given them rest, then would He not afterward have spoken of another day" (v. 8). In this verse the apostle removes a possible objection and gives further confirmation of his argument, by a particular application of it unto the point before him. That which he still insists upon is, his principal assertion from the words of David, namely, the rest prepared and proposed in the Gospel unto believers. To this the Hebrews might object: Although the people who came out of Egypt entered not into the promised rest of God, yet the next generation did so under Joshua—why then propose this rest unto us, and warn against our danger of missing it? This objection is conclusively set aside by showing that God in David proposed "another day" of rest unto Israel centuries after Joshua, and as no new Sabbath was appointed in David's time, his words must be understood prophetically. Hence there was a rest proposed unto the Hebrews (and so us) and "another day" to memorialize it.

"There remaineth therefore a keeping of a Sabbath unto the people of God" (v. 9). The apostle here shows, in a brief summary, what had been conclusively established in his whole disquisition: three things indubitably followed. First, that a Divine and spiritual rest remains for the people of God to enter into and enjoy with Him. Second, that a Sabbath day to memorialize it, and be a means of entering into that rest, abides under the Gospel. Third, that it must of necessity be

"another day," a different one from that which obtained under the old covenant. It is to be duly noted that the apostle did not say "there awaiteth" or "there is yet to be a Sabbath keeping," but "there remaineth." The reference is not to something future, but what is present. This word is used in the same sense when applied negatively to the system of sacrifices: "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins" (Heb. 10:26). How striking, that this occurs in Hebrews! The Levitical priesthood has been set aside, the temple is no more, Judaism is abolished; but a Sabbath remains!

We wish to call special attention to the fact that in v. 9 Paul again deliberately changed his terms. The word for "rest" here in v. 9 is an entirely different one from that used in vv. 1, 3, 5, 8, 10. It is "sabbatismos" which speaks for itself: the R. V. has "There remaineth therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God." It was a word coined by the apostle to express the whole sense of that with which he was treating: that is, to denote both the rest itself and the appointment of "another day" as a token of it—it signifies our rest in God and the Day which is the pledge of it. And this Sabbatismos remaineth—the word "remaineth" signifies to be left after others have been withdrawn (as the primitive and Judaical Sabbaths have), to continue unchanged, as the Christian Sabbath will unto the end of the world. Here, then, is a plain, positive, unequivocal declaration by the Spirit of God: "there remaineth therefore a Sabbath keeping." Nothing could be simpler, nothing less ambiguous, for this is addressed to the "holy brethren partakers of the heavenly calling" (3:1). Hence, we solemnly and emphatically declare that the man who says there is no Christian Sabbath takes direct issue with the N. T. Scriptures.

"There remaineth therefore a keeping of a Sabbath to the people of God." In this and the following verse the apostle evidences the perfect analogy between the several rests of God and His people discoursed of in this chapter. First, at the beginning there was the creative work of God and His resting therefrom, which made way for a rest for His creatures in Himself and His worship by the

contemplation of the works which He had made, and a day was specially assigned for that purpose: that was the primitive Sabbatismos. Second, there was a great work of God in bringing Israel out of Egypt and the establishing of His people in Canaan, which made way for their entering into His rest and worship, a Sabbath day being appointed to express both the one and the other: this was the Mosaic Sabbatismos.

So now, under the Gospel, there is a Sabbatismos comprised of all these. As we shall see there was another and greater work of God, and a rest of His own ensued thereon. On that work is founded the promise of rest spiritual and eternal to those who do believe, and the determination of a new day expressive of the one and the other. This is the Christian Sabbatismos. That the redemptive work of Christ has not only secured this spiritual rest to His people, but has also necessitated and resulted in a new Sabbath day to celebrate it, appears from two things in the apostle's discourse. First, by referring to our Gospel rest by the name, of DAY (v. 8). Second, from his coining of this term "Σαββατισμὸς" to express both our spiritual rest and the Sabbath-keeping which memorializes the same.

"For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works as God did from his" (v. 10). Plain and simple as these words are, yet they have been grievously wrested by most of the commentators. They are generally regarded and referring to believers entering into the rest of God, through their believing of the Gospel. But there are two considerations which expose the error of this view. First, the verse does not read, "they who enter into his rest" but "he that is entered into." Second, if the reference was to believers what are the "works" from which they cease? Their sins, say some; their legalistic efforts to win God's approval, say others; their sorrows and sufferings, from which they shall rest in Heaven, say yet others. But how could they be said to rest from such works "AS God from His" own? It is utterly impossible to satisfactorily answer such a question. No, the verse speaks not of believers, but of Christ.

"For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his." There the apostle concludes his argument by declaring that the "rest" which remains for believers to enter into (4:3), and the new day appointed by God for this dispensation (4:9), have a new and special foundation, which the previous rests and days had no interest or concern in, namely, that the Author of it ceased from His own works and entered into His rest. Proofs that this verse refers to Christ are many. First, its opening "For," which denotes that the apostle now indicates whence it is there is a new Σαββατισμὸς remaining for the people of God. He had before shown there could be no such rest but what was founded upon the works of God. Such a foundation this new rest must have, and doth have. It is the work of Him by whom the Church is builded: 3:3, 4.

Second, the change of number in the pronoun from the plural to the singular intimates the same thing. In vv. 1 and 3 the apostle had used "us" and "we," but here "he that is entered." This is the more noticeable because in the verse immediately preceding he had mentioned "the people of God." That it is not them who are here in view further appears from the fact that they never cease from their works while left in this world. No other reason can possibly be given for this change of number except that a single person is here expressed. Third, note it is not simply said of this person that "he that is entered into rest" (as in vv. 3 and 8), but "into his rest" absolutely. God spoke of "My rest;" here He mentions "his rest"—Christ's rest!

Well, then, may we with the utmost confidence exclaim with the Psalmist, "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (118:24). "We observe the day as henceforth our true Sabbath, a day made. and ordained of God, for the perpetual remembrance of the achievements of our Redeemer" (C. H. Spurgeon). It should be pointed out that the passage we have last quoted is part of a remarkable prophecy, which set forth both the humiliation and exaltation of the Lord Jesus—"the sufferings of

Christ and the glory that should follow." The passage is quoted in the N. T. no less than six times, being expressly applied to the Saviour. First, He is seen as "the Stone which the builders refused," and then as "become the head of the corner" (v. 22).

And how could that "Stone," contemptuously trodden underfoot by men, become "the head of the corner?" How indeed except by being raised! It was by His triumph over death that Christ became the Head of the corner—a "corner" is when two walls meet together, and in resurrection Christ became Head of both believing Jews and believing Gentiles. The Psalmist added, "This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes" (v. 23). And then follows "This is the day which the Lord hath made." What could be clearer? How perfectly it accords with Heb. 4:9, 10! That "day" was Divinely "made" to memorialize Christ's victory over the grave: God has "made it remarkable, made it holy, has distinguished it from all other days: it is therefore called the Lord's day, because it bears His image and superscription" (Matt. Henry).

And so it is: the Christian Sabbath is specifically designated "the Lord's day" in Rev. 1:10. It is called such, because it owes its pre-eminence to the Lord's institution and authority. By taking to Himself the title of "the Lord of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:28), Christ clearly intimated His authority to determine which day of the week a Sabbath rest was to be observed by His people, and by ceasing from His works and entering into His rest on the first day of the week, He has "limited" this one for us. Those who are determined to close their eyes to all this evidence and get rid of the first-day Sabbath at any price, wrest these words in Rev. 1:10 by saying they signify "the Day of the Lord"—when He comes in judgment. But the immediate context is dead against them: all that follows from 1:10 to the end of chap. 3 shows that this opening vision respected present and not future things. Moreover, the Greek is different from 2 Pet. 3:10! "The Lord's supper" (1 Cor. 11:21) memorializes His death; "the Lord's day" celebrates His resurrection.

## Conclusion

A brief word on v. 11 must suffice: "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any of you fall after the same example of unbelief." Here the apostle returns to his main exhortation and therefore uses the word ("κατάπαυσιν") employed in vv. 1, 3, to which we refer the reader—thus vv. 4–10 are an explanatory parenthesis. The "fear" of v. 1 is not that of dread or doubt, but of reverential respect unto the Divine threatenings and promises, such as would move its possessors to heed the one and inherit the other. The utmost of our endeavors and efforts are required in order to our obtaining an entrance into the rest of Christ (v. 11). We are to "labour" or give the greatest possible diligence thereto (cf. John 6:27). To mortify sin, deny self, cut off right hands, endure all sorts of afflictions and persecutions, are painful, difficult, and attended with many hardships. The future state of Christians is one wholly of rest, but his present state is a mixed one: partly of rest, partly of labour—labour against sin, rest in the love and grace of God.

Having traced through Scripture the original institution of the Sabbath in Eden, the brief but plain intimations of its observance by the patriarchs, its solemn renewal at Sinai and incorporation into the Moral Law, its being honored by Christ and freed from pharisaical additions, its Christianization, it only remains for us to state in a few words its importance, design, and value. The Sabbath is a memorial of Divine creation. It denotes that God is the sovereign Lord of our time, which is to be used and improved by us as He has specified in the Fourth Commandment. It is a commemoration of Christ's resurrection and a foreshadowing of our Eternal Rest from sin. It is designed to preserve us from becoming wholly absorbed with the things of time and sense. It is a signal means of grace for the promotion of the spiritual life. In proportion as it is kept holy, godliness prospers. A due observance thereof lies at the foundation of a nation's happiness and prosperity. "Blessed is the man that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it" (Isa. 66:2).

Here is a summary of the reasons why Christians should observe the Sabbath on the first day of the week. First, because that day was clearly anticipated by O. T. typology—the striking things connected with "the eighth day." Second, because the New Covenant necessitated a new Day of rest to signify the old covenant was abrogated. Third, because the honour and glory of Christ required it: on the day especially, appointed for Divine worship, God would now have us occupied with His risen and exalted Son. Fourth, His own example bears witness thereto: His repeated meetings with His disciples (John 19) and His sending the Spirit on that day (Acts 2:1) set His imprimatur upon it. Fifth, because the early Church so celebrated it (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1, 2): there is not a single recorded instance in the N. T. of the saints meeting together for worship, after Christ's resurrection on any other day but on the first of the week! Sixth, because we are expressly told that God has "limited" or determined "another day" (Heb. 4:8) than the old one, and that, because that Christ then rose from the dead (v. 10). Seventh, because we are Divinely assured that, in view of the raising up of the rejected Stone to be the head of the corner. "This is the day which the Lord hath made" (Ps. 118:24), and therefore is it called "the Lord's day" in the N. T. (Rev. 1:10).

It is true that though death was the Divinely ordained penalty for the Israelite who polluted the Sabbath, it is not threatened against us today; nevertheless, let not any proud rebel suppose he shall escape the anger of his offended Creator. Gal. 6:7 applies here with its full solemn force: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." No, God is not mocked. He has commanded man to spend one day out of each seven in rest from all unnecessary work, and if he disobeys, God will make him rest, rest on a bed of sickness, and if that does not suffice, rest in death!

# Churches of God

Studies in the Scriptures

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"For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews."  
(1 Thessalonians 2:14)

THE ignorance which prevails in Christendom today concerning the truth about the Churches of God is deeper and more general than error on any other Scriptural subject. Many who are quite sound evangelically and are well taught on what we call the great fundamentals of the faith, are most unsound ecclesiastically. Mark the fearful confusion that abounds respecting the term itself. There are few words in the English language with a greater variety of meanings than "church." The man in the street understands by "church" the building in which people congregate for public worship. Those who know better, apply the term to the members in spiritual fellowship who meet in that building. Others use it in a denominational way and speak of "the Methodist Church" or "Presbyterian Church." Again, it is employed nationally of the state-religious institution as "the Church of England" or "the Church of Scotland." With Papists the word "church" is practically synonymous with "salvation," for they are taught that all outside the vale of "Holy Mother Church" are eternally lost.

Many of the Lord's own people seem to be strangely indifferent concerning God's mind on this important subject. One from whose teachings on the church we differ widely has well said, "Sad it is to hear men devoted in the Gospel, clear expounders of the Word of God, telling us that they do not trouble themselves about church doctrine; that salvation is the all-important theme; and the establishing of Christians in the fundamentals is all that is necessary.



We see men giving chapter and verse for every statement, and dwelling upon the infallible authority of the Word of God, quietly closing their eyes to its teachings upon the church, probably connected with that for which they can give no Scriptural authority, and apparently contented to bring others into the same relationship."

What constitutes a New Testament church? That multitudes of professing Christians treat this question as one of trifling importance is plain. Their actions show it. They take little or no trouble to find out. Some are content to remain outside of any earthly church. Others join some church out of sentimental considerations, because their parents or partner in marriage belonged to it. Others join a church from lower motives still, such as business or political considerations. But this ought not to be. If the reader is an Anglican, he should be so, because he is fully persuaded that his is the most Scriptural church. If he is a Presbyterian, he should be so, from conviction that his "church" is most in accord with God's Word. So, if he is a Baptist or Methodist, etc.

There are many others who have little hope of arriving at a satisfactory answer to the question, What constitutes a New Testament church? The fearful confusion which now obtains in Christendom, the numerous sects and denominations differing so widely both as to doctrine and church-order and government, has discouraged them. They have not the time to carefully examine the rival claims of the various denominations. Most Christians are busy people who have to work for a living, and hence they do not have the leisure necessary to properly investigate the Scriptural merits of the different ecclesiastical systems. Consequently, they dismiss the matter from their minds as being one too difficult and complex for them to hope of arriving at a satisfactory and conclusive solution. But this ought not to be. Instead of these differences of opinion disheartening us, they should stimulate to greater exertion for arriving at the mind of God. We are told to "buy the truth," which implies that effort and personal sacrifice are required. We are bidden to "prove all things."

Now, it should be obvious to all that there must be a more excellent way than examining the creeds and articles of faith of all the Denominations. The only wise and satisfactory method of discovering the Divine answer to our question, What constitutes a New Testament church? is to turn to the New Testament itself and carefully study its teachings about the "church." Not some godly man's views; not accepting the creed of the church to which my parents belonged; but "proving all things" for myself! God's people have no right to organize a church on different lines from those which governed the churches in New Testament times. An institution whose teachings or government are contrary to the New Testament is certainly not a New Testament "church."

Now if God has deemed it of sufficient importance to place on record upon the pages of Inspiration what a New Testament church is, then surely it should be of sufficient importance for every redeemed man or woman to study that record, and not only so but to bow to its authority and conform their conduct thereto. We shall thus appeal to the New Testament only and seek God's answer to our question.

1. A New Testament church is a local body of believers. Much confusion has been caused by the employment of adjectives which are not to be met with in the N. T. Were you to ask some Christians, To what church do you belong? they would answer, The great invisible church of Christ—a church which is as intangible as it is invisible. How many recite the so-called Apostles' Creed, "I believe in the holy catholic Church," which most certainly was not an article in the Apostles' "creed." Others speak of "the Church militant" and "the Church triumphant," but neither are these terms found in Scripture, and to employ them is only to create difficulty and confusion. The moment we cease to "hold fast the form of sound words" (2 Tim. 1:13) and employ unscriptural terms, we only befog ourselves and others. We cannot improve upon the language of Holy Writ. There is no need to invent extra terms; to do so is to cast reflexion on the vocabulary of the Holy Spirit. When people talk of "the universal Church of Christ" they employ another unscriptural and

antisciptural expression. What they really mean is "the Family of God." This latter appellation includes the whole company of God's elect; but "Church" does not.

Now the kind of church which is emphasized in the N. T. is neither invisible nor universal; but instead, visible and local. The Greek word for "church" is ἐκκλησία, and those who know anything of that language are agreed that the word signifies "An Assembly." Now an "assembly" is a company of people who actually assemble. If they never "assemble," then it is a misuse of language to call them "an Assembly." Therefore, as all of God's people never have yet assembled together, there is today no "universal Church" or "Assembly." That "Church" is yet future; as yet it has no concrete or corporate existence.

In proof of what has been said above, let us examine those passages where the term was used by our Lord Himself during the days of His flesh. Only twice in the four Gospels do we find Christ speaking of the "church." The first is in Matthew 16:18 where He said unto Peter, "Upon this Rock I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." What kind of a "church" was the Savior here referring to? The vast majority of Christians have understood it as the great invisible, mystical, and universal Church, which comprises all His redeemed. But they are certainly wrong. Had this been His meaning He had necessarily said, "Upon this Rock I am building My church." Instead, He used the future tense, "I will build," which shows clearly that at the time He spoke, His "church" had no existence, save in the purpose of God. the "church" to which Christ referred in Matthew 16:18 could not be a universal one, that is, a church which included all the saints of God, for the tense of the verb used by Him on this occasion manifestly excluded the O. T. saints! Thus, the first time that the word "church" occurs in the N. T. it has no reference to a general or universal one. Further, our Lord could not be referring to the Church in glory, for it will be in no danger of "the gates of hell!" His declaration that, "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," makes it clear beyond all doubt that Christ was

referring to His church upon earth, and thus, to a visible and local church.

The only other record we have of our Lord speaking about the "church" while He was on earth, is found in Matthew 18:17, "If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." Now the only kind of a "church" to which a brother could relate his "fault" is a visible and local one. So obvious is this, there is no need to further enlarge upon it.

In the final book of the N. T. we find our Savior again using this term. First in Revelation 1:11 He says to John, "What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia." Here again it is plain that the Lord was speaking of local churches. Following this, we find the word "church" is upon His lips nineteen more times in the Revelation, and in every passage the reference was to local churches. Seven times over He says, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches," not "what the Spirit saith unto the Church"—which is what would have been said had the popular view been correct. The last reference is in Revelation 22:16, "I Jesus have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches:" The reason for this being, that as yet, the Church of Christ has no tangible and corporate existence, either in glory or upon earth; all that He now has here is His local "churches."

In further proof that the kind of "church" which is emphasized in the N. T. is a local and visible one we appeal to other facts of Scripture. We read of "The church which was at Jerusalem" (Acts 8:1). "The church that was at Antioch" (Acts 13:1), "The church of God which is at Corinth" (1 Cor. 1:2)—note carefully that though this church is linked with, yet is it definitely distinguished from "all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord,!" Again; we read of "churches" in the plural number: "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria" (Acts 9:31), "The

churches of Christ salute you" (Rom. 16:16), "Unto the churches of Galatia" (Gal. 1:2). Thus it is seen that, that which was prominent and dominant in N. T. times was local and visible churches.

2. A New Testament church is a local body of baptized believers. By "baptized believers" we mean Christians who have been immersed in water. Throughout the N. T. there is not a single case recorded of any one becoming a member of a church of Jesus Christ without his first being baptized; but there are many cases in point, many indications and proofs that those who belonged to the churches in the days of the apostles were baptized Christians.

Let us turn first to the last clause of Acts 2:47: "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be (the V. R. correctly gives it "were") saved." Note carefully it does not say that "God," or "the Holy Spirit," or "Christ," but "The Lord added." The reason for this is as follows: "The Lord" brings in the thought of authority, and those whom He "added to the church" had submitted to His lordship. The way in which they had "submitted" is told us in vv. 41-42: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls," etc. thus, in the earliest days of this dispensation, "the Lord added" to His church saved people who were baptized.

Take the first of the Epistles. Romans 12:4-5 shows that the saints at Rome were a local church. Turn back now to Romans 6:4-5 where we find the apostle saying to and of these church members at Rome, "Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." Thus, the saints in the local church at Rome were baptized believers.

Take the church at Corinth. In Acts 18:8 we read, "Many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." Further proof that

the Corinthian saints were baptized believers is found in 1 Corinthians 1:13–14; 10:2, 6; 1 Corinthians 12:13 rightly translated and punctuated (we hope to deal with this passage separately in a future article) expressly affirms that entrance into the local assembly is by water baptism.

Ere passing to the next point let it be said that a church made up of baptized believers is obviously and necessarily a "Baptist church"—what else could it be termed? This is the name which God gave to the first man whom He called and commissioned to do any baptizing. He named him "John the Baptist." Hence real "Baptists" have no reason to be ashamed of or to apologize for the scriptural name they bear. If someone asks, Why did not the Holy Spirit speak of the "Baptist church at Corinth" or "The Baptist churches of Galatia?" We answer, for this reason: there was, at that time, no need for this distinguishing adjective; there were no other kind of churches in the days of the apostles but Baptist churches. They were all "Baptist churches" then; that is to say, they were all composed of scripturally-baptized believers. It is men who have invented all other "churches" (?) and church-names now in existence.

3. A New Testament church is a local body of baptized believers in organized relationship. This is necessarily implied in the term itself. An "Assembly" is a company of people met together in organized relationship, otherwise there would be nothing to distinguish it from a crowd or mob. Clear proof of this is found in Acts 19:39, "But if ye inquire anything concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly." These words were spoken by the "town clerk" to the Ephesian multitude which was disturbing the peace. Having "appeased the people," and having affirmed that the apostles were neither robbers of churches nor blasphemers of their goddess, he reminded Demetrius and his fellows that "the law is open, and there are deputies," and bade them "implead one another." The Greek word for "assembly" in this passage is ecclesia, and the reference was to the Roman court, i.e., an organization governed by law.

Again, the figures used by the Holy Spirit in connection with the "church" are pertinent only to a local organization. In Romans 12 and in 1 Corinthians 12 He employs the human "body" as an analogy or illustration. Nothing could be more unsuitable to portray some "invisible" and "universal" church whose members are scattered far and wide. The reader scarcely needs to be reminded that there is not a more perfect organization on this earth than the human body—each member in its appointed place, each to fulfil its own office and perform its distinctive function. Again, in 1 Timothy 3:15 the church is called the "house of God." The "house" speaks of ordered relationships: each resident having his own room, the furniture being suitably placed, etc.

Further proof that a New Testament "church" is a local company of baptized believers in organized relationship is found in Acts 7:38, where the Holy Spirit applies the term ecclesia to the children of Israel—"the church in the wilderness." Now the children of Israel in the wilderness were a redeemed, separated baptized, organized "Assembly." Some may be surprised at the assertion that they were baptized. But the Word of God is very explicit on this point. "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Cor. 10:1–2). So, too, they were organized; they had their "princes" (Num. 7:2) and "priests," their "elders" (Ex. 24:1) and "officers" (Deut. 1:15). Therefore, we may see the propriety of applying the term ecclesia to Israel in the wilderness, and discover how its application to them enables us to define its exact meaning. It thus shows us that a New Testament "church" has its officers, its "elders" (which is the same as "bishops"), "deacons" (1 Tim. 3:1, 12), "treasurer" (John 12:6; 2 Cor. 8:19), and "clerk"—"number of names" (Acts 1:15) clearly implies a register.

4. A New Testament church is a local body of baptized believers in organized relationship, publicly and corporately worshipping God in the ways of His appointment. To fully amplify this heading would

necessitate us quoting a goodly portion of the N. T. Let the reader go carefully through the book of Acts and the Epistles, with an unprejudiced mind, and he will find abundant confirmation. Attempting the briefest possible summary of it, we would say: First, by maintaining "the apostles' doctrine and fellowship" (Acts 2:42). Second, by preserving and perpetuating Scriptural baptism and the Lord's Supper: "keep the ordinances" as they were delivered to the church (1 Cor. 11:2). Third, by maintaining a holy discipline: Hebrews 13:17; 1 Timothy 5:20–21, etc. Fourth, by going into all the world and preaching the Gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15).

5. A New Testament church is independent of all but God. Each local church is entirely independent of any others. A church in one city has no authority over a church in another. Nor can a number of local churches scripturally elect a "board," "presbytery," or "pope" to lord it over the members of those churches. Each church is self-governed, compare 1 Corinthians 16:3; 2 Corinthians 8:19. By church-government we mean that its work is administrative and not legislative.

A N. T. church is to do all things "decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:40), and its only authoritative guide for "order" is the Holy Scriptures. Its one unerring standard, its final court of appeal, by which all issues of faith, doctrine, and Christian living are to be measured and settled, is the Bible, and nothing but the Bible. Its only Head is Christ: He is its Legislator, Resource, and Lord.

The local church is to be governed by what "the Spirit saith unto the churches." Hence it necessarily follows that it is altogether separate from the State, and must refuse any support from it. While its members are enjoined by Scripture to be "subject unto the higher powers that be" (Rom. 13:1), they must not permit any dictation from the State in matters of faith or practice.

The administration of the government of a N. T. church resides in its own membership, and not in any special body or order of men, either



within or without it. A majority of its members decide the actions of the church. This is clear from the Greek of 2 Corinthians 2:6, "Sufficient to such a man (a disorderly brother who had been disciplined) is this punishment, which was inflicted of many." The Greek for the last two words is "ὕπὸ τῶν πλειόνων." πλειόνων is an adjective, in the comparative degree, and literally rendered the clause signifies "by the majority," and is so rendered by Dr. Charles Hodge, than whom there have been few more spiritual and competent Greek scholars. Bagster's Interlinear renders it "by the greater portion," and the margin of the R.V. gives "Greek the more." The definite article obliges us to render it "by the more" or "by the majority."

To sum up. Unless you have a company of regenerated and believing people, scripturally baptized, organized on N. T. lines, worshipping God in the ways of his appointing—particularly in having fellowship with the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, maintaining the ordinances, preserving strict discipline, active in evangelistic endeavor—it is not a "New Testament church," whatever it may or may not call itself. But a church possessing these characteristics is the only institution on this earth ordained, built, and approved of by the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence, next to being saved, the writer deems it his greatest privilege of all to belong to one of His "churches." May Divine grace increasingly enable him to walk as becometh a member of it.

## **Communion**

"Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." (1 Peter 5:7)

THIS means just what it says. Christian reader, there ought to be no restraint between you and the Lover of your soul. He would have you be on, and maintain, more intimate terms with Himself, than with any human creature. He is always accessible, and never changes in His feelings toward you. He would have you make Him your "Friend:" not only your Counselor, but your Confident—the One into whose ear (and the only one) you are to pour the very secrets of your heart. He would have you be quite artless and natural, just like a little child coming to its mother, pouring into her ear its every little woe, trouble, and disappointment. when harassed by any soul-troubles, such as a feeling of coldness of heart toward Him, burdened about a lack of faith, or because your thoughts so often wander when you try to meditate on Divine things, or in prayers; come to Him, tell Him all about it, unburden yourself to Him: cast "all your care upon Him," keep back nothing when something has irritated you, disturbed your composure of mind and peace of soul: when someone has said or done something which causes a resentment to rise within you, and you find it hard to forgive them; go and tell the Lord about it: confess to Him that this ought not to be, that you are ashamed of yourself, and ask Him to lay His calming hand upon you, and to give you a forgiving spirit. Or suppose something in the household arrangements has "gone wrong," something which you could not help: perhaps the milkman or the baker is late, or the stove is not cooking as you wish, and you are disturbed: go to Him, tell Him about it, cast this "care" upon Him. You can never "weary" the Lord.

It is the Christian's holy privilege to cultivate the most familiar converse with Christ. Nothing more honours Him, nothing more delights Him, for this is giving Him His true place in your daily life. The "Christian life" is not the vague and mystical thing which the unsaved deem it to be, and which some preachers have made people think it is. No, it is an intensely practical and blessed thing. It is pride (quite unsuspected) which hinders so many from maintaining this simple and childlike converse and communion with Christ. People are ready to call upon Him when some big thing (as they think it) confronts them, some really urgent need comes up; but the little (?)

things they seek to carry and work out them selves. But God's Word says, "in everything by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4:6).

Above, we have said that it is "pride" which keeps back the Christian from casting all (every) his care upon Christ. The proof of this is intimated in the verse immediately preceding (1 Pet. 5:7): for there we read, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." It is an humbling thing to our haughty flesh, our self-sufficiency, our proud reason, to be made to feel the truth of Christ's words "without Me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5)—acceptably to God. But it is a blessed thing for the heart when we are brought to the place of complete conscious dependency upon the Lord for everything. That is the place of rest, joy, victory. May the Lord be pleased to add His blessing to these few lines.

### **The Lord's Care of His People**

"Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." (1 Pet. 5:7) what a perfect rest do we get when on coming to the Lord Jesus we take His yoke upon us, the yoke which He Himself ever wore, and which He now lovingly imposes upon all His people. O, it is an easy yoke and a light burden. Love joyfully accepts what infinite love imposes. We then are satisfied in knowing that every interest of ours is unspeakably precious to Him: that every hair is counted: every tear is put into His bottle, and that every sigh is noted. Nothing can harm those whom He keeps as the apple of His eye. Our one and only danger is that we begin to plan for ourselves and thus virtually take ourselves out of His hands. He will bring us at whatever cost of suffering to us, to commit ourselves absolutely to His loving and perfectly trusted hands.

## The Covenant Allegory

THE last eleven verses of Galatians 4 are far from being free of difficulties appears from the diverse expositions of the commentators. Nor will the limited space now at our disposal allow us to enter into as full an elucidation as could be wished, nor permit the pausing now and again to furnish collateral proofs for what is advanced, as would be our desire. Brevity has its advantages, but it does not always make for clarity. We must, however, content ourselves now with a comparatively terse running comment on this passage, and that, according to the limited light which we have therefrom.

Galatians 4:21–31 is in several respects very similar to the contents of 2 Corinthians 3. In each case the apostle is opposing himself to the errors which had been sedulously propagated amongst his converts by Judaisers. In each case he shows that the fundamental issue between them concerned the covenants, for any teacher who is confused thereon is certain to go astray in all his preaching. In each case the apostle appeals to well-known incidents in the Old Testament Scripture, and with the wisdom given him from above proceeds to bring out the deep spiritual meaning thereof. In each case he establishes conclusively the immeasurable superiority of Christianity over Judaism, and thus completely undermined the very foundations of his adversaries' position. Though of peculiar importance to those unto whom the apostle wrote immediately, yet this passage contains not a little of great value for us today. "Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?" (Gal. 4:21). Here the apostle addresses himself to those who had been lending a ready ear to their spiritual enemies. By his "ye that desire to be under the law" signified those who hankered after subjection to Judaism. His "do ye not hear the law?" means, Are you willing to listen unto what is recorded in the first book of the Pentateuch and have pointed out to you the dispensational significance of the same? Paul's design was to show those who were so anxious to be

circumcised and submit themselves to the whole Mosaic system, that, so far from such a course being honorable and beneficial, it would be fraught with danger and disgrace. To yield unto those who sought to seduce them spiritually would inevitably result in "bondage" (see 4:9) and not "liberty" (5:1). To prevent this, he begs them to listen to what God had said.

"For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman. But he who was born of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the free woman was by promise. Which things are an allegory" (vv. 22, 24). Very remarkable indeed is this, for we are here divinely informed that not merely did the Mosaic rites possess a typical significance, but the lives of the patriarchs themselves had a figurative meaning. Not only so, but their affairs were so controlled by providence that they were shaped to shadow forth coming events of vast magnitude. Paul was here moved by the Spirit to inform us that the domestic occurrences in Abraham's household were a parable in action, which parable he had interpreted for us. Thus we are granted an insight to passages in Genesis which no human wisdom could possibly have penetrated.

The transactions in the family of Abraham were divinely ordered to presage important dispensational epochs. The domestic affairs of the patriarch's household were invested with a prophetic significance. The historical incidents recorded in Genesis 16 and 21 possessed a typical meaning, contained beneath their surface spiritual truths of profound importance. The apostle here reminds his readers of the circumstances recorded of the two wives of Abraham, and of their respective offspring, and declares that the mothers adumbrated the two covenants, and their sons, the respective tendencies and results of those covenant, in other words, Sarah and Hagar are to be viewed as the representatives of the two covenants, and the sons which they bore as representatives of the kind of worshipers which those covenants were fitted to produce.

"For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid the other by a free woman." The apostle's design was to wean those Galatians who were Judaistically inclined from their strange infatuation for an obsolete and servile system, by unfolding to them its true nature. This he does by referring them to an emblematic representation of the two economies. Abraham had a number of other sons besides Ishmael and Isaac, but it is to them alone—the circumstances of their birth, subsequent conduct, history, and fate—that Paul's discussion exclusively relates.

In her unbelief and impatience (unwilling to wait for God to make good His word in His own time and way) Sarah gave her maid to Abraham in order that he might not be wholly without posterity. Though this caused confusion and brought trouble upon all concerned, yet it was ordained by God to presage great dispensational distinctions, nor did it in any wise thwart the accomplishment of His eternal purpose. "Abraham had two sons," Ishmael, the son of an Egyptian, a bondslave; Isaac, the son of Sarah, a free woman, of the same rank as her husband. As we have already said, these two mothers prefigured the two covenants, and their children the worshipers which those covenants tended to produce.

"But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the free woman was by promise" (v. 23). Great as was the disparity between the two mothers, greater still was the difference between the way in which their respective sons were born. Ishmael was born in the ordinary course of generation, for "after the flesh" signifies to the carnal counsel which Sarah gave to Abraham, and by the mere strength of nature. In connection with the birth of Ishmael there was not any special promise given, nor any extraordinary divine interposition. Vastly different was it in the case of Isaac. for he was the child of promise and born in direct consequence of the miracle-working power of God, and was under the benefit of that promise as long as he lived. What is here specially emphasized by the apostle is that the son of the slave was in an inferior condition from the very beginning.

"Which things are an allegory" (v. 24). An allegory is a parabolic method of conveying instruction, spiritual truths being set forth under material figures. Allegories are in words what hieroglyphics are in printing, both of which abound among the Orientals—Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* is the best-sustained allegory in the English language. "For these (feminine) are the two covenants" (v. 24). Here the apostle proceeds to give us the occult meaning of the historical facts alluded to in the preceding verse. He affirms that the domestic incidents in the family of Abraham constituted a divinely ordained illustration of the basic principles in regard to the condition of spiritual slaves and of spiritual freemen, and are to be regarded as adumbrating the bondage which subjection to the law of Moses produced and the liberty which submission to the gospel secures.

"These are the two covenants." This cannot of course be understood literally, for it was neither intelligible nor true that Sarah and Hagar were actually two covenants in their own persons. The words *is* and *are* frequently have the force of *represent*. When Christ affirmed of the sacramental bread "This is my body," He meant, this bread emblemizes My body. When we read of the cliff smitten by Moses in the wilderness (out of which gushed the stream of living water) "that rock was Christ" (1 Cor. 10:4), it obviously signifies, that rock prefigured Christ. So too when we are told "the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches" (Rev. 1:20), we are to understand that the one symbolized the other.

"These are the two covenants." There has been much difference of opinion as to exactly which covenants are intended. Some insist that the reference is to the everlasting covenant of grace and the Adamic or covenant of works; others argue it is the Abrahamic or covenant of promise and the Sinaitic; while others conclude it is the Sinaitic and the Christian or that which is made with the people of God in the gospel. Really, it is more a matter of terms than anything else, for whatever nomenclature we adopt it comes to much the same thing. "The one from mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is

Hagar" (v. 24): by which is meant, that order of things under which the nation of Israel was placed at Sinai, appointed for the purpose of keeping them a separate people, and which because of its legalistic nature was fitly foreshadowed by the bondslave.

"The one (covenant) from mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage" or produces those of a servile spirit, for it made slaves of all who sought justification and salvation by their own doings. It is to be carefully borne in mind that the relation entered into between God and Israel at Sinai was entirely a natural one, being made with the nation as such; and consequently all their descendants, upon their being circumcised, automatically became subjects of it without any spiritual change being wrought in them. "So far as this covenant gave birth to any children, those were not true children of God, free, spiritual, with hearts of filial confidence and devoted love; but miserable bondmen, selfish, carnal, full of mistrust and fear. Of these children of the Sinaitic covenant we are furnished with the most perfect exemplar in the Scribes and Pharisees of our lord's time" (P. Fairbairn).

"For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia" (v. 25). Here again Is signifies "represents:" Hagar prophetically anticipated and prefigured Mount Sinai—not the literal mount, but that covenant which Jehovah there entered into with the nation of Israel. Nor is this mode of expression by any means unusual in Scripture: when representing Samaria and Jerusalem by two women the prophet said, "Samaria is Aholah and Jerusalem Aholibah" (Ezek. 23:4). "And answereth to Jerusalem which now is" (v. 25). "Answereth to" signifies "corresponds with," or as the margin gives it, "is in the same rank with:" the origin, status, and condition of Hagar supplied an exact analogy to the state of Jerusalem in the apostle's time. Jerusalem, which was the metropolis of Palestine and the headquarters of its religion, stands for Judaism.

"And is in bondage with her children" (v. 25). Judaism was subject to an endless round of ceremonial institutions, which the apostles



themselves declared to be a yoke "which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear" (Acts 15:10). Those under it enjoyed none of that spiritual liberty which the gospel bestows upon those who submit to its terms. That large part of the nation which had no interest in the covenant of promise made with Abraham (whereof faith was an indispensable prerequisite for entering into the good of it), was indeed outwardly a part of Abraham's family and members of the visible church (as Hagar was a member of his family); yet (like Ishmael) they were born in servitude. and all their outward obedience was of a slavish character, and their privileges (as his) but carnal and temporal.

"But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all" (v. 26). Here Paul shows what was prefigured by Sarah. Three things are said in describing the covenant and constitution of which she was the appropriate emblem, each of which must be duly noted in the framing of our definition.

1. "Jerusalem which is above." This word "above" (ano) is generally employed of location, and would thus signify the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb. 12:22) in contrast from the earthly. But here it is placed in antithesis from "which now is" (v. 25) and would thus mean the prior and primitive Jerusalem, of which Melchizedec was king (Heb. 7:2) and to whose order of Priesthood Christ's pertains. Or the "above" may have the force of excellency or supremacy as in "high calling" (Phil. 3:14). Combining the three: Sarah shadowed forth the entire election of grace; all true believers from the beginning to the end of time.

2. Which "is free:" such was the status and state of Sarah in contrast from that of Hagar, the bondslave. Suitably did Sarah set forth that spiritual liberty which is to be found in Christ, for He redeems all His people from the bondage of sin and death. Believing Gentiles are freed from the curse of the moral law, and believing Jews are freed from the dominion of the ceremonial law as well.

3. "Which is the mother of us all." The reference is not to the church either visible or invisible, for she cannot be the parent of herself; rather is it the everlasting covenant of grace which is in view, in which were included all true believers. Thus the difference between the systems represented by Hagar and Sarah are: the one was earthly, carnal, slavish, temporary; the other, heavenly, spiritual, free, eternal.

"For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that barest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath a husband" (v. 27). This was obviously brought in by Paul to confirm the interpretation he had made of the covenant allegory. It is a quotation from the predictions of Isaiah. Four things call for our consideration: (1) the needs-be for this comforting promise which God then gave; (2) the precise place in Isaiah's prophecy from which this quotation is taken; (3) the particular manner in which it is here introduced; (4) its striking pertinency to the apostle's purpose.

The needs-be for this reassuring word given by the lord is His believing yet sorrowing people in the days of Isaiah is not difficult to perceive, if we bear in mind the exact terms of the promise originally given to the patriarch and his wife, and then consider the state of Israel under Judaism. The grand promise to Abraham was that he should be "a father of many nations" (Gen. 17:4), and that Sarah should be "a mother of nations" (Gen. 17:16). But at Sinai, Sarah's natural children were placed under a covenant which erected a middle wall of partition, shutting them off from all other nations. How rigorous the restrictions of the covenant were and the exclusiveness it produced, appear plainly in the unwillingness of Peter (till supernaturally authorized by God) to enter the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:28).

The Sinaitic covenant consisted largely in "meats and drinks and carnal ordinances;" yet was it imposed only "till the time of reformation" (Heb. 9:10). It was well adapted to Israel after the flesh,

for it encouraged them to obedience by the promise of temporal prosperity and restrained by fear of temporal judgments. Amid the great mass of the unregenerate Jews there was always a remnant according to the election of grace, whose heart God had touched (1 Sam. 10:26), in whose heart was His law (Isa. 51:7). But the nation as a whole had become thoroughly corrupt by the time of Isaiah, being deaf to the voice of Jehovah and fast ripening for judgment (1:2–6). The godly portion had diminished to "a very small remnant" (1:9), and the outlook was fearfully dark. It was to strengthen the faith of the spiritual and comfort their hearts that Isaiah was raised up.

The quotation here made by Paul was from Isaiah 54:1, and its very location intimated clearly that it looked forward to gospel times, for coming immediately after that graphic description of the Redeemer's sufferings in the previous chapter, it at once suggests that we are then given a picture of those new covenant conditions which followed His death. This is ever God's way: in the darkest night He causes the stars of hope to shed forth their welcome light, bidding His people to look beyond the gloomy present to the brighter future. God had not forgotten His promise to the patriarch; and though many centuries had intervened, the coming of His Son would make good the ancient oracles, for all the divine promises are established in Christ (2 Cor. 1:19, 20).

Let us next note the manner in which Paul introduces Isaiah's prediction into his discussion: "For it is written." It is clear that the apostle cites the prophet to establish what he had affirmed regarding the allegorical significance of the circumstances of Abraham's household. This at once fixes for us the elucidation of the prophecy. Paul had pointed out that Abraham had sons by two diverse wives, that those sons represented the different type of worshipers which the two covenants produced. that Sarah, (as representing the Abrahamic covenant) which he here likened unto "Jerusalem which is above," is "the mother of us all." In turn, Isaiah refers to two women, views them allegorically; apostrophizing the one as "barren"

and contrasting her from one "who had a husband," assuring the former of a far more numerous progeny.

How pertinent Isaiah's prediction was to the apostle's argument is evident. His design was to turn away the hearts of the Galatians from Judaism, and to accomplish this he demonstrates that that system had been superseded by something far more blessed and spiritually productive. "For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren." Whom was the prophet there addressing? Immediately, the godly remnant in Israel, the children of faith, those who had their standing in and derived their blessing from the Abrahamic covenant. Isaiah addressed them in the terms of the allegory. Just as the historical Sarah was childless for many years after she became the wife of Abraham, so the mystical Sarah (Abrahamic covenant) had for long centuries shown no sign whatever of coming to fruition. But as the literal Sarah ultimately became a mother, so the mystical one should bear a numerous seed.

Marvelous indeed are the ways of God, and remarkably is His decree wrought out through His providences. That parable in action in the household of Abraham contemplated that which took thousands of years to unfold. First, was the marriage between Abraham and Sarah, which symbolized the covenant union between God and His people. Second, for many years Sarah remained barren, foreshadowing that lengthy period during which God's purpose in that covenant was suspended. Third, Hagar, the bondslave, took Sarah's place in the family of Abraham, typifying his natural descendants being placed under the Sinaitic covenant. Fourth, Hagar did not permanently supplant Sarah, adumbrating the fact that Judaism was of but temporary duration. Fifth, ultimately Sarah came into her own and was divinely enabled to bear a supernatural seed—an emblem of the spiritual children of God under the new covenant.

"Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not." The Abrahamic covenant is here represented as a wife who (like Sarah) had long remained childless. Comparatively few real children had been raised up to God among the Jews from Moses onward. True, the nation was in

outward covenant with Him, and thus was (like Hagar in the type) "she who hath a husband;" but all the fruit they bore was like unto Ishmael—that which was merely natural, the product of the flesh. But the death of Christ was to alter all this: though the Jews would reject Him, there should be a great accession to the spiritual family of Abraham from among the Gentiles, so that there would be a far greater number of saints under the new covenant than had pertained under the old.

"Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise" (v. 28). Here the apostle begins his application of the allegory. As Sarah prefigured the covenant of grace, so Isaac represented the true children of God. Paul was here addressing himself to his spiritual brethren, and therefore the "we" includes all who are born from above—believing Gentiles as well as Jews. "We," the children of the new covenant, represented in the allegory by Isaac. Our standing and state is essentially different from Ishmael's, for he (like the great mass of those under the Sinaitic covenant) belong to the ordinary course of mere nature; whereas genuine Christians are "the children of promise"—of that made to Abraham, which, in turn, made manifest what God had "promised before the world began" (Titus 1:2). The relation into which believers are brought with God originates in a miracle of grace which was the subject of divine promise.

"But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now" (v. 29). Here the apostle brings in a further detail supplied by the allegory which was germane to his subject. He refers to the opposition made against Isaac by the son of Hagar, recorded in Genesis 21:9. This received its counterpart in the attitude of the Judaisers toward Christians. They who still adhere to the old covenant were hostile to those who enjoyed the freedom of the new. Probably one reason why the apostle mentioned this particular was in order to meet an objection: How can we be the "children of promise" (God's high favorites) seeing we are so bitterly hated and opposed by the Jews? The answer is, No marvel, for thus it

was from the beginning: the carnal have ever persecuted the spiritual.

"Nevertheless what saith the Scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman" (v. 30). Here is the final point in the allegory (taken from Gen. 21:10, 12) and which incontestably clinched the apostle's argument that Israel after the flesh are finally set aside by God. Hagar represented the Sinaitic covenant and Ishmael its carnal worshipers, and their being cast out of Abraham's household prophetically signified God's setting aside of Judaism and the fact that the natural descendants of Abraham had no place among his spiritual children and could not share their heritage (cf. John 8:34, 35). The two cannot unite: pure Christianity necessarily excludes Judaism. In its wider application (for today): none who seek salvation by law-keeping shall enter heaven.

"So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free" (v. 31). Here the plain and inescapable conclusion is drawn; since Christians are the children of promise, they and not carnal Jews are the true heirs of Abraham. Since the new covenant is superior to the old and believers in Christ are freed from all debasing servitude, it obviously follows they must conduct themselves as the lord's freemen. The time had now arrived when to cling to Judaism was fatal. The controversy turned on the question of who are the real heirs of Abraham (see 3:7, 16, 29). In chapter 4 the apostle exposes the empty pretensions of those who could claim only fleshly descent from the patriarch. We are the children of Abraham, said the Judaisers.

Abraham had two sons, replies Paul—the one of free, the other of servile birth: to which line do you belong? whose spirit have you received?

To sum up. Paul's design was to deliver the Galatians from the Judaisers. He showed that by submitting to Judaism they would

forfeit the blessings of Christianity. This he accomplished by opening up the profound significance of the covenant allegory, which presented three principal contrasts: birth by nature as opposed to grace; a state of bondage as opposed to liberty; a status of temporary tenure as opposed to permanent possession. Just as Hagar was rightfully the handmaid of Sarah but was wrongfully accorded the position of Abraham's wife, so the Sinaitic covenant was designed to supplement the Abrahamic but was perverted by the Jews when they sought from it salvation and fruitfulness.

## **The Cross and Self**

"Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any will come after Me let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."  
(Matthew 16:24)

ERE developing the theme of this verse let us comment on its terms. "If any:" the duty enjoined is for all who would join Christ's followers and enlist under His banner. "If any will:" the Greek is very emphatic, signifying not only the consent of the will, but full purpose of heart, a determined resolution. "Come after Me:" as a servant subject to his Master, a scholar his Teacher, a soldier his Captain. "Deny:" the Greek means "deny utterly." Deny himself: his sinful and corrupt nature. "And take up:" not passively bear or endure, but voluntarily assume, actively adopt. "His cross:" which is scorned by the world, hated by the flesh, but is the distinguishing mark of a real Christian. "And follow Me:" live as Christ lived—to the glory of God.

The immediate context is most solemn and striking. The Lord Jesus has just announced to His apostles, for the first time, His

approaching death of humiliation (v. 21). Peter was staggered, and said, "Pity Thyself, Lord" (v. 22 mar.). That expressed the policy of the carnal mind. The way of the world is self-seeking and self-shielding. "Spare thyself" is the sum of its philosophy. But the doctrine of Christ is not "save thyself" but sacrifice thyself. Christ discerned in Peter's counsel a temptation from Satan (v. 23), and at once flung it from Him. Then turning to Peter, He said: Not only "must" Jesus go up to Jerusalem and die, but everyone who would be a follower of His must take up his cross (v. 24). The "must" is as imperative in the one case as in the other. Mediatorially the cross of Christ stands alone, but experimentally it is shared by all who enter into life.

What is a "Christian?" One who holds membership in some earthly church? No. One who believes an orthodox creed? No. One who adopts a certain mode of conduct? No. What, then, is a Christian? He is one who has renounced self and received Christ Jesus as Lord (Col. 2:6). He is one who takes Christ's yoke upon him and learns of Him who is "meek and lowly in heart" (Matthew 11:29). He is one who has been "called unto the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:9): fellowship in His obedience and suffering now, in His reward and glory in the endless future. There is no such thing as belonging to Christ and living to please self. Make no mistake on that point "Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple," (Luke 14:27) said Christ. And again He declared, "But whosoever shall [instead of denying himself] deny Me before men [not "unto" men: it is conduct, the walk which is here in view], him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 10:33).

The Christian life begins with an act of self-renunciation, and is continued by self-mortification (Rom. 8:13). The first question of Saul of Tarsus, when Christ apprehended him, was, "Lord, what wouldst Thou have me to do?" The Christian life is likened unto a "race," and the racer is called upon to "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset" (Heb. 12:2), which "sin" is in the



love of self, the desire and determination to have our "own way" (Isa. 53:6). The one great aim, end, task, set before the Christian is to follow Christ—to follow the example He has left us (1 Pet. 2:21), and He "pleased not Himself" (Rom. 15:3). And there are difficulties in the way, obstacles in the path, the chief of which is self. Therefore this must be "denied." This is the first step toward "following" Christ.

What does it mean for a man to utterly "deny himself?" First, it signifies the complete repudiation of his own goodness. It means ceasing to rest upon any works of our own to commend us to God. It means an unreserved acceptance of God's verdict that "all our righteousnesses [our best performances] are as filthy rags" (Isa. 64:6). It was at this point that Israel failed: "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:3). But contrast the declaration of Paul: "And be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness" (Phil. 3:9).

For a man to utterly "deny himself" is to completely renounce his own wisdom. None can enter the kingdom of heaven except they become "as little children" (Matthew 18:3). "Woe unto them that are wiser in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight" (Isa. 5:21). "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools" (Rom. 1:21). When the Holy Spirit applies the Gospel in power to a soul, it is to the "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). A wise motto for each Christian to adopt is "Lean not unto thine own understanding" (Prov. 3:5).

For a man to utterly "deny himself" is to completely renounce his own strength. It is to have "no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:3). It is the heart bowing to Christ's positive declaration "Without Me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). It was at this point Peter failed: (Matthew 26:33). "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty

spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18). How necessary it is, then, that we heed 1 Corinthians 10:12: "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall!" The secret of spiritual strength lies in realizing our personal weakness: (see Isa. 40:29; 2 Cor. 12:9). Then let us "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 2:1).

For a man to utterly "deny himself" is to completely renounce his own will. The language of the unsaved is, "We will not have this Man to reign over us" (Luke 19:14). The attitude of the Christian is, "For to me to live is Christ" (Phil. 1:21)—to honour, please, serve Him. To renounce our own wills means heeding the exhortation of Phil. 2:5, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," which is defined in the verses that immediately follow as that of self-abnegation. It is the practical recognition that "ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6:19, 20). It is saying with Christ, "Nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt" (Mark 14:36).

For a man to utterly "deny himself" is to completely renounce his own lusts or fleshly desires. "A man's self is a bundle of idols" (Thomas Manton, Puritan), and those idols must be repudiated. Non-Christians are "lovers of their own selves" (2 Tim. 3:1); but the one who has been regenerated by the Spirit says with Job, "I am vile" (40:4), "I abhor myself" (42:6). Of non-Christians it is written, "all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's" (Phil. 2:21); but of God's saints it is recorded, "they loved not their own lives unto the death" (Rev. 12:11). The grace of God is "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world" (Titus 2:12).

This denial of self which Christ requires from all His followers is to be universal. There is to be no reserve, no exceptions made: "Make not provision for the flesh, to the lusts" (Rom. 13:14). It is to be constant, not occasional: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23). It is to be spontaneous, not forced, performed gladly, not

reluctantly: "And whatsoever ye do, do heartily, as to the Lord" (Col 3:23). O how wickedly has the standard which God sets before us been lowered! How it condemns the easy-going, flesh-pleasing, worldly lives of so many who profess (but vainly), that they are "Christians!"

"And take up his cross." This refers to the cross not as an object of faith, but as an experience in the soul. The legal benefits of Calvary are received through believing, when the guilt of sin is cancelled, but the experimental virtues of Christ's Cross are only enjoyed as we are, in a practical way, "made conformable unto his death" (Phil. 3:10). It is only as we really apply the cross to our daily lives, regulate our conduct by its principles, that it becomes efficacious over the power of indwelling sin. There can be no resurrection where there is no death, and there can be no practical walking "in newness of life" until we "bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus" (2 Cor. 4:10). The "cross" is the badge, the evidence, of Christian discipleship. It is his "cross" and not his creed, which distinguishes a true follower of Christ from religious worldlings.

Now in the New Testament the "cross" stands for definite realities. First, it expresses the world's hatred. The Son of God came here not to judge, but to save; not to punish but to redeem. He came here "full of grace and truth." He was ever at the disposal of others: ministering to the needy, feeding the hungry, healing the sick, delivering the demon-possessed, raising the dead. He was full of compassion: gentle as a lamb; entirely sinless. He brought with Him glad tidings of great joy. He sought the outcast, preached to the poor, yet scorned not the rich; He pardoned sinners. And how was He received? What welcome did men accord Him? They "despised and rejected" Him (Isa. 53:3). He declared, "They hated Me without a cause" (John 15:25). They thirsted for His blood. No ordinary death would appease them. They demanded that He should be crucified. The Cross, then, was the manifestation of the world's inveterate hatred of the Christ of God.

The world has not altered, any more than the Ethiopian has changed his skin or the leopard his spots. The world and Christ are still in open antagonism. Hence it is written, "Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (Jas. 4:4). It is impossible to walk with Christ and commune with Him until we have separated from the world. To walk with Christ necessarily involves sharing his humiliation: "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach" (Heb. 13:13). This is what Moses did: (see Heb. 11:24–26). The closer I am walking with Christ, the more shall I be misunderstood (1 John 3:2), ridiculed (Job 12:4) and detested by the world (John 15:19). Make no mistake here it is utterly impossible to keep in with the world and have fellowship with the Holy Christ. Thus, to "take up" my "cross" means, that I deliberately court the enmity of the world through my refusing to be "conformed" to it (Rom. 12:2). But what matters the world's frowns if I am enjoying the Saviour's smiles!

Taking up my "cross" means a life voluntarily surrendered to God. As the act of wicked men, the death of Christ was a murder; but as the act of Christ Himself, it was a voluntary sacrifice, offering Himself to God. It was also an act of obedience to God. In John 10:18 He said, "No man taketh it [His life] from Me, but I lay it down of Myself." And why did He? His very next words tell us: "This commandment have I received of My Father." The cross was the supreme demonstration of Christ's obedience. Herein He was our Exemplar. Once again we quote Philippians 2:5, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." In what follows we see the Beloved of the Father taking upon Him the form of a Servant, and becoming "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Now the obedience of Christ must be the obedience of the Christian—voluntary, gladsome, unreserved, continuous. If that obedience involves shame and suffering, reproach and loss, we must not flinch, but set our face "like a flint" (Isa. 50:7). The cross is more than the object of the Christian's faith, it is the badge of discipleship, the principle by which his life is to be regulated. The "cross" stands for surrender and dedication to God: "I beseech you therefore, brethren,

by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1).

The "cross" stands for vicarious service and suffering. Christ laid down His life for others, and His followers are called on to be willing to do the same: "We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16): that is the inevitable logic of Calvary. We are called to follow Christ's example, to the fellowship of His sufferings, to be partners in His service. As Christ made himself "of no reputation" (Phil. 2:7) we must not. As He "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Matthew 20:28), so must we. As He "pleased not Himself" (Rom. 15:3), no more must we. As He ever thought of others, so must we: "Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves in the body" (Heb. 13:3).

"For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for My sake, shall find it" (Matthew 16:25). Words almost identical with these are found again in Matthew 10:39, Mark 8:35, Luke 9:24; 17:33, John 12:25. Surely, such repetition argues the deep importance of our noting and heeding this saying of Christ's. He died that we might live (John 12:24), so must we (John 12:25). Like Paul we must be able to say, "Neither count I my life dear unto myself" (Acts 20:24). The "life" that is lived for the gratification of self in this world, is "lost" for eternity; the life that is sacrificed to self-interests and yielded to Christ, will be "found" again, and preserved through eternity.

A young university graduate, with brilliant prospects, responded to the call of Christ to a life of service for Him in India among the lowest caste of the natives. His friends exclaimed, What a tragedy! A life thrown away! Yes, "lost" so far as this world is concerned, but "found" again in the world to come!

## **Cross-Bearing**

"When said Jesus unto His disciples, if any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me."  
(Matthew 16:24)

"THEN said Jesus unto His disciples, if any man will"—the word "will" here means "desire to" just as in that verse, "If any will live godly." It signifies "determine to." "If any man will or desires to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross (not a cross, but his cross) and follow me." Then in Luke 14:27 Christ declared, "And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple." So it is not optional. The Christian life is far more than subscribing to a system of truth or adopting a code of conduct, or of submitting to religious ordinances. Preeminently the Christian life is a person; experience of fellowship with the Lord Jesus, and just in proportion as your life is lived in communion with Christ, to that extent are you living the Christian life, and to that extent only.

The Christian life is a life that consists of following Jesus. If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and "follow Me." O that you and I may gain distinction for the closeness of our walk to Christ, and then shall we be "close communionists" indeed. There is a class described in Scripture of whom it is said, "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." But sad to say, there is another class, and a large class, who seem to follow the Lord fitfully, spasmodically, half-heartedly, occasionally, distantly. There is much of the World and much of self in their lives, and so little of Christ. Thrice happy shall he be who like Caleb followeth the Lord fully.

Now, beloved, our chief business and aim is to follow Christ, but there are difficulties in the way. There are obstacles in the path, and

it is to them that the first part of our text refers. You notice that the words "follow Me" come at the end. Self, self stands in the way, and the world with its ten thousand attractions and distractions is an obstacle; and therefore Christ says, "If any man will come after Me— (first) let him deny himself, (second) take up his cross, (third) and follow Me." And there we learn the reason why so few professing Christians are following Him closely, manifestly, consistently.

The first step toward a daily following of Christ is the denying of self. There is a vast difference, brethren and sisters, between denying self and so-called self-denial. The popular idea that obtains both in the world and among Christians is that of giving up things which we like. There is a great diversity of opinion as to what should be given up. There are some who would restrict it to that which is characteristically worldly, such as theatre-going, dancing, and the racecourse. There are others who would restrict it to a certain season when amusements and other things which are followed during the remainder of the year are rigidly eschewed at that time. But such methods as those only foster spiritual pride, for surely I deserve some credit if I give up so much as. My friends, what Christ speaks of in our text (and O may the spirit of God apply it to our souls this morning) as the first step toward following him, is, the denial of self itself not simply some of the things that are pleasing to self. not some of the things after which self hankers, but the denying of self itself. What does that mean—"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself?" It means in the first place, abandoning his own righteousness; but it means far more than that. That is only its first meaning. It means refusing to rest upon my own wisdom. It means far more than that. It means ceasing to insist upon my own rights. It means repudiating self itself. It means ceasing to consider our own comforts, our own ease, our own pleasure, our own aggrandizement, our own benefits. It means being done with self. It means, beloved, saying with the apostle, For me to live is, not self, but Christ. For me to live is to obey Christ, to serve Christ, to honor Christ, to spend myself for Him. That is what it means. And "if any man will come after Me," says our Master, "let him deny himself," let self be

repudiated, be done with. In other words it is what you have in Romans 12:1, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice unto God."

Now the second step toward following Christ is the taking up of the cross. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross." Ah, my friends, to live out the Christian life is something more than a passive luxury; it is a serious undertaking. It is a life that has to be disciplined in sacrifice. The life of discipleship begins with self-renunciation and it continues by self-mortification. In other words, our text refers to the cross not simply as an object of faith, but as a principle of life, as the badge of discipleship, as an experience in the soul. And, listen! Just as it was true that the only way to the Father's throne for Jesus of Nazareth was by the cross, so the only way for a life of communion with God and the crown at the end for the Christian is via the cross. The legal benefits of Christ's sacrifice are secured by faith, when the guilt of sin is cancelled: but the cross only becomes efficacious over the power of indwelling sin as it is realized in our daily lives.

I want to call your attention to the context. Turn with me for a moment to Matthew 16, verse 21: "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took Him, and began to rebuke Him." He was staggered and said, "Pity Thyself, Lord." That expressed the policy of the world. That is the sum of the world's philosophy—self shielding and self-seeking; but that which Christ preached was not spare "but sacrifice." The Lord Jesus saw in Peter's suggestion a temptation from Satan and He flung it from Him. Then He turned to His disciples and said, if any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." In other words what Christ said was this: I am going up to Jerusalem to the cross: if anyone would be My follower there is a cross for him. And, as Luke 14 says, "Whosoever doth not bear his cross cannot he My disciple." Not only must Jesus go up to Jerusalem and be killed, but everyone who comes after Him must take up his cross. The



"must" is as imperative in the one case as in the other. Mediatorially the cross of Christ stands alone, but experimentally it is shared by all who enter into life.

Now then, what does "the cross" stand for? What did Christ mean when He said that except a man take up his cross? My friends, it is deplorable that at this late date such a question needs to be asked, and it is more deplorable still that the vast majority of God's own people have such unscriptural conceptions of what the "cross" stands for. The average Christian seems to regard the cross in this text as any trial or trouble that may be laid upon him. Whatsoever comes up that disturbs our peace, that is displeasing to the flesh, that irritates our temper is looked upon as a cross. One says, "Well, that is my cross," and another says, "Well, this is my cross," and someone else says something else is their cross. My friends, the word is never so used in the New Testament.

The word "cross" is never found in the plural number, nor is it ever found with the indefinite article before it—"a cross," Note also that in our text the cross is linked to a verb in the active voice and not the passive. It is not a cross that is laid upon us, but a cross which must be "taken up!" The cross stands for definite realities which embody and express the leading characteristics of Christ's agony.

Others understand the "cross" to refer to disagreeable duties which they reluctantly discharge, or to fleshly habits which they grudgingly deny. They imagine that they are cross-bearing when, prodded at the point of conscience, they abstain from things earnestly desired. Such people invariably turn their cross into a weapon with which to assail other people. They parade their self-denial and go around insisting that others should follow them. Such conceptions of the cross are as Pharisaical as false, and as mischievous as they are erroneous.

Now, as the Lord enables me, let me point out three things that the cross stands for. First, the cross is the expression of the world's hatred. The world hated the Christ of God and its hatred was

ultimately manifested by crucifying Him. In the 15th chapter of John, seven times over, Christ refers there to the hatred of the world against Himself and against His people; and just in proportion as you and I are following Christ, just in proportion as our lives are being lived as His life was lived, just in proportion as we have come out from the world and are in fellowship with Him, so will the world hate us.

We read in the Gospels that one man came and presented himself to Christ for discipleship, and he requested that he might first go and bury his father—a very natural request, a very praiseworthy one surely (?) and the Lord's reply is almost staggering. He said to that man, "Follow Me: and let the dead bury their dead." What would have happened to that young man if he had obeyed Christ? I do not know whether he did or not, but if he did, what would happen? What would his kinsfolk and his neighbours think of him? Would they be able to appreciate the motive, the devotion that caused him to follow Christ and neglect what the world would call a filial duty? Ah, my friends, if you are following Christ the world will think you are mad, and some natures and dispositions find it very hard to bear reflections on their sanity. Yes, there are some who find the reproaches of the living a harder trial than the loss of the dead.

Another young man presented himself to Christ for discipleship and he requested the Lord that he might first be allowed to go home and say farewell to his friends—a very natural request, surely—and the Lord presented to him the cross: "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God!" Affectionate natures find the wrench of home ties hard to bear; harder still are the suspicions of loved ones and friends for having been slighted. Yes, the reproach of the world becomes very real if we are following Christ closely. No man can keep in with the world and follow Him.

Another young man came and presented himself to Christ and fell at His feet and worshipped Him, and said, "Master, what good thing

shall I do?" and the Lord presented to him the cross. "Sell all that thou hast and give to the poor ... and come and follow Me." And the young man went away sorrowful. And Christ is still saying to you and to me this morning, "Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple." The cross stands for the reproach and the hatred of the world. But as the cross was voluntary for Christ, so it is for His disciple. It can either be avoided or accepted; ignored or "taken up!"

But secondly, the cross stands for a life that is voluntarily surrendered to the will of God. From the standpoint of the world the death was a voluntary sacrifice. Turn for a moment to the 10th of John, beginning at the 17th verse: "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." Why did He thus lay down his life? Look at the closing sentence of verse 18: "This commandment have I received of My Father." The cross was the last demand of God upon the obedience of His Son. That is why we read in Philippians 2 that, He "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death" (that was the climax, that was the end of the path of obedience)—"even the death of the cross."

Christ has left us an example that we should follow His steps. The obedience of Christ should be the obedience of the Christian—voluntary, not compulsory—voluntary, continuous, faithful, without any reserve, unto death. The cross then stands for obedience, consecration, surrender, a life placed at the disposal of God. "If any man will come after Me, let him take up his cross and follow Me" and "Whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple." In other words, dear friends, the cross stands for the principle of discipleship, our life being actuated by the same principle that Christ's was. He came here and He pleased not

Himself: no more must I. He made Himself of no reputation: so must I. He went about doing good: so should I. He came not to be ministered unto but to minister: so should we. He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. That is what the cross stands for: First, the reproach of the world—because we have antagonized it, raised its ire by separating ourselves from it, and are walking on a different plane, and through being actuated by different principles from those by which it walks. Second, a life sacrificed unto God—laid down in devotion to Him.

In the third place, the cross stands for vicarious sacrifice and suffering. Turn to the first Epistle of John, the third chapter, verse 16: "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives." That is the logic of Calvary. We are called unto fellowship with Christ, our lives to be lived by the same principles that His was lived by—obedience to God, sacrifice for others. He died that we might live and, my friends, we have to die that we may live. Look at the 25th verse of Matthew 16: "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it:" that means every Christian, for Christ was speaking there to disciples. Every Christian who has lived a self-centered life, considering his own comforts, his own peace of mind, his own welfare, his own advantages and benefits, that "life" is going to be lost forever—all wasted so far as eternity is concerned; wood, hay and stubble, that will go up in smoke. But "whosoever will lose his life for My sake," that is, whosoever has not lived his life considering his own well being, his own interests, his own profit, his own advancement, but has sacrificed that life, has spent it in the service of others for Christ's sake; he shall find—"find" what?—he shall find it, not something else: it, not another: he shall find it. That life has been immortalized, perpetuated, it has been built of imperishable materials that will survive the testing-fire in the day to come. He shall find "it." He died that we might live, and we have to die if we are to live! "Whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it."

Again, in the 20th chapter of John, Christ said to His disciples, "As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." What was Christ sent here to do? To glorify the Father: to express God's love; to manifest God's grace; to weep over Jerusalem; to have compassion on the ignorant and those that are out of the way; to toil so assiduously that He had no leisure so much as to eat; to live a life of such self-sacrifice that even His kinsfolk said, "He is beside Himself." and, "as the Father hath sent Me, even so," says Christ, "send I you:" In other words, I send you back into the world out of which I have saved you. I send you back into the world to live with the cross stamped upon you. O brethren and sisters, how little "blood" there is in our lives! How little is there the bearing of the dying of Jesus in our bodies (2 Cor. 4:10)

Have we begun to "take up the cross" at all? Is there any wonder that we are following Him at such a distance? Is there any wonder that we have such little victory over the power of indwelling sin? There is a reason for that. Mediatorially the Cross of Christ stands alone, but experimentally the cross is to be shared by all His disciples. Legally the cross of Calvary annulled and put away our guilt, the guilt of our sins; but, my friends, I am perfectly convinced that the only way of getting deliverance from the power of sin in our lives and obtaining mastery over the old man within us, is by the cross becoming a part of the experience of our souls. It was at the cross sin was dealt with legally and judicially: it is only as the cross is "taken up" by the disciple that it becomes an experience—slaying the power and defilement of sin within us. And Christ says, "Whosoever doth not bear his cross, cannot be My disciple." O what need has each Christian here this morning to get alone with the Master and consecrate Himself to His service.

## The Cure for Despondency

"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me?" (Psalm 42:5)

WHEN the Psalmist gave utterance to these words, his spirit was dejected and his heart was heavy within him. In the checkered career of David there was not a little which was calculated to sadden and depress: the cruel persecutions of Saul, who hunted him as a partridge upon the mountains, the treachery of his trusted friend Ahithophel, the perfidy of Absalom, and the remembrance of his own sins, were enough to overwhelm the stoutest. And David was a man of like passions with us: he was not always upon the mountain-top of joy, but sometimes spent seasons in the slough of despond and the gorge of gloom.

But David did not give way to despair, nor succumb to his sorrows. He did not lie down like a stricken beast and do nought but fill the air with his howling. No, he acted like a rational creature, and like a man, looked his troubles squarely in the face. But he did more; he made diligent inquiry, he challenged himself, he sought to discover the cause of his despondency: he asked, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" He desired to know the reason for such depression. This is often the first step toward recovery from dejection of spirit. Repining and murmuring get us nowhere. Fretting and wringing our hands bring no relief either temporally or spiritually. There needs to be self-interrogation, self-examination, self-condemnation.

"Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" We need to seriously take ourselves to task. We need to fearlessly face a few plain questions. What is the good of giving way to despair? What possible gain can it bring me? To sit and sulk is not "redeeming the time" (Eph 5:16). To mope and mourn will not mend matters. Then let each despondent one call his soul to account, and inquire what adequate cause could be assigned for peevishness and fretting. "We may have great cause

to mourn for sin, and to pray against prevailing impiety: but our great dejection, even under the severest outward afflictions or inward trials, springs from unbelief and a rebellious will: we should therefore strive and pray against it" (Thomas Scott).

"Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" Cannot you discover the real answer without asking counsel from others? Is it not true that, deep down in your heart, you already know, or at least suspect, the root of your present trouble? Are you "cast down" because of distressing circumstances which your own folly has brought you into? Then acknowledge with the Psalmist, "I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right, and Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me" (119:75). Is it because of some sin, some course of self-will, some sowing to the flesh, that you are now of the flesh reaping corruption? Then confess the same to God and plead the promise found in Proverbs 28:13: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Or are you grieved because Providence has not smiled upon you so sweetly as it has on some of your neighbors? Then heed that injunction, "Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity" (Ps. 37:1).

Perhaps the cases suggested above do not exactly fit that of some of our readers. Not a few may say, "My soul is cast down and my heart is heavy because my finances are at so low an ebb, and the outlook is so dark." That is indeed a painful trial, and one which mere nature often sinks under. But, dear friend, there is a cure for despondency even when so occasioned. He who declares "the cattle upon a thousand hills are Mine," still lives and reigns! Cannot He who fed two million Israelites in the wilderness for forty years minister to you and your family? Cannot He who sustained Elijah in the time of famine keep you from starving? "If God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you. O ye of little faith!" (Matthew 6:30).

Returning to our opening text, let us observe how that David not only succumbed not to his sorrows, interrogated his soul, and rebuked his unbelief, but he also preached to himself: "Hope thou in God!" Ah, that is what the despondent needs to do: nothing else will bring real relief to the hearer. The immediate outlook may be dark, but the Divine promises are bright. The creature may fail you, but the Creator will not, if you truly put your trust in Him. The world may be at its wits' end, but the Christian needs not be so. There is One who is "a very present help in trouble" (Ps. 46:1), and He never deserts those who really make Him their refuge. The writer has proved this, many, many a time, and so may the reader. The fact is that present conditions afford a grand opportunity for learning the sufficiency of Divine grace. Faith cannot be exercised when everything needed is at hand to sight.

"Hope thou in God"—In His mercy: You have sinned, sinned grievously in the past, and now you are receiving your just deserts. True, but if you will penitently confess your sins, there is abundant mercy with the Lord to blot them all out (Isa 55:7).

In his power: Every door may he shut against you, every channel of help be closed fast; but nothing is too hard for the Almighty!

In His faithfulness: Men may have deceived you, broken their promises, and now desert you in the hour of need; but He who cannot lie is to be depended upon—O doubt not His promises.

In His love: "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end" (John 13:1).

"For I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance." Such is ever the blessed assurance of those who truly hope in God. They know that, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all" (Psa 34:19). God has told them that "weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Ps. 30:5). So Christian reader, when the fiery trial has done its work,



and your bonds are burned off (Dan. 3:25), you will thank Him for the trials which are now so unpleasant; Then hopefully anticipate the future. Count upon God, and He will not fail you.

Let each Christian reader who is not now passing through deep waters join with the writer in fervent prayer to God, that He will graciously sanctify the "present distress" unto the spiritual good of His own people, and mercifully supply their temporal needs.

## **"Doctor" Or "Brother"**

WHAT strange methods God sometimes employs in teaching His Children much needed lessons! This has recently been the writer's experience. I have been approached by a "university" to accept from them a degree of "D. D." Asking for time to be given so that I might prayerfully seek from God, through His written word, a knowledge of His will, fuller light came than was expected. I had very serious doubt's as to the permissibility of one of God's servants accepting a title of fleshly honor. I now perceive that it is wrong for me to receive it even complimentary. Various friends, as a mark of respect, have addressed me as "Dr. Pink." I now ask them to please CEASE from doing so. Let it not be understood that I hereby condemn other men for what they allow. No, to their own Master they stand or fall. The principal passages which have helped me I now mention, praying that it may please God to also bless them to others.

FIRST, to the false comforters of Job, Elihu (God's representative) said. "Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give FLATTERING TITLES unto men" (Job 32:21). SECOND, "Be NOT ye called 'Rabbi' or teacher" (Matthew 23:8), which is what

"Doctor" signifies. THIRD, John 5:44 reproves those who "receive honor one of another" and bids us seek "the honor that cometh from God ONLY." FOURTH, none of the Lord's servants in the New Testament ever employed a title. "Paul, an apostle," but never "the apostle Paul." FIFTH, the Son of God "made Himself of no reputation" (Phil. 2:7); is it then fitting that His servants should now follow an opposite course? SIXTH, Christ bids us learn of Him who was "meek and lowly" (Matthew 11:29). SEVENTH, one of the marks of the apostasy as "having men's persons in admiration because of advantage" (Jude 17). EIGHTH, we are bidden to go forth unto Christ outside the camp "bearing His reproach" (Heb. 13:13).

For these reasons it does not seem to me to be fitting that one who is here as a representative and witness for a "despised and rejected" Christ should be honored and flattered of men. Please address me as "BROTHER PINK."

## **Does First Corinthians 12 Mean the Universal Church or a Local New Testament**

FOR almost ten years after his regeneration the writer never doubted that the "body" spoken of in 1 Corinthians 12 had reference to "the Church Universal." This was taught him by those known as "Plymouth Brethren," which is found in the notes of the Scofield Reference Bible, and is widely accepted by evangelicals and prophetic students. Not until God brought him among Southern Baptists (a high privilege for which he will ever be deeply thankful) did he first hear the above view challenged. But it was difficult for him to weigh impartially an exposition which meant the refutation of a teaching received from men highly respected, to say nothing of confessing he had held an altogether erroneous concept so long, and had allowed himself to read 1 Corinthians 12 (and similar passages) through other men's spectacles. However, of late, the writer has been led to make a prayerful and independent study of the subject for himself, with the result that he is obliged to renounce his former view as utterly untenable and unscriptural.

The Authorized Version of 1 Corinthians 12:13 reads as follows: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into the body"—concerning this we shall have more to say later on. On 1 Corinthians 12 Dr. Scofield, in his Reference Bible, has this to say: "Chapter 12 concerns the Spirit in relation to the body of Christ. This relation is twofold: (1) The baptism with the Spirit forms the Body by uniting believers to Christ, the risen and glorified Head, and to each other (vs. 12, 13). The symbol of the Body thus formed is the natural, human body (v. 12), and all the analogies are freely used (vs. 14–26). (2) To each believer is given a spiritual enablement and capacity for specific service," etc., etc. In capitalizing the word "body" Dr. Scofield unquestionably has in mind "the Church Universal." Should there be any doubt upon this

point it is at once dispelled by a reference to the notes of Dr. Scofield on Hebrews 12:23—"The true church, composed of the whole number of regenerate persons from Pentecost to the First Resurrection (1 Cor. 15:52,) united together and to Christ by the baptism with the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:12, 13), is the Body of which He is the Head." It is to be noted that in both places the Doctor speaks of "the baptism with the Spirit," but in 1 Corinthians 12:13 there is no mention made at all of any baptism "with" the Holy Spirit, either in the English or in the Greek; such is merely a figment of the Doctor's imagination.

The Revised Version of 1 Corinthians 12:13 reads thus: "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body." We believe this is much better and a more accurate translation of the Greek than the Authorized Version rendering. But we have one fault to find with the Revised Version rendering too. The capitalizing of the word "spirit" (πνεύματι) is utterly misleading, and while it is well nigh impossible to get the real meaning of the verse. For the benefit of those who do not read the New Testament in the Greek, we may say that in the language in which the New Testament was originally written there are no capital letters used, except at the beginning of a book or paragraph. πνεῦμα is always written in the Greek with a small "s," and it is a question of exposition and interpretation, not of translation in any wise, whether a small "s" or a capital "S" is to be used each instance where the word for spirit is used. In many instances it is translated with a small "s"—spirit (Matt. 5:3; Rom. 1:4; 1:9; 1 Cor 2:11; 5:3; etc.). In others, where the Holy Spirit of God is referred to, a capital is rightly employed. Furthermore, the Greek word πνεῦμα is used not only to denote sometimes the Holy Spirit of God, and at others the spirit of man (as contra-distinguished from his soul and body), but it is also employed psychologically; we read of "the spirit (πνεῦμα) of meekness" (1 Cor. 4:21), and of "the spirit (πνεῦμα) of cowardice" (2 Tim. 1:7), etc. Again, in Philippians 1:27 we read "stand fast in one spirit." Here "spirit" has the force of oneness of thought, accord, object. Note that in Philippians 1:27 the Greek for "in one spirit" is precisely the same in every respect, as the

Greek at the beginning of 1 Corinthians 12:13, and in Philipians 1:27 even the translators of the Authorized Version have used only a small "s" for "spirit"—as they most certainly ought to have done in 1 Corinthians 12:13. One other point concerning the Greek: The preposition translated "by" in 1 Corinthians 12:13 is "έν," which is translated in the New Testament "among" 114 times, "by" 142, "with" 139, "in" 1,863 times. Comment is needless. "In one spirit were we all baptized" should be the rendering of 1 Corinthians 12:13. The "baptism" here is not Holy Spirit baptism at all, but water baptism. Note: whenever we read of "baptism" in the New Testament without anything in the verse or context which expressly describes it (as in Gal. 3:27; Eph. 4:5, etc.), it is always water baptism which is in view.

"In one spirit were we all baptized into one body." Into what body? The "church Universal" or a local church of Christ? We submit that a careful study of 1 Corinthians 12 can furnish only one possible answer—a local Baptist church. Note the following points.

(1) The head of the "body" described here in 1 Corinthians 12 is seen to be on earth—verses 16, 17. Now it would be utterly incongruous to represent the Head of the mystical, universal church (supposing such a thing existed, which, as yet it certainly does not) as on earth, for the Head of that church which, in the future, will be the universal Church of Christ, is in heaven, and it is in heaven the universal church will assemble (see Heb. 12:22–24). But it is perfectly fitting to represent (in the illustration of the human body) the head of the local church as on earth, for wherever a local New Testament church assembles for worship or to transact business for Christ, He is in their midst (Matt. 18:20).

(2) In 1 Corinthians 12:22, 23, we read of members of the body which seem to be "more feeble," and of those "less honorable" and of "uncomely" parts of members. Now such characteristics of members of the human body accurately illustrates the differences which exist between the spiritual states of various members in a local assembly, but the illustration of the "body" here fails completely if the "Church

Universal" is in view, for when the Church Universal meets in heaven every member of it will be "like Christ," "fashioned into the body of glory," and such comparisons as "more feeble," "less honorable," "uncomely members," will forever be a thing of the past!

(3) In 1 Corinthians 12:24 the apostle speaks of what God has done in order that there should be no schism in the body (v. 25). Now let any impartial reader ask, in what body is a schism (division) possible? Certainly not in the Church Universal for that is solely of Divine workmanship, into which human responsibility and failure do not enter. When the church of the First-Born assembles in heaven, glorified, "not having spot or wrinkle or anything," there will be no "schism" there. But in the church which the apostle is contemplating in 1 Corinthians 12 there was "schism" (see 1 Cor. 11:18, etc.). Therefore it is proof positive that it is the local church, and not the Church Universal, which is in view in 1 Corinthians 12.

(4) In 1 Corinthians 12:26 we read "and whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it: or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it." Now is this true of a Universal Church? Certainly not. Is it true that whenever a believer in Christ in India or China (of whom I have never even heard) "suffers" that "all the members," all believers in America, "suffers" with it or him? Certainly not. But it is true ideally, and often in experience that when one member of a local church "suffers" all the members of that local church suffer too. We must refrain from adding further arguments.

Sufficient has been advanced, we trust, to prove that the "body" referred to in 1 Corinthians 12:13 is a local church, and that the "human body" is here used to illustrate the mutual dependence and relationship existing between its various members. From this established and incontrovertible fact several conclusions follow:

First, the "baptism" by which one enters "into" a New Testament church is water baptism, for the Holy Spirit does not "baptize" anybody into a local assembly.

Second, no matter what our nationality—Jew or Gentile—no matter what our social standing—slave or freeman—all the members of the local church have been baptized "in one spirit," that is, in one mind, purpose, accord, and there is therefore oneness of aim for them to follow, oneness of privilege to enjoy, oneness of responsibility to discharge. Furthermore, they are said to "drink of one spirit," that is, they are one, and all appropriate (symbolized by "drink") this oneness of spirit.

Third, there is only one way of entrance into a local church of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that is by "baptism" scripturally performed by a scripturally qualified and scripturally authorized administrator, for we read "in one spirit we were all baptized into one body." It therefore follows that none save those who have been Scripturally "baptized" have entered "into" a New Testament Church, all others being members of nothing but man-made institutions. Hence the tremendous importance of "keeping the ordinances" as they have been delivered by Christ Himself to His churches.

The writer would apologize for writing at such length (he has condensed as much as he possibly could) but cherishes the hope that his own personal confession with which he began this article will exercise others to search the Scriptures more diligently and to "prove all things" for themselves, not accepting the teaching of any man, no matter who he may be. Brethren, let us covet to be "Bereans."

## **Eternal Punishment**

### **I. ETERNAL PUNISHMENT**

This time we take up our pen to write on one of the most solemn truths taught in the Word. And ere we began we turned to the Lord and earnestly sought that wisdom and grace which we are conscious we sorely need; making request that we might be preserved from all error in what we shall say, and that nothing may find a place in these pages which shall be displeasing to that Holy One, "whose we are, and whom we serve." O that we may write in the spirit of One who said, "Who knoweth the power of Thine anger, even according to Thy fear, so is Thy wrath" (Ps. 90:11).

The subject before us is one that needs stressing in these days. The great majority of our pulpits are silent upon it, and the fact that it has so little place in modern preaching is one of the signs of the times, one of the many evidences that the Apostasy must be near at hand. It is true that there are not a few who are praying for a world-wide Revival, but it appears to the writer that it would be more timely, and more scriptural, for prayer to be made to the Lord of the harvest, that He would raise up and thrust forth laborers who would fearlessly and faithfully preach those truths which are calculated to bring about a revival.

While it is true that all genuine revivals come from God, yet He is not capricious in the sending of them. We are sure that God never relinquishes His sovereign rights to own and to bless where and as He pleases. But we also believe that here, as everywhere, there is a direct connection between cause and effect. And a revival is the effect of a previous cause. A revival, like a genuine conversion, is wrought of God by means of the Word—the Word applied by the Holy Spirit, of course. Therefore, there is something more needed (on our part) than prayer: the Word of God must have a place, a prominent place, the prominent place. Without that there will be no Revival, whatever excitement and activities of the emotions there may be.

It is the deepening conviction of the writer that what is most needed today is a wide proclamation of those truths which are the least acceptable to the flesh. What is needed today is a scriptural setting



forth of the character of God—His absolute sovereignty, His ineffable holiness, His inflexible justice, His unchanging veracity. What is needed today is a scriptural setting forth of the condition of the natural man—his total depravity, his spiritual insensibility, his inveterate hostility to God, the fact that he is "condemned already" and that the wrath of a sin-hating God is even now abiding upon him. What is needed today is a scriptural setting forth of the alarming danger in which sinners are—the indescribably awful doom which awaits them, the fact that if they follow only a little further their present course they shall most certainly suffer the due reward of their iniquities. What is needed today is a scriptural setting forth of the nature of that punishment which awaits the lost—the awfulness of it, the hopelessness of it, the unendurableness of it, the endlessness of it. It is because of these convictions that by pen as well as by voice we are seeking to raise the alarm.

It may be thought that what we have said in the above paragraph stands in need of qualification. We can imagine some of our readers saying, Such truths as these may be needed by the lost, but surely you do not wish to be understood as saying that these subjects ought to be pressed upon the Lord's people! But that is exactly what we do mean and do say. Re-read the Epistles, dear friends, and note what place each of these subjects has in them! It is just because these truths have been withheld so much from public ministrations to the saints that we now find so many backboneless, sentimental, lopsided Christians in our assemblies. A clearer vision of the awe-inspiring attributes of God would banish much of our levity and irreverence. A better understanding of our depravity by nature would humble us, and make us see our deep need of using the appointed means of grace. A facing of the alarming danger of the sinner would cause us to "consider our ways" and make us more diligent to make our "calling and election sure." A realization of the unspeakable misery which awaits the lost (and which each, of us fully merited) would immeasurably deepen our gratitude, and bring us to thank God more fervently that we have been snatched as brands from the burning and delivered from the wrath to come; and too, it will make

us far more earnest in our prayers as we supplicate God on behalf of the unsaved. Moreover, scriptural and searching addresses along these lines would, in some cases at least, lay hold of those who have a form of godliness but who deny the power thereof. They would have some effect on that vast company of professors who are "at ease in Zion." They would, if God were depended upon, arouse the indifferent, and cause some who are now careless and unconcerned to cry, "What must I do to be saved?" Remember that the ground must be plowed before it is ready to be sowed: and the truths mentioned above are needed to prepare the way for the Gospel.

Concerning the eternal punishment of the wicked there are few, it seems, who realize the vital importance of a ringing testimony to this truth, and fewer still who apprehend the deep seriousness of what is involved in a denial of it. The importance of a clear witness to this doctrine may be seen by noting what a prominent place it holds in the Word; and contrariwise, the seriousness of denying it is evidenced by the fact that such denial is a rejection of God's truth. The need of giving this solemn subject a prominent place in our witness is apparent, for it is our bounden duty to warn sinners of their fearful peril and bid them flee from the wrath to come. To remain silent is criminal; to substitute anything for it is to set before the wicked a false hope. The great importance of expounding this doctrine, freely and frequently, also appears in that, excepting the Cross of Christ, nothing else so manifests the heinousness of sin, whereas every modification of eternal punishment, only serves to minimize the evil of it.

We propose to deal with our present theme under the following divisions. First, we shall examine briefly some of the leading objections brought against the truth of eternal punishment. Second, we shall classify various passages which treat of the destiny of the lost, showing that death seals the sinner's doom, that his condition is then beyond hope, that the punishment awaiting him is interminable. Third, we shall examine those scriptures which throw light upon the nature of the punishment which awaits the lost.

Finally, we shall seek to make a practical application of the whole subject.

In taking up the objections made against the truth of eternal punishment it would be a hopeless task were we to attempt to notice every argument which the fertile mind of unbelief (under the control of Satan, as it is) has devised. We shall, however, consider those of greatest weight, and those which have received the widest acceptance among unbelievers. These we shall classify as follows: First, deductions drawn from the Divine perfections. Second, passages appealed to by Universalists. Third, passages appealed to by Annihilationists. Fourth, assertions that punishment is not penal and retributive but disciplinary and remedial.

#### 1. DEDUCTIONS DRAWN FROM THE DIVINE PERFECTIONS

(1) God is love. From this scriptural premise the conclusion is drawn that He will never cast any of His creatures into endless woe. But we must remember that the Bible also tells us that "God is light," and between light and darkness there can be no fellowship. Divine love is not a sentimental passion which overrides moral distinctions. God's love is a holy love, and because it is such He hates all evil; yea, it is written, "Thou hatest all workers of iniquity" (Ps. 5:5). Startling as it may sound, it is nevertheless a fact, that the Scriptures speak much more frequently of God's anger and wrath, than they do of His love and compassion. Let any one consult Young's or Strong's Concordance and they may verify this for themselves. To argue, then, that because God is love, He will not inflict eternal torment on the wicked, is to ignore the fact that God is light, and is to asperse His holiness.

(2) God is merciful. Man may be a sinner, and holiness may require that he should be punished, but it is argued that Divine mercy will intervene, and if the punishment be not entirely revoked it is imagined that the sentence will be modified and the term of punishment be shortened. We are told that the eternal torment of the

lost cannot be harmonized with a God of mercy. But if by the mercy of God be meant that He is too tenderhearted to apportion such miseries to His creatures, then we might as logically reason that seeing God's mercy, like all His attributes, is infinite, therefore, none of His creatures will be permitted to suffer at all. Yet this is manifestly erroneous. Facts deny it. His creatures do suffer, oftentimes excruciatingly, even in this life. Look out on the world today and mark the untold misery which abounds on every hand, and then remember that, however mysterious all this may be to us, nevertheless, it is all permitted by a merciful God. So, too, read in the Old Testament the accounts of the deluge, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire and brimstone from heaven, the plagues upon Egypt, the judgments which were visited upon Israel, and then bear in mind that these were not prevented by the mercy of God! To reason, then, that because God is merciful He will not cast into the Lake of Fire every one whose name is not found written in the book of life, is to fly in the face of all God's judgments in the past!

(3) God is just. It is often said it would be unjust for God to sentence any of His erring creatures to eternal perdition. But who are we to pass judgment upon the justice of the decisions of the All-Wise? Who are we to say what is consistent or inconsistent with God's righteousness? Who are we to determine what shall best vindicate the Divine benevolence or equity? Sin has so enfeebled our power of righteous judgment, so darkened our understanding, so dulled our conscience, so perverted our wills, so corrupted our hearts, that we are quite incompetent to decide. We are ourselves so infected and affected by sin that we are altogether incapable of estimating its due merits. Imagine a company of criminals passing judgment on the equity and goodness of the law which had condemned them! The truth of the matter is—and how often is it lost sight of!—that God is not to be measured by human standards.

But have we realized that to deny the justice of eternal punishment is also to repudiate the grace of God? If endless misery be unjust, then exemption from it must be the sinner's right, and if so, his salvation

could never be attributed to grace, which is unmerited favor! Moreover, to deny the justice of eternal punishment is to fly in the face of Christian consciousness, which universally witnesses to the fact that punishment, and only punishment, is all that each of us deserves. Moreover, if the sinner has despised and rejected eternal happiness, is there any reason why he should complain against the justice of eternal misery? Finally, if there is an infinite evil in sin—as there is—then infinite punishment is its due reward.

(4) God is holy. Because God is infinitely holy, He regards sin with infinite abhorrence. From this scriptural premise it has been erroneously concluded that, therefore, God will ultimately triumph over evil by banishing every last trace of it from the universe; otherwise, it is said, His moral character is gone. But against this sophistry we reply; God's holiness did not prevent sin entering His universe, and He has permitted it to remain all these thousands of years, therefore a holy God can and does co-exist with a world of sin! To this it may be answered: There are good and sufficient reasons why sin should be allowed now. Quite so, is our rejoinder; and who knows what these reasons are? Conjecture we may; but who knows? God has not told us in His Word. Who, then, is in the position to say that there may not be eternal reasons—necessities—for the continued existence of sin? That God will triumph over evil is most certainly true. His triumph will be manifested by incarcerating every one of His foes in a place where they can do no more damage, and where in their torments His holy hatred of sin will shine for ever and ever. The Lake of Fire so far from witnessing to Satan's victory, will be the crowning proof of his utter defeat.

## 2. THE PASSAGES APPEALED TO BY UNIVERSALISTS

Universalists may be divided, broadly, into two classes: those who teach the ultimate salvation of every member of Adam's race, and those who affirm the ultimate salvation of all creatures, including the Devil, the fallen angels, and the demons. The class of passages to which both appeal are verses where the words "all," "all men," "all

things," "the world" are to be found. The simplest way to refute their contentions on these passages is to show that such terms are restricted, usually modified by what is said in the immediate context.

The issue raised by Universalists narrows itself down to the question of whether "all men" and "all things" are employed, in passages which speak of salvation, in a limited or unlimited sense. Let us, then, point to a number of passages where these general terms occur, but where it is impossible to give them an absolute force or meaning:

"And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins" (Mark 1:5). "And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not" (Luke 3:15). "And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, He that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold the same baptizeth, and all come to Him" (John 3:26). "And early in the morning He came again into the temple," and "all the people came unto Him; and He sat down, and taught them" (John 8:2). "For thou shalt be His witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard" (Acts 22:15). "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men" (2 Cor. 3:2).

In none of the above passages has "all," "all men," "all the people" an unlimited scope. In each of those passages these general terms have only a relative meaning. In Scripture "all" is used in two ways: meaning "all without exception" (occurring infrequently), and "all without distinction" (its general significance), that is, all classes and kinds—old and young, men and women, rich and poor, educated and illiterate, and in many instances Jews and Gentiles, men of all nations. Very frequently the "all" has reference to all believers, all in Christ.

What we have just said concerning the relative use and restricted meaning of the terms "all" and "all men" applies with equal force to "all things." In Scripture this is another expression which often has a

very limited meaning. We give a few examples of this: "For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs" (Rom. 14:2). "For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure" (Rom. 14:20). "I am made all things to all, that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor. 9:22). "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient" (1 Cor. 10:23). "Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things" (Eph. 6:21). "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). In each of these passages "all things" has a restricted force.

Another class of passages appealed to by Universalists are verses where "the world" is mentioned. But a careful examination of every passage where this term occurs in the New Testament will show that we are not obliged to understand it as referring to the entire human race, because in a number of instances it means far less. Take the following examples. "For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world" (John 6:33). Mark that here it is not a matter of proffering "life" to the world, but of giving "life." Does Christ "give life"—spiritual and eternal life, for that is what is in view—to every member of the human family? "If thou do these things, show Thyself to the world" (John 7:4). Here it is plain that "the world" is an indefinite expression—show Thyself in public, to men in general, is its obvious meaning here. "The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how we prevail nothing? Behold, the world is gone after Him" (John 12:19). Did the Pharisees mean that the entire human race had "gone after" Christ? Surely not. "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world" (Rom. 1:8). Must this mean that the faith of the Roman saints was known and spoken of by all the race of mankind? Did all men everywhere "speak" of it? Did one man out of every ten thousand in the Roman Empire know anything about it? "The word of the truth of the Gospel, which is come unto you, as it is in all the world" (Col. 1:5, 6). Does "all the world" here mean, absolutely and unqualifiedly, all mankind? Had all men everywhere heard the Gospel? Surely the

meaning of this verse is, that the Gospel, instead of being confined to the land of Judea and the lost sheep of the house of Israel, had gone forth abroad without restraint, into many places. "And all the world wondered after the beast" (Rev. 13:3). That the reference here cannot be to all men without exception we know from other scriptures.

It will be seen, then, from the passages cited above that there is nothing in the words themselves which compel us to give an unlimited meaning to "all men," "all things," "the world." Therefore when we insist that "the world" which is saved, and the "all men" who are redeemed, are the world of believers and the all men who receive Christ as their personal Saviour, instead of interpreting the Scriptures to suit ourselves we are explaining them in strict harmony with other passages. On the other hand, to give to these terms unlimited scope and to make them mean all without exception is to interpret them in a way which manifestly clashes with the many passages which plainly teach there are those who will be finally lost.

One other remark may be made upon Universalism before turning to our next sub-division, and that is, the very fact that Universalism is so popular with the wicked, is proof irresistible, that it is not the system taught in the Bible. 1 Cor. 2:14 tells us "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." That the natural man does receive the teaching that every one will ultimately be saved, is a sure sign it does not belong to "the things of the Spirit of God." The wicked hate the light, but love the darkness; hence, while they deem as "foolishness" the truth of God and reject it, they esteem as reasonable the Devil's lies, and greedily devour them.

### 3. PASSAGES APPEALED TO BY THE ANNIHILATIONISTS

Truth is one: consistent: eternally unchanged. Error is hydra-headed, inconsistent and contradictory, ever varying in its forms. So determined are men to persuade themselves that the eternal



punishment of the wicked is a myth, the enmity of the carnal mind has devised a variety of ways of ridding themselves of this truth which is so hateful to them. "God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions" (Eccl. 7:29). One of these inventions is the theory that at death the wicked pass into oblivion, and that after their resurrection and judgment at the Great White Throne, they are annihilated in the Lake of Fire. Incredible as this view appears, nevertheless it has had and still has many advocates and adherents; and what is even more unthinkable, the Word of God is appealed to in support of it. It is because of this that we make a brief notice of it here.

The first class of passages to which they appeal are verses where "death" is mentioned. Death is regarded in the most absolute sense. Death they take to mean the passing from existence into non-existence; an utter extinction of being. Death is applied to the soul as well as the body. How, then, is this error to be met? We answer, By an appeal to God's Word. The meaning of a word is to be defined not from its derivation, not from its employment by heathen writers, not from the definition supplied by a standard English dictionary, nor from the lexicons, but from its usage in the Holy Scriptures. What, then, does death mean as used by the Holy Spirit?

Let us turn first to 1 Cor. 15:36: "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die." Here is the Holy Spirit's illustration and type of the death and resurrection of a believer. Now, does the living germ in the seed sown become extinct before it brings forth fruit? Surely not. There is a decaying, of course, of its outer shell—and therein lies the analogy with the death of man—but the living germ within dies not, otherwise there could be no harvest. Death, then, according to this illustration of the Holy Spirit is not annihilation. The same illustration was used by our Lord. Said He, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24). The stalk and ear of corn in harvest time are but the life-germ fully developed. So it is with man. The body dies; the soul lives on. Note how this comes

out, unmistakably, in the Saviour's words as recorded in Matt. 10:28: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." The "soul" man is unable to kill. But God is able—and mark carefully the distinction—"to destroy (not kill) both soul and body in hell." As the word "destroy" is another word misused and erroneously defined by the Annihilationists, a few words must be said upon it.

As used in Scripture the words "destroy," "destruction," "perish" etc. never signify cessation of existence. In Matt. 10:7 one of the principle Greek words for "destroyed" is rendered "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Those Israelites had not ceased to be, but were away from God! In Mark 2:22 the same word is translated "marred" in connection with "bottles" of skins which the new wine burst. So, too, the word "perish" never signifies annihilation in Scripture. In 2 Pet. 3:6 we read, "The world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished." The "world" that perished, whether the reference be to the pre-Adamic earth or the world destroyed by the Flood, was not reduced to nothing. When, then, Scripture speaks of the wicked as perishing and as being destroyed, it is in order to expose the error of those who assert that they have a gospel for those who die unsaved. That the wicked have "perished" excludes all hope of their subsequent salvation. 1 Tim. 5:6 tells us there is a living—death even now "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth"—so will there be in eternity.

The absurdity and unscripturalness of Annihilationism are easily exposed. If at death the sinner passes out of existence, why resurrect him in order to annihilate him again? Scripture speaks of the "punishment" and "torment" of the wicked; but any one can see that annihilation is not these! If annihilation were all that awaits the wicked, they would never know that they had received their just deserts and the "due reward" of their iniquities! Scripture speaks of degrees of punishment for the lost; but annihilation would make this impossible; annihilation would level all distinctions and ignore all

degrees of guilt. In Isa. 33:14 we are told, "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" So far from sinners being annihilated they shall dwell with the devouring fire! Scripture speaks again and again of the "wailing and gnashing of teeth" of those who are cast into hell, and this, at once, gives the lie to those who affirm extinction of being.

#### 4. THE THEORY THAT THE PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED IS DISCIPLINARY AND REMEDIAL

There are those who allow that the wicked will be cast into hell, and yet they insist that the punishment is corrective rather than retributive. A sort of Protestant Purgatory is invented, the fires of which are to be purifying rather than penal. Such a conception is grossly dishonoring to God. Some who hold this view make a great pretense of honoring Christ, yet in reality they greatly dishonor Him. If men who died rejecting the Saviour are yet to be saved, if the fires of hell are to do for men what the blood of the Cross failed to effect, then why was the Divine Sacrifice needed at all—all might have been saved by the disciplinary sufferings of hell, and so God could have spared His Son. Again; if God compassionates His enemies and cherishes nothing but gracious designs of infinite pity toward those who have despised and rejected His Son, we may well ask, Then why does He take such dreadful measures with them? If loving discipline be all that they need, cannot Divine wisdom devise some gentler measure than consigning them to the "torment" of the Lake of Fire for "the ages of the ages?" This is an insuperable difficulty in the way of the theory we are now refuting. But once we see that the Lake of Fire is the place of punishment, not discipline, and that it is Divine wrath and not love that casts the reprobate into it, then the difficulty entirely disappears.

Utterly inconsistent though it be, there are those who argue that the fires of hell owe their disciplinary efficacy to the blood of Christ. These enemies of the truth have been well answered by Sir Robert Anderson: "Such punishment, therefore, must be the penalty due to

their sins; else it were unrighteous to impose it. If, then, the lost are ultimately to be saved, it must be either because they shall have satisfied the penalty; or else through redemption—that is, because Christ has borne that penalty for them. But if sinners can be saved by satisfying Divine justice in enduring the penalty due to sin, Christ need not have died. If, on the other hand, the redeemed may yet be doomed, though ordained to eternal life in Christ, themselves to endure the penalty for sin, the foundations of our faith are destroyed.

It is not, I repeat, the providential or disciplinary, but the penal consequences of sin, which follow the judgment. We can therefore understand how the sinner may escape his doom through his debt being paid vicariously, or we can (in theory, at all events) admit that he may be discharged on payment personally of 'the uttermost farthing;' but that the sinner should be made to pay a portion of his debt, and then released because some one else had paid the whole before he was remitted to punishment at all,—this is absolutely inconsistent with both righteousness and grace" ("Human Destiny").

Again; if it be true that the damned in the Lake of Fire are still the objects of Divine benevolence; that as the creatures of His hand, the Lord still looks upon them with the most benign regard, and the unquenchable fire is nothing more than a rod in the hand of a wise and loving Father, we ask, How can this be harmonized with the manner in which Scripture uniformly speaks of unbelievers? God has not left us in ignorance of how He regards those who have openly and persistently defied Him. Again and again the Bible makes known to us the solemn fact that God looks upon the wicked as cumberers of the earth, as repugnant to Him. They are represented as "dross" not gold (Ps. 119:119); as worthless "chaff" (Matt. 3:12); as "vipers" (Matt. 12:34); as "vessels unto dishonor" and "vessels of wrath" (Rom. 9:21, 22); as those who are to be made the Lord's footstool (1 Cor. 15:27) as "trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots" (Jude 12) and therefore fit for nothing but the fire; as those who will be "spewed out of the Lord's mouth" (Rev. 3:16), that is, as objects of revulsion. Some of these passages describe

Jewish reprobates, others sinners of the Gentiles; some refer to those who lived in a by-gone dispensation, others belong to the present; some speak of men this side of the grave, some of those on the other side. One purpose in calling attention to them is to show how God regards his enemies. The estimate expressed in the above passages (and they might easily be multiplied) cannot be harmonized with the view that God still looks upon them in love and entertains only the most tender regards for them.

Another class of passages may be referred to in this connection. "For I lift up My hand to heaven, and say, I live forever. If I whet My glittering sword, and Mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to Mine enemies, and will reward them that hate Me. I will make Mine arrows drunk with blood, and My sword shall devour flesh; and that with the blood of the slain and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy" (Deut. 32:40–42). Can this be made to square with the theory that God has naught but compassion toward those who have despised and defied Him?

"Because I have called, and ye have refused; I have stretched out My hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all My counsel, and would none of My reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me" (Prov. 1:24–28). Is this the language of One who still has designs of mercy toward His enemies?

"I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with Me; for I will tread them in Mine anger, and trample them in My fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all My raiment" (Isa. 63:3). Weigh this carefully, and then ask if such treatment is meted out toward those unto whom the Lord cherishes nought but compassion.

Should it be said, Each of these passages is from the Old Testament, it would be sufficient to say, True, but it is the same God as the New Testament reveals that is there speaking. But consider one verse from the New Testament also. The Christ of God is yet going to say to men, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire" (Matt. 25:41). Is it thinkable that the Son of God would pronounce this awful malediction upon those who are merely appointed to a season of disciplinary chastisement, after which they will be forever with Him in perfect bliss!

Thus we have sought to show that the various objections brought against eternal punishment will not stand the test of Holy Writ; that, though often presented in a plausible form, and with the avowed intention of vindicating the Divine character, yet, in reality, they are nothing more than the reasonings of that carnal mind which is enmity against God.

Having disposed of the principal objections brought against the truth of Eternal Punishment, we now turn to consider

## **II. THE DESTINY OF THE WICKED**

There is deep need for us to approach this solemn subject impartially and dispassionately. Let writer and reader cry earnestly to God that all prejudices and preconceptions may be removed from our minds. It ill becomes us to sit at the feet of Infinite Wisdom determined to hold fast to our foregone conclusions. Nothing can be more insulting to God than to presume to examine His Word, professing a desire to learn His mind, when we have already settled to our own satisfaction what it will say. Some one has said that we ought to bring our minds to the Scriptures as blank paper is brought to the printing press, that it may receive only the impress of the type. May such grace be vouchsafed to us all that we may ever present our minds to the Holy Spirit's teaching that only the impress may be left which God has designed. May our only desire be to hear "What saith the Lord?"

## 1. THE CERTAINTY OF THEIR JUDGMENT

It is written "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). This is one of the many verses which refute the errors of the Annihilationists, who make the judgment of the sinner to be, itself, death. But here death and judgment are clearly distinguished. The one follows the other.

The fact of a future judgment for sinners is established by numerous passages. In Eccl. 11:9 we read, "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." Again, in Eccl. 12:14, we are told, "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." The New Testament witnesses to the same truth: "He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained" (Acts 17:31). The judgment itself is described in Rev. 20:11–15.

Of the certainty of this coming judgment we are left in no doubt—"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (2 Pet. 2:9). It will be impossible for the sinner to evade it. Escape there will be none—"How can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Matt. 23:33). Resistance, individually or collectively, will be futile—"Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished" (Prov. 11:21). No confederacy of His foes shall hinder God from taking vengeance upon them.

## 2. DEATH SEALS THE SINNER'S FATE

Scripture teaches plainly that man's opportunity for salvation is limited to the period of his earthly life. If he dies unsaved his fate is sealed inexorably. There are two passages in the New Testament most generally relied upon by those who affirm that there is for the

lost a hope beyond death. These are both found in the 1st Epistle of Peter. A brief notice then shall be taken of them.

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing" (3:18–20). But these verses make no reference whatever to any preaching heard by those who had already passed out of this life. They simply tell us that the Spirit of God preached through Noah, while the ark was being built, to those who were disobedient; and because they refused to respond to that preaching they are now "spirits in prison." It was not Christ Himself who "preached," but the Holy Spirit, as is plain from the opening words of v. 19—"By which also:" the "by which" points back to "the Spirit" at the end of v. 18. That the Holy Spirit did address Himself to the antedeluvians we know from Gen. 6:3—"My Spirit shall not always strive with man." The Spirit strove through Noah's preaching. That Noah was a "preacher" we learn from 2 Pet. 2:5.

The second passage is found in 1 Pet. 4:6, "For this cause was the Gospel preached also to them that are dead." But this need not detain us. The Gospel was preached, not as now being preached, or, will again be preached to them! That such passages as these are appealed to only serves to show how untenable and impossible is the contention they are supposed to support.

That death seals the doom of the lost, we may prove negatively by the fact—and this is conclusive of itself—that we have not a single instance described in either the Old Testament or the New of a sinner being saved after death. Nor is there a single passage which holds out any promise of this in the future. But there are passages which contain positive teaching to the contrary. Several of these are now submitted.



We turn first to Prov. 29:1: "He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." This is so explicit and unequivocal it needs no words of ours either to expound or enforce it. Once the rebellious sinner is "cut off" he is "without remedy." Nothing could be clearer: at death his doom is sealed.

Again, in Matt. 9:6 we read, "But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins,—(then saith He to the sick of the palsy) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house." Why did not the Lord simply say, "The Son of Man hath power to forgive sins," and then stop? That would have been sufficient reply to His critics. The only reason that we can suggest why the Saviour should have added the qualifying words—"The Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins"—was because he would give us to understand that after a sinner leaves the "earth" the Son of Man (Christ in His mediatorial character) has not the "power" (or "authority" as ἐξουσία really means) to forgive sins.

A similar instance to the above is found in John 12:25: "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." Notice that the antithesis would be complete without the restricting words "in this world"—"He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life shall keep it unto life eternal." Again, we say, that the only reason we can see why Christ added the qualifying clause, "He that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal" was in order to show that destiny is fixed once we leave this world.

In 2 Cor. 5:10, which speaks of believers, we have another example of this careful employment of qualifying language: "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body." The saints are to be dealt with not merely according to what they have done, but that they may receive "the things done in the body." What they have done after they left the body and prior to the resurrection is not taken into account.

In John 8:21 it is recorded how that Christ said to His enemies, "I go My way, and ye shall seek Me, and shall die in your sins; whither I go, ye cannot come." Observe carefully the order of the last two clauses. Once they died in their sins, it was impossible for them to go to heaven. The solemn force of this verse comes out even more clearly if we contrast with it John 13:36: "Simon Peter said unto Him, Lord, whither goest Thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow Me afterwards." Mark the absence of the qualifying "now" in John 8:21. To Peter it was said, as to a representative saint, "Thou shalt follow Me (to heaven) afterwards;" but to the wicked, Christ declared, "Whither I go, ye cannot come!"

### 3. WHAT AWAITS THE SINNER AT DEATH

We naturally turn for light on this to the teaching of the Lord, for more was said through Him than through any other concerning the future of the wicked. Nor shall we turn in vain to the record of His words. In Luke 16 we find Him drawing aside the veil which hides from us what lies beyond death. He tells us of a rich man who died "and was buried" (v. 22). But he had not ceased to exist. So far from it, the Lord went on to say, "And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments." That Christ was here describing the actual experience of this rich man after death there is no good reason to doubt; to say otherwise, is to be guilty of blasphemously charging the Son of God with using language which He knew would mislead countless numbers of those who later would read the record of His words. No one who comes to this passage with an unprejudiced mind would ever suppose that it gave anything else than a plain and simple picture of what befalls the wicked after death. It is only those who have previously arrived at the foregone conclusion that there is no torment for the unbeliever after death, who approach this passage determined to explain away its obvious meaning, who rule out of it what is there and read into it what is not there.

"In Hades he lift up his eyes, being in torments." The Greek word here translated hell is "Hades" (ᾍδης), which is a generic term for the unseen world, into which the souls of all pass at death. No doubt it is due to the fact that the souls of saints as well as sinners are represented as entering Sheol (שְׁאוֹל) at death that caused the translators to render it "grave" in many instances. But the fact that in both the Hebrew and the Greek there is an entirely different word used for "grave" ought to have prevented such a mistake. The Holy Spirit has carefully preserved the distinction between the two terms throughout. A careful examination of every passage in the Old and New Testaments where these words occur will show that many things are said of the "grave" (Heb. "קֶבֶר;" Gk. "μνημεῖον") which could never be said of "Sheol" or "Hades;" and many things are said of the latter which are never predicated of the former. For example: both the Hebrew and Greek words for "grave" occur in the plural again and again; Sheol and Hades never do so. The Hebrew and Greek words for "grave" are frequently referred to as the possession of individuals—"My grave" (Gen. 50:5); "grave of Abner" (2 Sam. 3:32); "His own (Joseph's) new tomb" (Matt. 27:60); "The sepulchres of the righteous" (Matt 23:29), etc. In Gen. 50:5 we read, "In my grave which I have digged for me;" of "μνημεῖον" we read, "And he laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock" (Matt. 27:60). Sheol and Hades are never so referred to. The body enters "קֶבֶר" and "μνημεῖον," but it is never said to enter Sheol or Hades. Sufficient has been said to demonstrate that Sheol or Hades is not the grave. We may, therefore, confidently affirm that neither Sheol or Hades should ever be rendered "grave" or "the grave."

Hades refers to the same place as Sheol. Their identification is unequivocally established by a comparison of Ps. 16:10 with Acts 2:27: "Thou wilt not leave My soul in Sheol" (Ps. 16:10), is "Thou shalt not leave My soul in Hades" in Acts 2:27. But it is important to bear in mind that Sheol or Hades had two compartments, reserved respectively for the saved and the lost. And "between" these two, our Lord tells us there is "a great gulf fixed" (Luke 16:26). The compartment we are now considering is that which receives the souls

of the wicked. In this, Christ declares, is a "flame" which torments. This is in perfect harmony with the teaching of the Old Testament concerning Sheol. In Deut. 33:22 we read, "For a fire is kindled in Mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest Sheol." Again; in the parable of the tares our Lord said, "I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them" (Matt. 13:30). The explanation of this is found in vv. 40–42 of the same chapter: "As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this age. The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." As this takes place at the end of this age and before the judgment begins, the "furnace of fire" must refer to Hades rather than the Lake of Fire.

Returning then to the teaching of Luke 16 concerning the experience of the wicked immediately after death, we read, "And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments." Here we have a sentient being, a conscious person, in a definite place; suffering there excruciatingly. He was in "torments." So great was his anguish he begged that one might "dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue" (v. 24). But such alleviation was denied him. He was bidden to "remember" how he had lived—a worshipper of Mammon. Such, we are assured, will be the doom of every one that dies in his sins.

#### 4. THE UTTER HOPELESSNESS OF THE LOST

Thus far we have seen, first, that the judgment of the wicked is certain; second, that death seals their doom; third that at death the souls of unbelievers go to Hades, into that compartment of the unseen world reserved for the lost, there to be tormented in the flame. There they remain until the judgment, when they shall be resurrected and brought before the Great White Throne to receive their final sentence. We, therefore, devote a separate section to show that after the wicked are brought out of Hades there is even then, no hope whatever of their salvation.

The first scripture we appeal to in proof of this is John 5:29: "All that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." This is the solemn announcement of the Son of God. Let His words be well weighed. Here He tells us briefly, what awaits the sum total of the dead. They are divided into two classes: they that have done good, and they that have done evil. For the one there is the "resurrection of life;" for the other the "resurrection of damnation." For evil-doers there is no resurrection of probation, and no resurrection of salvation; but simply and solely the resurrection of damnation. How this removes the very foundation on which any might desire to build a future hope for the wicked!

In 1 Thess. 4:13 we read, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." Here the apostle draws a contrast between the Christian grieving over the death of believing loved ones, and the heathen who mourned the loss of their dear ones. The Christian may sorrow over the departure of a saved relative or friend, but he can also comfort himself with the blessed hope presented to him in the Scriptures, the hope of being re-united at the coming of the Lord. This hope the heathen, and the unsaved in Christendom who mourn the loss of unsaved friends, have not. Yea, they have "no hope." This is not weakened at all by the fact that in Eph. 2:12, 13 we read of those once "without hope" who had nevertheless, been "made nigh by the blood of Christ." The Ephesian scripture speaks of those alive in the world, and while here there is always a hope they may be saved; though while they remain unsaved they are "without hope," that is, without any scripturally-warranted hope. But the Thessalonian passage speaks of those who have passed out of this world unsaved, and for them there is "no hope." Whatever vain hopes the wicked may now cherish in the day to come, the very "expectation of the wicked shall perish" (Prov. 10:28)!

Another scripture which proves the hopeless state of those who have rejected God's truth is to be found in Heb. 10:26–29: "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace?" For our present purpose we need not stop to consider of whom this passage is specifically speaking. Sufficient to know that it treats of those who have wilfully resisted the light. For these we are told "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." If there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, then they must themselves suffer the Divine penalty for them. What that penalty is this same passage tells us; it is "fiery indignation" which shall devour them. It is a judgment "without mercy." It is a "punishment" sorer than that which befell him that despised Moses' law.

"For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment" (James 2:13). It is true that the apostle is here writing to saints, but in the verse we have just quoted there is a noticeable change in his language, and here he is obviously speaking of the unsaved. In the previous verse he had said "Ye," but now he changes to "he." He that hath showed no mercy (to his fellowmen) shall have "judgment without mercy" from God; and this, in spite of the fact that "mercy rejoiceth against judgment." The last clause is plainly for the purpose of adding solemnity to what precedes. Judgment "without mercy" is language which looks back to Isa. 27:11, where we read, "It is a people of no understanding: therefore He that made them will not have mercy on them, and He that formed them will show them no favor." If, then, this judgment is "without mercy" how it closes the door against all possibility of a final reprieve, or even a modification of the dread sentence! And how it exposes the baselessness of that hope which is cherished by many,

viz., that in the last great Day they think to cast themselves upon the mercy of that One whom they now despise and defy! Vain will it be to cry for mercy then. Of old God said to Israel, "Therefore will I also deal in fury: Mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in Mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them." So it will be at the last judgment. One other scripture may be considered in this connection: "Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever" (Jude 13). Unspeakably solemn is this. This verse is referring to the future portion of those who now turn "the grace of our God into lasciviousness" and deny "the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 4). Unto them is reserved "the blackness of darkness forever." The endless night of their doom shall never be relieved by a single star of hope. Thus have we sought to show that the Word of God by a variety of expressions, each of which is unambiguous and conclusive, reveals the utter hopelessness of those taking part in "the resurrection of damnation." We shall next consider

## 5. THE LAST ABODE OF THE LOST

This is given at least two different names in the New Testament: "Gehenna" and "Lake of Fire." Let us now examine the teaching of Scripture concerning them.

First, "γέεννα" is the Grecianized form of the Hebrew for "valley of Hinnom," which was a deep gorge on the east of Jerusalem. This valley of Hinnom (גֵּי הִנּוֹם) was first used in connection with idolatrous rites (2 Chron. 28:3). Later it became a burial ground (Jer. 7:31), or more probably a crematorium. Still later became the place where the garbage of Jerusalem was thrown and burned (Josephus). Its fires were kept constantly alight so as to consume the filth and rubbish deposited therein.

Second, this valley of Hinnom foreshadowed the great garbage-receptacle of the universe—Hell, just as other places and persons in

the Old Testament Scriptures adumbrated other objects more vile—for example, the "king of Tyre" in Ezek. 28. Just as what is there said of this king has in view one more sinister than he, so what is said of the valley of Hinnom symbolized that which was far more awful. We can no more limit Gehenna to the valley outside of Jerusalem than we can restrict "the king of Tyre" to a mere man of the past.

Third, the valley of Hinnom our Lord used as an emblem of Hell, and stamped with the hall-mark of His authority the wider and more solemn scope of the word. It should be carefully noted that when speaking of Gehenna He never referred to the mere literal valley outside of Jerusalem, but employed it to designate the place of eternal torments.

Fourth, Gehenna, in its New Testament usage, refers to a place. "And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into Gehenna" (Matt 5:29. See also Matt. 18:9).

Fifth, the fire of Gehenna is eternal. "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into Gehenna, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:43, 44).

Sixth, Gehenna is the place in which both soul and body are destroyed. "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna" (Matt. 19:28). This passage is most important, for more than any other it enables us to gather the real scope of this term. The fact that the "soul" as well as the body is destroyed there, is proof positive that our Lord was not referring to the valley of Hinnom. So, too, the fact that the "body" is destroyed there, makes it certain that "Gehenna" is not another name for "Hades." In pondering this solemn verse we should remember that "destroy"



does not mean to annihilate. Some have raised a quibble over the fact that Christ did not here expressly say that God would "destroy both soul and body in hell," but merely said "Fear Him which is able to." This admits of a simple and conclusive reply. Surely it is apparent on the surface that Christ is not here predicating of God a power which none can deny, but which, notwithstanding, He will never exert! He was not simply affirming the omnipotence of God, but uttering a solemn threat which will yet be executed. That such was His meaning is established beyond the shadow of doubt when we compare Matt. 10:28 with the parallel passage in Luke 12:5: "But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: fear Him, which after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear Him." This threat we know will be fulfilled.

Seventh, Gehenna is identical with the Lake of Fire. There are four things which indicate this, and taken together they constitute a cumulative but clear proof. First, the fact that in Gehenna God "destroys" both soul and body (Matt. 10:28). This shows the wicked who are there destroyed have already received their resurrection bodies. Second, the fact that the fire of Gehenna is eternal: it will "never be quenched" (Mark 9:43). This is nowhere said of the fires of sheol or hades. Third, in Isa. 30:33 we learn that "תִּפְתֵּחַ" is ordained for "the king"—it is "the king" of Dan. 11:36, that is the Antichrist, "the Assyrian" of Isa. 30:30. Now "תִּפְתֵּחַ" is another name for the valley of Hinnom, as may be seen by a reference to Jer. 7:31, 32. In Rev. 19:20 we are told that the Beast (the Antichrist) together with the False Prophet will be "cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." Thus by comparing Isa. 30:33 with Rev. 19:20 we learn that Gehenna and the Lake of Fire are one and the same. Finally, notice the absence of "Gehenna" in Rev. 20:14, "And death and hades were cast into the lake of fire." The meaning of this is the people whom death and hades had seized "death" capturing the body; "hades" claiming the soul. That the casting of "death and hades" into the Lake of Fire refer to their captives is clear from the concluding words of the verse—"This is the second death," i.e. for their victims. Note then that we are not told that "Gehenna" was cast into the Lake

of Fire because Gehenna and the Lake of Fire are one and the same place.

We shall now offer a few remarks upon the Lake of fire and brimstone. The following analysis indicates the teaching of Scripture concerning it.

First, it is the place which finally receives the Beast and the False Prophet: Rev. 19:20.

Second, it is the place which finally receives the Devil: Rev. 20:10.

Third, it is the place which finally receives all whose names are not found written in the book of life: Rev. 20:15 and cf. 21:8.

Fourth, it is a place of "torment;" Rev. 20:10.

Fifth, it is a place whose torment is ceaseless and interminable, "day and night for ever and ever:" Rev. 20:10 and cf. 14:11.

Sixth, it is also termed "The Second Death:" Rev. 20:14; 21:8, etc.

Seventh, it has "no power" on the people of God: Rev. 20:6 and cf. 2:11.

In the sixth item above we have pointed out that the Lake of Fire is also denominated "The Second Death." At least three reasons may be suggested for this. First, this designation intimates that the endless torments of the Lake of Fire are the penalty and wages of sin. "The wages of sin is death." Second, the use of this appellation calls attention to the fact that all who are cast into the Lake of Fire will be eternally separated from God. As the first death is the separation of the soul from the body, so the second death will be the eternal separation of the soul from God—"Punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord" (2 Thess. 1:9). Third, such a title emphasizes the dreadfulness of the Lake of Fire. To the normal man death is the object he fears above all others. It is that from

which he naturally shrinks. It is that which he most dreads. When, then, the Holy Spirit designates the Lake of Fire the "Second Death" He is emphasizing the fact that it is an object of horror from which the sinner should flee.

## 6. THE ETERNALITY OF THE SUFFERINGS OF THE LOST

Upon this point the language of Scripture is most explicit. In Matt. 25:41 we read of "everlasting fire." In Matt. 25:46 of "everlasting punishment." In Mark 6:29 of "eternal damnation." And in 2 Thess. 1:9 of "everlasting destruction." We are aware that the enemies of God's truth have sought to tamper with this word rendered everlasting and eternal. But their efforts have been entirely futile. The impossibility of rendering the Greek word by any other English equivalent appears from the following evidence:

The Greek word is "αἰώνιος" and its meaning and scope has been definitely defined for us by the Holy Spirit in at least two passages. "While we look not at the things which are seen: but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:18). Here a contrast is drawn between things "seen" and things "not seen," between things "temporal" and things "eternal." Now it is obvious that if the things "temporal" should last forever, there would be no antithesis between them and the things "eternal." It is equally obvious that if the things "eternal" are merely "age-long," then they cannot be properly contrasted with things that are temporal. The difference between things temporal and things eternal in this verse is as great as the difference between the things "seen" and the things "not seen."

The second example, which is of the same character as the one furnished in 2 Cor. 4:18, is equally conclusive. In Philemon 15 we read, "For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him forever." Here the Greek for "forever" is αἰώνιος. The apostle is beseeching Philemon to receive Onesimus,

who had left his master, and whom Paul had sent back to him. When the apostle says "receive him forever," his evident meaning is, never banish him, never sell him, never again send him away. "αἰώνιος" is here contrasted with "for a season," showing that it means just the opposite of what that expression signifies.

Eternal or everlasting is the one and unvaried meaning of αἰώνιος in the New Testament. The same word translated "everlasting destruction," "everlasting punishment," "everlasting fire," is rendered "everlasting life" in John 3:16; "the everlasting God" in Rom. 16:26; "eternal salvation" in Heb. 5:9; "His eternal glory" in 1 Pet. 5:10. No argument needs to be made to prove that in these passages it is impossible to fairly substitute any other alternative for ever lasting and eternal. And it is thus with the other class of passages. The "everlasting fire" will synchronize with the existence of "the everlasting God." The "everlasting punishment" of the lost will continue as long as the "everlasting life" of believers. The "eternal damnation" of the wicked will no more have an end than will the "eternal salvation" of the redeemed. The "everlasting destruction" of unbelievers will prove as interminable as the "everlasting glory" of God. To deny the former is to deny the latter. To affirm the everlastingness of God is to prove the endlessness of the misery of His enemies.

## 7. THE FINALITY OF THEIR STATE

The doom of those who shall be cast into the Lake of Fire is irrevocable and final. Many independent considerations prove this. Forgiveness of sins is limited to life on this earth. Once the sinner passes out of this world there remaineth "no more sacrifice for sins." The fact that at death the soul of the wicked goes at once into the "furnace of fire" (Matt. 12:42) witnesses to the fixity of his future state. The fact that, later, his resurrection is one "of damnation" (John 5:29) excludes all possibility of a last-hour reprieve. The fact that he is cast soul and body into a lake of fire argues that then he receives his final portion. The fact that the Lake of Fire is

denominated the "Second Death" denotes the hopelessness of his situation. Just as the first death cuts him off forever from this world, so the second death cuts him off forever from God.

In Phil. 3 the apostle Paul speaks of the enemies of the Cross of Christ, and moved by the Holy Spirit he tells us that their "end is destruction" (v. 19). Stronger and more unequivocal language could not be used. There is nothing beyond the "end." And the end of the enemies of the Cross of Christ is "destruction" not salvation. The Greek word here translated "end" is "τέλος." It is found in the following passages: "Of His Kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:33); "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10:4); "Having neither beginning of days nor end of life" (Heb. 7:3); "I am ... the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last" (Rev. 22:13).

As we have already seen, the twentieth chapter of Revelation describes the final judgment of the wicked before the Great White Throne, after which they are cast into the Lake of Fire. The chapters which follow—the last two in the Bible—may be read carefully and searched diligently, but they will not be found to contain so much as a single hint that those cast into the Lake of Fire shall ever be delivered from it. Instead, we find in the very last chapter of God's Word the solemn statement, "He that is unjust let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still" (Rev. 22:11). Thus the finality of their condition is expressly affirmed on the closing page of Holy Writ.

In the last two articles we have considered some of the principal sophistries which unbelief has brought against the truth of eternal punishment, and have also examined the teaching of Scripture concerning the Destiny of the wicked. We approach now the most solemn aspect of our subject, namely:

### **III. THE NATURE OF PUNISHMENT AWAITING THE LOST**

#### **1. THE PORTION OF THE WICKED IMMEDIATELY AFTER DEATH**

We turn first to the teaching of our Lord found in Luke 16. Here, we learn the following facts: First, that in Hades the lost are in full possession of all their faculties and sensibilities. They see, for the rich man saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom (v. 23). They feel, for he was in "torments" (v. 24). They cry for mercy, for he asked—but in vain—for a drop of water to cool his tongue (v. 24). They are in possession of memory, for the rich man was bidden to "remember" what he had received during his lifetime on earth (v. 25). It is impossible for them to join the redeemed: there is "a great gulf fixed" between them (v. 26).

Unspeakably solemn is all this. Not only will the lost be tormented in flames, but their anguish will be immeasurably increased by a sight of the redeemed being "comforted." Then shall they see the happy portion of the blest which they despised, preferring as they did the pleasures of sin for a season. And how the retention of "memory" will further augment their sufferings! With what unfathomable sorrows will they recall the opportunities wasted, the expostulations of parents and friends slighted, the warnings of God's servants disregarded, the proclamations of God's Gospel spurned. And then to know there is no way of escape, no means of relief, no hope of a reprieve! Their lot will be unbearable; their awful portion, beyond endurance. The Son of God has faithfully forewarned that "there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 13:42). It is very significant that Christ referred to this just seven times—denoting the completeness of their misery and anguish; see Matt. 8:12; 13:42–50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Luke 13:28.

#### **2. THE FINAL PORTION OF THE WICKED**

(1) This is spoken of as being "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord" (2 Thess. 1:9). None but one who really knows God can begin to estimate what it will mean to be eternally banished from the Lord. Forever separated from the Fount of all goodness! Never to enjoy the light of God's countenance! Never to bask in the sunshine of His presence. This, this is the most awful of all. 2 Thess. 1:9 furnishes clear intimation that the judgment of Matt. 25, with its eternal sentence, looks beyond the Assize. "Destruction from the presence of the Lord" is parallel with. "depart from Me ye cursed."

(2) The final portion of the wicked is spoken of as "everlasting punishment" (Matt. 25:46)\*. In 1 John 4:18 the same Greek word is rendered "κόλασιν." This term announces the satisfying of God's justice. In the punishing of the wicked. God vindicates his outraged majesty. Herein punishment differs from correction or discipline. Punishment is not designed for the good of the one who suffers it. It is intended for the enforcing of law and order; it is necessary for the preservation of government.

(3) The final portion of the wicked is spoken of as a "tormenting." This is proven by the fact that the everlasting fire into which the wicked depart is "prepared for the Devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41) which emphasizes the awfulness of this punishment, rather than specifies who are going to endure. This verse sets forth the severity of the punishment of the lost. If the everlasting fire be "prepared for the Devil and his angels," then how intolerable it will be! If the place of eternal torment into which all believers shall be cast is the same as that in which God's arch-enemy will suffer; how dreadful that place must be.

That this everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels, produces the most awful suffering is clear from Rev. 20:10, where we are told that Satan shall be "tormented day and night for ever and ever." No doubt this torment will be both internal and external, mental and physical. The word occurs for the first time in the New

Testament in Matt. 8:6. "Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented." The same word occurs again in Rev. 9:5 where we read of infernal locusts, issuing from the Pit, and which are given power to torment men, the nature of which is explained as "the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man." So intense will be the suffering caused therefrom "men shall seek death and shall not find it, and they shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them" (Rev. 9:6). This torment then cannot mean less than the most excruciating pain which we are now capable of conceiving. How much. the pains of Hell will exceed the pains of earth we know not.

(4) The final portion of the wicked is spoken of as "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 7). But many say this is merely a figurative expression. We ask, How do they know that? Where has God told them so in His Word? Personally, we believe that when God says "fire" He means "fire." We refuse to blunt the sharp edge of His Word. Was the Deluge figurative? Was it figurative "fire and brimstone" which descended from heaven and destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah? Were the plagues upon Egypt figurative ones? Is it figurative fire which shall yet burn this earth, and cause the very elements to "melt with fervent heat?" No; in each of these cases we are obliged to take the words of Scripture in their literal signification. Let those who dare affirm that Hell-fire is non-literal answer to God. We are not their judges; but we refuse to accept their toning down of these solemn words. Literal fire in Hell presents no difficulty at all to the writer. The lost will have literal bodies when they are cast into Hell. The "angels" also have bodies; and for all we know to the contrary, the Devil has too.

But the question is often asked, How can the bodies of the lost be tormented eternally by literal fire? Would not the fire utterly consume them? Even though we were unable to furnish an answer to this question, we should still believe that Scripture meant what it said. But we are satisfied that God's Word answers this question. In Ex. 3 we read of the bush in the wilderness burning with fire, and yet was not consumed! In Dan. 3 we read of the three Hebrews being



cast into the fiery furnace of Babylon, yet were they not consumed? Why was this? Because, in some way unknown to us, God preserved the bush, and the bodies of the three Hebrews. Is God, then, unable to preserve the bodies of the damned from being consumed? Surely not. But we are not left even to this unescapable inference. In Mark 9:47-49 we are told, "It is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. For every one shall be salted with fire." The expression "salted with fire" confirms what we have said above. Salt is a preservative; hence, when we are told that "every one" who is cast into Gehenna shall be "salted with fire" we learn that the very fire itself so far from consuming shall preserve. If it be asked, How can this be? We answer, Because that fire is "prepared" by God (Matt. 25:41).

(5) The final portion of the wicked is described as an association with the vilest of the vile. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" (Rev. 21:8). O dear reader, weigh well this solemn language. You may be a person of culture and refinement: judged by moral standards your life may be exemplary and spotless: you may pride yourself on your honesty and truthfulness: you may be very particular in your choice of friends and very careful to avoid the company of the profane and vicious: you may even be religious, and look down in scorn and pity upon the idolaters of heathendom; but God says that if you die in unbelief your portion shall be with "the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars." Think of what it will mean to spend eternity in the Prison-house of the universe with Cain, and Pharaoh, and Judas! Think of what it will mean to be shut up with the vile Sodomites? Think of being incarcerated forever with every blasphemer who has ever lived!

(6) The final portion of the wicked is described as "the blackness of darkness forever" (Jude 13). Unrelieved will be their fearful

sufferings; interminable their torments. No means of escape. No possibility of a reprieve. No hope of deliverance. Not one will be found who is able to befriend them and intercede with God for them. They had the offer of a Mediator often made them in this world; but no such offer will be made them in the Lake of Fire. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." There will be no resting-place in Hell; no secret corner where they can find a little respite; no cooling fountain at which they may refresh themselves. There will be no change or variation of their lot. Day and night, forever and ever, shall they be punished. With no prospect of any improvement they will sink down into blank despair.

(7) The final portion of the wicked will be beyond the creature's power of resistance. "And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (Matt. 21:44). There are many who now say, If at the end I find myself in Hell, I will bear it as well as I can, as if by strength of will and firmness of mind they shall, in measure at least, be able to support themselves. But alas! Their resolutions will count for nothing.

It is common with men in this world to shun calamities, but if they find this is impossible, they set themselves to bear it: they fortify their spirits and resolve to support themselves under it as well as they can. They muster up all their courage and resolution in the determination to keep their hearts from sinking. But it will be utterly vain for sinners to do this in the Lake of Fire. What would it help a worm which was about to be crushed by some great rock, to collect its strength and endeavor to set itself to bear up against its weight, and so seek to prevent itself from being crushed? Much less will a poor damned soul be able to support itself under the weight of the wrath of Almighty God. No matter how much the sinner may now harden himself, in order to endure the pains of Hell, the first moment he shall feel the flames, his heart will melt like wax before the furnace—"Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong,

in the days that I shall deal with thee? I the Lord have spoken it, and will do it" (Ezek. 22:14).

If such then be the case with impenitent sinners, that they can neither escape their punishment, nor deliver themselves from it, nor bear up under it, what will become of them? I answer in the words of another:—

"They will wholly sink down into eternal death. There will be that sinking of heart, of which we now cannot conceive. We see how it is with the body when in extreme pain. The nature of the body will support itself for a considerable time under very great pain, so as to keep from wholly sinking. There will be great struggles, lamentable groans and panting, and it may be convulsions. These are the strugglings of nature to support itself under the extremity of the pain. There is, as it were, a great lothness in nature to yield to it; it cannot bear wholly to sink. But yet sometimes pain of body is so very extreme and exquisite, that the nature of the body cannot support itself under it: however loth it may be to sink, yet it cannot bear the pain; there are a few struggles, and throes, and pantings, and it may be a shriek or two, and the nature yields to the violence of the torments, sinks down, and the body dies. This is the death of the body. So it will be with the soul in Hell; it will have no strength or power to deliver itself; and its torment and horror will be so great, so mighty, so vastly disproportioned to its strength, that having no strength in the least to support itself, although it be infinitely contrary to the nature and inclination of the soul utterly to sink; yet it will sink, it will utterly and totally sink, without the least degree of remaining comfort, or strength, or courage, or hope. And though it will never be annihilated, its being and perception will never be abolished: yet such will be the infinite depth of gloominess that it will sink into, that it will be in a state of death, eternal death."

"The nature of man desires happiness; it is the nature of the soul to crave and thirst after well-being; and if it be under misery, it equally pants after relief; and the greater the misery is, the more easily doth

it struggle for help. But if all relief be withholden, all strength overborne, all support utterly gone; then it sinks into the darkness of death. We can conceive but little of the matter; we cannot conceive what that sinking of the soul in such a case is. But to help your conception, imagine yourself to be cast into a fiery oven, all of a glowing heat, or into the midst of a blowing brick-kiln, or of a great furnace, where your pain would be as much greater than that occasioned by accidentally touching a coal of fire, as the heat is greater. Imagine also that your body were to lie there for a quarter of an hour, full of fire, as full within and without as a bright coal of fire, all the while full of quick sense; what horror would you feel at the entrance of such a furnace! And how long would that quarter of an hour seem to you! If it were to be measured by a glass, how long would the glass seem to be running! And after you had endured it for one minute, how overbearing would it be to you to think that you had yet to endure the other fourteen."

"But what would be the effect on your soul, if you knew you must lie there enduring that torment to the full for twenty-four hours! And how much greater would be the effect, if you knew you must endure it for a whole year, and how vastly greater still, if you knew you must endure it for a thousand years! O then, how would your heart sink, if you thought, if you knew, that you must bear it forever and ever! That there would be no end! That after millions of millions of ages, your torment would be no nearer to an end, than ever it was; and that you never, never should be delivered! But your torment in Hell will be immeasurably greater than this illustration represents. How then will the heart of a poor creature sink under it! How utterly inexpressible and inconceivable must the sinking of the soul be in such a case." (Jonathan Edwards).

Such, in brief, is the portion awaiting the lost:—eternal separation from the Fount of all goodness; everlasting punishment; torment of soul and body; endless existence in the Lake of Fire, in association with the vilest of the vile; every ray of hope excluded; utterly crushed and overwhelmed by the wrath of a sin-avenging God. And let us

remember in Whose Word these solemn statements are found! They are found in the Word of Him who is faithful, and therefore has He written in plain and positive language so that none need be deceived. They are found in the Word of Him who cannot lie, and therefore He has not employed the language of exaggeration. They are found in the Word of Him who says what He means and means what He says, and therefore the writer, for one, dares do nothing else than receive them at their face value. We turn now to:

#### IV. THE APPLICATION OF THE SUBJECT

1. In what has been before us we learn how the Character and Throne of God will be vindicated. What can be too severe a judgment upon those who have despised so great a Being as the Almighty? If he that is guilty of treason against an earthly government deserves to lose his life, what punishment can be great enough for one who has preferred his own pleasure before the will and glory of a God who is infinitely good? To despise infinite excellence merits infinite misery. God has commanded the sinner to repent, He has courted him with overtures of grace, He has bountifully supplied his every need, and He has presented before him the Son of His love His choicest treasure—and yet men persist in their wicked course. No possible ground, then, will the sinner have to appeal against the sentence of the judge of all the earth, seeing that He not only tendered mercy toward him, but also bore with him in so much patience when He might justly have smitten him down upon the first crime he ever committed and removed him to Hell upon the first refusal of His proffered grace.

That God shall punish every rebel against Himself is required by the very perfections of His high sovereignty. It is but meet that He should display His governmental supremacy. The creature has dared to assert its independency: the subject has risen up in arms against his King; therefore, the right of God's throne must be vindicated—"I know that the Lord is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly He is above them" (Ex. 18:11). When Pharaoh dared to pit himself against Jehovah, God manifested His authority

by destroying him at the Red Sea. Another king He turned into a beast\*, to make him know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men. So, when the history of this world is wound up, God will make a full and final manifestation of His sovereign majesty. Though He now endures (not "loves") with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; it is that, in the coming Day. He may "show His wrath and make His power known" (Rom. 9:22).

2. What has been before us serves to expose the folly and madness of the greater part of mankind, in that for the sake of present momentary gratification, they run the serious risk of enduring all these eternal torments. They prefer a small pleasure, or a little wealth, or a little earthly honor and fame (which lasts but "for a season") to an escape from the Lake of Fire. If it be true that the torments of Hell are everlasting, what will it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? How mad men are who hear and read of these things and pretend to believe them, who are alive but a little while, a few short years at most, and yet who are careless about what becomes of themselves in the next world, where there is neither change nor end! How mad are they who hear that if they go on in sin, they shall be eternally miserable, and yet are not moved, but hear it with as much indifference as if they were not concerned in the matter at all! And yet for all they know to the contrary, they may be in fiery torments before another week is at an end!

How sad to note that this unconcern is shared by the great majority of our fellows. Age makes little difference. The young are occupied with pleasures, the middle-aged with worldly advancement, the aged with their attainments or lack of them; with the first it is the lust of the flesh, with the second it is the lust of the eyes, with the third it is the pride of life, which banishes from their minds all serious thoughts of the life to come. "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead" (Eccl. 9:3). O the blinding power of sin! O the deceitfulness of riches! O the perversity of the human heart! Nothing so reveals these things as the incredible sight of men and women

enjoying themselves and being at rest, while they are suspended over the eternal burning by the frail thread of mortality, which may be snapped at any moment.

3. What has been before us ought to make every unsaved reader to tremble as he scans these pages. These things are no mere abstractions, but dread realities, as countless thousands have already discovered to their bitter cost. They may not seem real to you now, but in a short time at most—should you continue to reject the Christ of God—they will be your portion. You, too, shall lift up your eyes in Hell, and behold the saints in heaven. You, too, shall crave a drop of water to alleviate your fearful agony; but it will be in vain. You, too, shall cry for mercy; but then it will be too late. O unsaved reader, we pray you not to throw this aside and seek to dismiss the subject from your thoughts. That is how thousands before you have acted, and the very memory of their folly only accentuates their misery. Far better had you been made wretched now for a time, than that you should weep and wail and gnash your teeth forever. Far better that you have your present false peace broken, than that you should be a stranger to real peace for all eternity.

"Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Whoever you are, whether young or old, whether rich or poor, whether religious or irreligious, if you are in a Christless state, then this is what await you at the end of your present course. This, this is the Hell over which you now hang, and into which you are ready to drop this very moment. It is vain for you to flatter yourself with hopes that you shall avoid it, or to say in your heart, Perhaps it may not be; perhaps things have been represented worse than they really are. These things are according to the Word of Truth, and if you will not be convinced by that Word when presented to you by men in the name of God, then God Himself will yet undertake to prove to you that these things are so.

Think it not strange that God should deal so severely with you, or that the wrath you shall suffer shall be so great. For great as it is, it is

no greater than the mercy which you now despise. The love of God, His marvellous grace in sending His own Son to die for sinners, is every whit as great and wonderful as this inexpressible wrath. You have refused to accept Christ as the Saviour from the wrath to come, you have despised God's dying love, why then should you not suffer wrath as great as that grace and love which you have rejected? Does it still seem incredible that God should so harden His heart against a poor sinner as to bear down upon him with infinite power and merciless wrath? Then pause and ask, Is it any greater than it is for me to harden my heart against Him, against infinite mercy, against the Son of His love? O dear friends, face this question of Christ Himself, "How can ye escape the damnation of Hell?" (Matt. 23:33). There is only one way of escape, and that is to flee to the Saviour. If you would not fall into the hands of the living God, then cast yourself into the arms of the Christ who died—"Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him" (Ps. 2:12).

4. What has been before us ought to make every professing Christian diligently examine himself. Weigh carefully the tremendously solemn issues which turn on whether or not you have really passed from death unto life. You cannot afford to be uncertain. There is far too much at stake. Remember that you are prejudiced in your own favor. Remember that you have a treacherous heart. Remember that the Devil is the great Deceiver of souls. Remember that "there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12). Remember it is written that "Many shall say unto Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works?" And then He will answer them, "I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:22, 23).

There are many who now wear the guise of saints, who appear like saints, and their state, both in their own eyes and that of their neighbors is satisfactory. And yet they have on only sheep's clothing; at heart, they are wolves. But no disguise can deceive the judge of all.



His eyes are as a flame of fire: they search the hearts and try the reins of the children of men. Wherefore, let each take earnest heed that he be not deceived. Compare yourself with the Word of God, for that is the rule by which you will be tried. Test your works, for it is by those you will be made manifest. Inquire whether you are really living a Christian life; whether or not the fear of God is upon you; whether or not you are mortifying your members which are upon the earth; whether or not you are "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts," and whether you are living "soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world," for it is thus that "grace" teaches the saints to live. Cry unto God earnestly and frequently that He will reveal you to yourself, and discover to you whether you are building upon the Rock, or upon the sand. Make the Psalmist's prayer yours—"Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts. And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. 139:23, 24). God will search you hereafter, and make fully manifest what you are, both to yourself and to others. Let each of us, then, humbly request Him to search us now. We have urgent need of Divine help in this matter, for our heart is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."

5. What has been before us should cause those who really enjoy the full assurance of faith to praise God with a loud voice. To each of you we say, God has given you wonderful cause for gratitude and thanksgiving. You, too, justly deserved to suffer the full weight of the wrath of a sin-hating and sin-avenging God. It is not long since you loved darkness rather than light. It is only a short time since you turned a deaf ear to both God's commands and entreaties. It is only a few years at most since you despised and rejected His beloved Son. What marvelous grace was it then that snatched you as a brand from the burning! What wondrous love was it that delivered you from the wrath to come! What matchless mercy it was that changed you from a child of Hell (Matt. 23:15) to a child of God! O how you should praise the Father for having ever set His love upon you.

How you should praise the Son for having died to save you from the Lake of Fire. How you should praise the blessed Spirit for having quickened you into newness of life. And how your appreciation ought to be expressed now in a life that is glorifying to the triune God. How diligently ought you to seek to learn what is well-pleasing in His sight. How earnestly you should seek His will. How quick should you be to run in the way of His commandments. Let your life correspond with the praises of your lips.

6. What has been before us ought to stir up all of God's people to a deepened sense of their duty. Fellow-Christian, have you no obligations toward your godless neighbors? If God has made clear these solemn truths to you, does it not deepen your responsibility toward the unsaved? If you have no love for souls, it is greatly to be feared that your own soul is in imminent danger. If you can witness, unmoved, men and women hurrying down the broad road which leadeth to destruction, then it is seriously to be doubted if you have within you the Spirit of that One who wept over Jerusalem. It is true you have no power of your own to save a soul from death, but are you faithfully giving out that Word which is the instrument which God uses to bring souls from death unto life? Are you supplicating God as you ought and depending on Him to bless your efforts to point the lost to the Lamb of God? Are you as fervent as you should be in your cries to God on behalf of the lost? Alas, must you not join the writer as he hangs his head in shame? Is there not reason for each of us to ask God to give us a clearer vision of that indescribably awful portion which awaits every Christ rejector, and to enable us to act in the power of such a vision!

7. What has been before us will yet be the occasion of profoundest praise to God. Whatever difficulties the eternal punishment of the wicked may present to us now—and it is freely granted that it is difficult for our reason to grasp it, and that of necessity, for we are incapable of discerning the infinite malignity of sin, and therefore unable to see what punishment it really deserves—yet, in the Day to come it will be far otherwise. When we behold God's righteous

dealings with His enemies, when we hear the sentences being given according to their works, when we see how justly and thoroughly they deserve merciless wrath, and stand by as they are cast into the Lake of Fire, so far from shrinking back in horror our hearts will give vent to gladsome praise. Just as of old the overthrow of God's enemies at the Red Sea caused His people to burst forth in worshipful song, so in the coming Day we shall be moved to rejoicing when we witness the final display of God's holiness and justice in the overthrow and punishment of all who have defied Him. Remember that in the destruction of the wicked God will be glorified, and this it is which will be the occasion of the rejoicing of His people. Not only will God be "clear" when He judges (Ps. 51:4), but His perfections will be magnified in the sentences pronounced.

## **Evangelical Preaching**

THE question which is before us for consideration and (attempted) elucidation really concerns the preacher's efforts to "win souls" (Prov. 11:30), and as to how far the Word warrants him going towards the realization of his longings to see sinners converted under his ministry. And here, it seems to the writer, there are two extremes to be guarded against. On the one hand, we believe those preachers come short of discharging their duties who rest content with simply setting forth in an abstract and impersonal way what are termed "the Doctrines of Grace." To say, "I have faithfully declared all the counsel of God and now I must leave results with him," sounds very pious, but it leaves the way open for several serious questions. It is perfectly true that "results" rest entirely with God, for he alone "giveth the increase" (1 Cor. 3:7). But, have we declared all the counsel of God

when we have fully expounded the "five points" of Calvinism? We think not. The preacher is something more than a human gramophone, mechanically repeating a scriptural formula.

Of the forerunner of Christ it is said that he was "A burning and a shining light" (John 5:3). He was "the voice of one crying in the wilderness." No correct but cold formalist was he. Of our Saviour it is recorded that he wept over Jerusalem because her children would not come to him. No heartless fatalist was he. The great apostle to the Gentiles wrote, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (2 Cor. 5:11). Do you do this, brother preacher? Query: Were Paul on earth today saying, "We persuade men" would his orthodoxy be suspected? Again; he announced, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray (plead) you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:20). Do these methods characterize our evangelical ministrations? Surely we all have need to pray earnestly for more devotion to Christ, more love for souls, more fervour and power in preaching the gospel.

## **Experimental Salvation**

SALVATION may be viewed from many angles and contemplated under various aspects, but from whatever side we look at it we must ever remember that "Salvation is of the Lord." Salvation was planned by the Father for His elect before the foundation of the world. It was purchased for them by the holy life and vicarious death of His incarnate Son. It is applied to and wrought in them by His Holy Spirit. It is known and enjoyed through the study of the Scriptures,

though the exercise of faith, and though communion with the triune Jehovah.

Now it is greatly to be feared that there are multitudes in Christendom who verily imagine and sincerely believe that they are among the saved, yet who are total strangers to a work of divine grace in their hearts. It is one thing to have clear intellectual conceptions of God's truth, it is quite another matter to have a personal, real heart acquaintance with it. It is one thing to believe that sin is the awful thing that the Bible says it is, but it is quite another matter to have a holy horror and hatred of it in the soul. It is one thing to know that God requires repentance, it is quite another matter to experimentally mourn and groan over our vileness. It is one thing to believe that Christ is the only Savior for sinners, it is quite another matter to really trust Him from the heart. It is one thing to believe that Christ is the Sum of all excellency, it is quite another matter to love him above all others. It is one thing to believe that God is the great and holy One, it is quite another matter to truly reverence and fear Him. It is one thing to believe that salvation is of the Lord, it is quite another matter to become an actual partaker of it through His gracious workings.

While it is true that Holy Scripture insists on man's responsibility, and that all through them God deals with the sinner as an accountable being; yet it is also true that the Bible plainly and constantly shows that no son of Adam has ever measured up to his responsibility, that every one has miserably failed to discharge his accountability. It is this which constitutes the deep need for God to work in the sinner, and to do for him what he is unable to do for himself. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:8). The sinner is "without strength" (Rom. 5:6). Apart from the Lord, we "can do nothing" (John 15:5).

While it is true that the Gospel issues a call and a command to all who hear it, it is also true that All disregard that call and disobey that command—"They all with one consent began to make excuse" (Luke

14:18). This is where the sinner commits his greatest sin and most manifests his awful enmity against God and His Christ: that when a Savior, suited to his needs, is presented to him, he "despises and rejects" Him (Isa. 53:3).

This is where the sinner shows what an incorrigible rebel he is, and demonstrates that he is deserving only of eternal torments. But it is just at this point that God manifests His sovereign and wondrous Grace. He not only planned and provided salvation, but he actually bestows it upon those whom He has chosen.

Now this bestowal of salvation is far more than a mere proclamation that salvation is to be found in the Lord Jesus: it is very much more than an invitation for sinners to receive Christ as their Savior. It is God actually saving His people. It is His own sovereignty and all-powerful work of grace toward and in those who are entirely destitute of merit, and who are so depraved in themselves that they will not and cannot take one step to the obtaining of salvation. Those who have been actually saved owe far more to divine grace than most of them realize. It is not only that Christ died to put away their sins, but also the Holy Spirit has wrought a work in them—a work which applies to them the virtues of Christ's atoning death.

It is just at this point that so many preachers fail in their exposition of the Truth. While many of them affirm that Christ is the only Savior for sinners, they also teach that He actually became ours only by our consent. While they allow that conviction of sin is the Holy Spirit's work and that He alone shows us our lost condition and need of Christ, yet they also insist that the decisive factor in salvation is man's own will. But the Holy Scriptures teach that "salvation is of the Lord" (Jonah 2:9), and that nothing of the creature enters into it at any point. Only that can satisfy God which has been produced by God Himself. Though it be true that salvation does not become the personal portion of the sinner until he has, from the heart, believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, yet is that very believing wrought in him by

the Holy Spirit: "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (Eph 2:8).

It is exceedingly solemn to discover that there is a "believing" in Christ by the natural man, which is not a believing unto salvation. Just as the Buddhists believe in Buddha, so in Christendom there are multitudes who believe in Christ. And this "believing" is something more than an intellectual one. Often there is much feeling connected with it—the emotions may be deeply stirred. Christ taught in the Parable of the Sower that there is a class of people who hear the Word and with joy receive it, yet have they no root in themselves (Matthew 13:20, 21). This is fearfully solemn, for it is still occurring daily. Scriptures also tell us that Herod heard John "gladly" Thus, the mere fact that the reader of these pages enjoys listening to some sound gospel preacher is no proof at all that he is a regenerated soul. The Lord Jesus said to the Pharisees concerning John the Baptist, "Ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light," yet the sequel shows clearly that no real work of grace had been wrought in them. And these things are recorded in Scripture as solemn warnings!

It is striking and solemn to mark the exact wording in the last two Scriptures referred to. Note the repeated personal pronoun in Mark 6:20: "For Herod feared John (not 'God!'), knowing that he as a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly." It was the personality of John which attracted Herod. How often is this the case today! People are charmed by the personality of the preacher: they are carried away by his style and won by his earnestness for souls. But if there is nothing more than this, there will one day be a rude awakening for them. That which is vital is a "love for the truth," not for the one who presents it is this which distinguishes the true people of God from the "mixed multitude" who ever associate with them.

So in John 5:35 Christ said to the Pharisees concerning His forerunner: "Ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light," not "in the light!" In like manner, there are many today who listen to one

whom God enables to open up some of the mysteries and wonders of His Word and they rejoice "in his light" while in the dark themselves, never having personally received "an unction from the Holy One." Those who do "love the truth" (2 Thess. 2:10) are they in whom a divine work of grace has been wrought. They have something more than a clear, intellectual understanding of the Scripture: it is the food of their souls, the joy of their hearts (Jer. 15:16). They love the truth, and because they do so, they hate error and shun it as deadly poison. They are jealous for the glory of the Author of the Word, and will not sit under a minister whose teaching dishonors Him; they will not listen to preaching which exalts man into the place of supremacy, so that he is the decider of his own destiny.

"Lord, Thou wilt ordain peace for us: for Thou also hast wrought all our works in us" (Isa. 26:12). Here is the heart and unqualified confession of the true people of God. Note the preposition: "Thou also hast wrought all our works in us." This speaks of a divine work of grace wrought in the heart of the saint. Nor is this text alone. Weigh carefully the following: "It pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me" (Gal. 1:15, 16).

"Unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Eph 3:20). "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it" (Phil 1:6). "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil 2:13). "I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them" (Heb. 10:16). "Now the God of peace ... make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight" (Heb 13:20). Here are seven passages which speak of the inward workings of God's grace; or in other words of experimental salvation.

"Lord, Thou wilt ordain peace for us: for Thou also hast wrought all our works in us" (Isa. 26:12). Is there an echoing response in our



heart to this, my reader? Is your repentance something deeper than the remorse and tears of the natural man? Does it have its root in a divine work of grace which the Holy Spirit hath wrought in your soul? Is your believing in Christ something more than an intellectual one? Is your relation to Him something more vital than what some act of yours has brought about, having been made one with Him by the power and operation of the Spirit? Is your love for Christ something more than a pious sentiment, like that of the Romanist who sings of the "gentle" and "sweet" Jesus? Does your love for Him proceed from an altogether new nature, that God has created within you? Can you really say with the Psalmist:

"Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee." Is your profession accompanied by true meekness and lowliness of heart? It is easy to call yourself names, and say, "I am an unworthy and unprofitable creature." But do you realize yourself to be such? Do you feel yourself to be "less than the least of all saints?" Paul did! If you do not; if instead, you deem yourself superior to the rank and file of Christians, who bemoan their failures, confess their weakness, and cry, "O wretched man that I am!"—there is grave reason to conclude you are a stranger to God!

That which distinguishes genuine godliness from human religiousness is this: the one is external, the other internal. Christ complained of the Pharisees, "Ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess" (Matthew 23:25). A carnal religion is all on the surface. It is at the heart God looks and with the heart God deals. Concerning His people He says: "I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them" (Heb. 10:16).

"Lord, Thou wilt ordain peace for us: for Thou also hast wrought all our works in us." How humbling is this to the pride of man! It makes everything of God and nothing of the creature! The tendency of human nature the world over, is to be self-sufficient and self-satisfied; to say with the Laodiceans, "I am rich, and increased with

goods, and have need of nothing" (Rev. 3:17). But here is something to humble us, and empty us of pride. Since God has wrought all our works in us, then we have no ground for boasting. "What hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (1 Cor. 4:7).

And who are the ones in whom God thus works? From the divine side; His favored, chosen, redeemed people. From the human side: those who, in themselves have no claim whatever on His notice; who are destitute of any merit; who have everything in them to provoke His holy wrath; those who are miserable failures in their lives, and utterly depraved and corrupt in their persons. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound, and did for them and in them what they would not and could not do for themselves.

And what is it God "works" in His people?—All their works. First, He quickens them: "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing" (John 6:63). "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth" (Jas. 1:18). Second, He bestows repentance: "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel" (Acts 5:31). "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18; 2 Tim. 2:25). Third, He gives faith: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). "Ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God" (Col. 2:12). Fourth, He grants a spiritual understanding: "And we know the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true" (1 John 5:20). Fifth, He effectuates our service: "I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Cor. 15:10). Sixth, He secures our perseverance: "who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation" (1 Pet. 1:5). Seventh, He produces our fruit: "From Me is thy fruit found" (Hosea 14:8). "The fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22). Yes, He has wrought all our works in us.

Why has God thus "wrought all our works in us?" First, because unless He had done so, all had eternally perished (Rom. 9:29). We were "without strength," unable to meet God's righteous demands. Therefore, in sovereign grace, He did for us what we ought but could not do for ourselves. Second, that all the glory might be His. God is a jealous God. He says so. His honour He will not share with another. By this means He secures all the praise, and we have no ground for boasting. Third, that our salvation might be effectually and securely accomplished. Were any part of our salvation left to us it would be neither effectual nor secure. Whatever man touches he spoils: failure is written across everything he attempts. But what God does is perfect and lasts for ever: "I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before Him" (Eccl. 3:14).

But how may I be sure that my works have been "wrought in me" by God? Mainly by their effects. If you have been born again, you have a new nature within. This new nature is spiritual and contrary to the flesh—contrary in its desires and aspirations. Because the old and new natures are contrary to each other, there is a continual war between them. Are you conscious of this inward conflict?

If your repentance be a God-wrought one, then you abhor yourself. If your repentance be a genuine and spiritual one, then you marvel that God did not long ago cast you into hell. If your repentance be the gift of Christ, then you daily mourn the wretched return which you make to God's wondrous grace; you hate sin, you sorrow in secret before God for your manifold transgressions. Not simply do you do so at conversion, but daily do so now.

If your faith be a God-communicated one, it is evidenced by your turning away from all creature confidences, by a renunciation of your own self-righteousness, by a repudiation of all your own works. If your faith be "the faith of God's elect" (Titus 1:1), then you are resting alone on Christ as the ground of your acceptance before God. If your faith be the result of "the operation of God," then you implicitly

believe His Word, you receive it with meekness, you crucify reason, and accept all He has said with childlike simplicity.

If your love for Christ be the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:25), then it evidences itself by constantly seeking to please Him, and by abstaining from what you know is displeasing to Him: in a word, by an obedient walk. If your love for Christ be the love of "the new man," then you pant after Him, you yearn for communion with Him above everything else. If your love for Christ be the same in kind (though not in degree) as His love for you, then you are eagerly looking forward to His glorious appearing, when He shall come again to receive His people unto Himself, that they maybe forever with the Lord. May the grace of spiritual discernment be given the reader to see whether his Christian profession be real or a sham whether his hope is built upon the Rock of Ages or the quicksands of human resolutions, efforts, decisions, or feelings; whether, in short, his salvation is "of the Lord" or the vain imagination of his own deceitful heart.

## **The Eye of Faith**

"I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee." (Job 42:5)

WHAT did Job signify by this? Obviously his words are not to be understood literally. No, by employing a common figure of speech, he meant that the mists of unbelief (occasioned by self-righteousness) had now been dispelled, and faith perceived the being of God as a glorious and living reality. ("Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord" Ps. 25:15), by which is meant that his faith was constantly

in exercise. Of Moses it is said that "he endured as seeing Him who is invisible" (Heb. 11:27), that is, his heart was sustained through faith's being occupied with the mighty God.

Faith is frequently represented in Scripture under the metaphor of bodily sight. Our Lord said of the great patriarch, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it and was glad" (John 8:56), meaning that his faith looked forward to the day of Christ's humiliation and exaltation. Paul was commissioned unto the Gentiles to "open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God" (Acts 26:18); or, in other words, to be the Divine instrument of their conversion through preaching to them the Word of Faith. To some of his erring children he wrote, "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently (plainly) set forth, crucified among you" (Gal. 3:1).

Now what we wish to point out in this article is, that when scripture speaks of faith under the notion of bodily sight, its writers were doing something more than availing themselves of a pertinent and suitable figure of speech. The Author of Scripture is the One who first formed the eye, that marvelous organ of vision and without a shadow of doubt He so fashioned it as to strikingly adumbrate in the visible that which now plays so prominent a part in the Christian's dealings with the invisible. Everything in the material world shadows forth some great reality in the spiritual realm, as we should perceive had we but sufficient wisdom to discern the fact. A wide field is here opened for observation and meditation, but we shall now confine ourselves to a single example, namely, the eye of the body as it symbolizes the faith of the heart.

1. The eye is a passive organ. The eye does not send out a light from itself, nor does it give anything unto the objects it beholds—what can the eye communicate to the sun, moon, and stars, when it gazes upon them! No, the eye merely receives the print or image of them into the mind (on the retina, which is then transmitted to the brain) without

adding anything to them. Just so is it with faith: it gives nothing unto God, or to what it beholds in the Word of His grace. It simply receives or takes them into the heart as they are presented to the soul's view in the light of the Divine revelation. What did the bitten Israelites communicate unto the brazen serpent when they looked unto it, and were healed? As little do we add unto Christ, when we "look" unto Him and are saved (Isa. 45:22).

2. The eye is a directing organ. The man that has the light of day and his eyes open can see his way, and is not so likely to stumble into ditches or fall into a precipice as a blind man, or one who walks at nighttime. So it is with faith: "The way of the wicked is as darkness, they know not at what they stumble," but "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. 4:19, 18). Of Christians it is said that "we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7). By "looking off unto Jesus" (faith's viewing our Exemplar) we are enabled to run the race which is set before us.

3. The eye is a very quick organ, taking up things at a great distance. Within a fraction of a moment I can turn my gaze from things lying on the ground and focus it upon the mountains which are many miles away; nay, more, I can look away altogether from the things of earth and mount up among the stars, and in a second view the entire expanse of the heavens. What an optical marvel is that! Equally wonderful is the power of faith: it is indeed a quick-sighted grace, taking up things at a great distance, as the faith of the patriarchs did, who saw the things promised "afar off" (Heb. 11:13). So too, in a moment faith may look back to an eternity past and view the everlasting springs of electing love, active on its behalf before the foundations of the earth were laid, and then, in the same breath, it can turn itself towards an eternity yet to come, and take a view of the hidden glories of an invisible world within the veil.

4. The eye, though it be little, is a very capacious organ. The man that has the light of day and has his eyes open may see all that comes within the range of his vision: he may look around and see things behind,

forward and view things ahead, downward upon the waters in a well or a stream at the bottom of a deep ravine, upwards and gaze upon bodies in the distant heavens. So is it with faith: it extends itself unto everything that lies within the vast compass of God's Word. It takes knowledge of things in the distant past, it also apprehends things that are yet to come; it looks into Hell, and penetrates into Heaven. It is able to discern the vanity of the world all around us.

It is true that there may be a genuine faith that takes in but little of the light of Divine revelation at first. Yet here again the earthly adumbration accurately shadows forth this spiritual truth. The eye of an infant takes in the light and perceives external objects, but with a good deal of weakness and confusion, until as it grows more its vision extends further and further. So it is with the eye of faith. At first, the light of spiritual knowledge is but dim: the babe in Christ is unable to see afar off. But as faith grows deeper and deeper into the Divine mysteries, until it comes at length to be swallowed up on open vision (John 17:24).

5. The eye is a very assuring faculty. Of the five bodily senses, this is the most convincing. What are we more sure of, than what we see with our eyes! Some fools may seek to persuade themselves that matter is a mental delusion, but no one in his right mind will believe them. If a man sees the sun shining in the heavens, he knows that it is day. In like manner, faith is a grace which carries in its very nature a great deal of certainty: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). Skeptics may deny the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures, but when the eye of faith has gazed upon its supernatural beauties, the point is settled once for all. Others may regard the Christ of God as a pious myth, but once the saint has really beheld the Lamb of God, it can say "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

6. The eye is an impressing organ: what we see, leaves an impression upon our minds, that is why we need to pray often "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity" (Ps. 119:37); that is why the prophet

declared "mine eye affecteth mine heart" (Lam. 3:51). If a man looks steadily at the sun for a few moments an impression of the sun is left in his eye, even though he turn his eyes away from it, or shuts them. In like manner, real faith leaves an impression of the Sun of righteousness upon the heart: "they looked unto Him, and were lightened" (Ps. 34:5). Even more definite is 2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." As the mighty power of Christ will, in a coming day, transform the bodies of His people from mortality to life and from dishonor to glory, so also does the Holy Spirit now exert a moral transforming power on the character of those who are His, and that by calling faith into exercise, the activity of which more and more conforms the soul to the image of God's Son.

7. The eye is a wondrous organ. Those who are competent to express an opinion, affirm that this particular member is the most curious and remarkable of any part of the human body: there is much of the wisdom and power of the Creator to be discovered in the formation of the visive faculty. So too faith is a grace that is curiously and wondrously wrought in the soul. There is more of the wisdom and power of the Divine Workman discovered in the formation of the grace of faith than in any other part of the new creature. Thus we read of the "work of faith with power" (2 Thess. 1:11), yea, that the same exceeding great and mighty power which was put forth by God in the raising of Christ from the dead is exerted upon and within them that believe (Eph. 1:19).

8. The eye of the body is a very tender thing: it is soon hurt and easily damaged. A very tiny cinder will cause pain and make it weep and it is very striking to note that that is the very way to recovery—it weeps out the dust or mote that gets into it. So too faith is a most delicate grace, thriving best in a pure conscience: hence the apostle speaks of "holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience" (1 Tim. 3:9). The lively actings of faith are soon marred by the dust of sin, or by the vanities of the world getting into the heart where it is seated. And



where ever true faith is, if it be hurt by sin, it vents itself in a way of godly sorrow.

N.B. For most of the above we are indebted to a sermon preached by Ebon. Erskine in 1740.

## **Faith**

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him." (Hebrews 11:6)

"But the Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in that heard it." (Hebrews 4:2)

THE linking together of these verses shows us the worthlessness of all religious activities where faith be lacking. The outward exercise may be performed diligently and correctly, but unless faith be in operation God is not honored and the soul is not profited. Faith draws out the heart unto God, and faith it is which receives from God; not a mere intellectual assent to what is revealed in Holy Writ, but a supernatural principle of grace which lives upon the God of Scripture. This, the natural man, no matter how religious or orthodox he be, has not; and no labours of his, no act of his will, can acquire it. It is the sovereign gift of God.

Faith must be operative in all the exercises of the Christian if God is to be glorified and he is to be edified. First, in the reading of the Word: "But these are written, that ye might believe" (John 20:31). Second, in listening to the preaching of God's servants: "The hearing of faith" (Gal. 3:2). Third, in praying: "Let him ask in faith, nothing

wavering" (Jas. 1:6). Fourth, in our daily life: "For we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7); "the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God" (Gal. 2:20). Fifth, in our exit from this world: "These all died in faith" (Heb. 11:13). What the breath is to the body, faith is to the soul; for one who is destitute of faith to seek to perform spiritual actions, is like putting a spring within a wooden dummy and making it go through mechanical motions.

Now an unregenerate professor may read the Scriptures and yet have no spiritual faith. Just as the devout Hindu peruses the Upanishads and the Mohammedan his Koran, so many "Christian" countries take up the study of the Bible, and yet have no more of the life of God in their souls than have their heathen brethren. Thousands in this land read the Bible, believe in its Divine authorship, and become more or less familiar with its contents. A mere professor may read several chapters every day, and yet never appropriate a single verse. But faith applies God's Word: it applies his fearful threatenings, and trembles before them; it applies His solemn warnings, and seeks to heed them; it applies His precepts, and cries unto Him for grace to walk in them.

It is the same in listening to the Word preached. A carnal professor will boast of having attended this conference and that, of having heard this famous teacher and that renowned preacher, and be no better off in his soul than if he had never heard any of them. He may listen to two sermons every Sunday, and fifty years hence be as dead spiritually as he is today. But the regenerated soul appropriates the message and measures himself by what he hears. He is often convicted of his sins and made to mourn over them. He tests himself by God's standard, and feels that he comes so far short of what he ought to be, that he sincerely doubts the honesty of his own profession. The Word pierces him, like a two-edged sword, and causes him to cry, "O wretched man that I am!"

So in prayer. The mere professor often makes the humble Christian feel ashamed of himself. The carnal religionist who has "the gift of

the gab" is never at a loss for words: sentences flow from his lips as readily as do the waters of a babbling brook; verses of Scripture seem to run through his mind as freely as flour passes through a sieve. Whereas the poor burdened child of God is often unable to do any more than cry "God be merciful to me a sinner." Ah, my friends, we need to distinguish sharply between a natural aptitude for "making" nice prayers and the spirit of true supplication: the one consists merely of words, the other of "groanings which cannot be uttered;" the one is acquired by religious education, the other is wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit.

Thus it is too in conversing about the things of God. The frothy professor can talk glibly and often orthodoxy of "doctrines," yes, and of worldly things, too: according to his mood, or according to his audience, so is his theme. But the child of God, while being swift to hear that which is unto edification, is "slow to speak." Ah, my reader, beware of talkative people; a drum makes a lot of noise but it is hollow inside! "Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness; but a faithful man who can find?" (Prov. 20:6). When a saint of God does open his lips about spiritual matters, it is to tell of what the Lord, in His infinite mercy, has done for him; but the carnal religionist is anxious for others to know what he is "doing for the Lord."

The difference is just as real between the genuine Christian and the nominal Christian in connection with their daily lives: while the latter may appear outwardly righteous, yet within they are "full of hypocrisy and iniquity" (Matthew 23:28). They will put on the skin of a real sheep, but in reality they are "wolves in sheeps' clothing." But God's children have the nature of sheep, and learn of Him who is "meek and lowly in heart," and, as the elect of God, they put on "mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering" (Col. 3:12). They are in private what they appear in public. They worship God in spirit and in truth, and have been made to know wisdom in the hidden parts of the heart.

So it is on their passing out of this world. An empty professor may die as easily and as quietly as he lived deserted by the Holy Spirit, undisturbed by the Devil; as the psalmist says, "there are no bands in their death" (73:4). But this is very different from the end of one whose deeply ploughed and consciously-defiled conscience has been "sprinkled" with the precious blood of Christ: "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace" (Ps. 37:37) yes, a peace which "passeth all understanding:" Having lived the life of the righteous, he dies "the death of the righteous" (Num. 23:10).

And what is it which distinguishes the one character from the other, wherein lies the difference between the genuine Christian and he who is one in name only? This: a God-given, Spirit-wrought faith in the heart. Not a mere head-knowledge and intellectual assent to the Truth, but a living, spiritual, vital principle in the heart—a faith which "purifies the heart" (Acts 15:9), which "worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6), which "overcometh the world" (1 John 5:4). Yes, a faith which is Divinely sustained amidst trials within and opposition without; a faith which exclaims "though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" (Job 13:15).

True, this faith is not always in exercise, nor is it equally strong at all times. The favored possessor of it must be taught by painful experience that as he did not originate it neither can he command it; therefore does he turn unto its Author, and say, "Lord I believe, help Thou mine unbelief." And then it is that, when reading the Word he is enabled to lay hold of its precious promises; that when bowing before the Throne of Grace, he is enabled to cast his burden upon the Lord; that when he rises to go about his temporal duties, he is enabled to lean upon the everlasting arms; and that when he is called upon to pass through the valley of the shadow of death, he triumphantly cries "I will fear no evil for Thou art with me." "Lord, increase our faith."

## **Family Worship**

THERE are some very important outward ordinances and means of grace which are plainly implied in the Word of God, but for the exercise of which we have few, if any, plain and positive precepts; rather are we left to gather them from the example of holy men and from various incidental circumstances. An important end is answered by this arrangement: trial is thereby made of the state of our hearts. It serves to make evident whether, because an expressed command cannot be brought requiring its performance, professing Christians will neglect a duty plainly implied. Thus, more of the real state of our minds is discovered, and it is made manifest whether we have or have not an ardent love for God and His service. This holds good both of public and family worship. Nevertheless, It is not at all difficult to prove the obligation of domestic piety.

Consider first the example of Abraham. the father of the faithful and the friend of God. It was for his domestic piety that he received blessing from Jehovah Himself, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment" (Gen. 18:19). The patriarch is here commended for instructing his children and servants in the most important of all duties, "the way of the Lord"—the truth about His glorious person. His high claims upon us, His requirements from us. Note well the words "he will command" them; that is, he would use the authority God had given him as a father and head of his house, to enforce the duties of family godliness. Abraham also prayed with as well as instructed his family: wherever he pitched his tent, there he "built an altar to the Lord" (Gen. 12:7; 13:4). Now my readers, we may well ask ourselves, Are we "Abraham's seed"

(Gal. 3:29) if we "do not the works of Abraham" (John 8:39) and neglect the weighty duty of family worship?

The example of other holy men are similar to that of Abraham's. Consider the pious determination of Joshua who declared to Israel, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (24:15). Neither the exalted station which he held, nor the pressing public duties which developed upon him, were allowed to crowd out his attention to the spiritual well-being of his family. Again, when David brought back the ark of God to Jerusalem with joy and thanksgiving, after discharging his public duties, he "returned to bless his household" (2 Sam 6:20). In addition to these eminent examples we may cite the cases of Job (1:5) and Daniel (6:10). Limiting ourselves to only one in the New Testament we think of the history of Timothy, who was reared in a godly home. Paul called to remembrance the "unfeigned faith" which was in him, and added, "which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois and thy mother Eunice." Is there any wonder then that the apostle could say "from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures" (2 Tim. 3:15)!

On the other hand, we may observe what fearful threatenings are pronounced against those who disregard this duty. We wonder how many of our readers have seriously pondered those awe-inspiring words "Pour out Thy fury upon the heathen that know Thee not, and upon the families that call not on Thy name" (Jer. 10:25)! How unspeakably solemn to find that prayerless families are here coupled with the heathen that know not the Lord. Yet need that surprise us? Why there are many heathen families who unite together in worshiping their false gods. And do not they put thousands of professing Christians to shame? Observe too that Jeremiah 10:25 recorded a fearful imprecation upon both classes alike: "Pour out Thy fury upon ..." How loudly should these words speak to us. It is not enough that we pray as private individuals in our closets; we are required to honor God in our families as well. At least twice each day—in the morning and in the evening—the whole household should be gathered together to bow before the Lord—parents and children,

master and servant—to confess their sins, to give thanks for God's mercies, to seek His help and blessing. Nothing must be allowed to interfere with this duty: all other domestic arrangements are to bend to it. The head of the house is the one to lead the devotions. but if he be absent, or seriously ill, or an unbeliever, then the wife should take his place. Under no circumstances should family worship be omitted. If we would enjoy the blessing of God upon our family then let its members gather together daily for praise and prayer. "Them that honour Me I will honour" is His promise.

An old writer well said, "A family without prayer is like a house without a roof, open and exposed to all the storms of Heaven." All our domestic comforts and temporal mercies issue from the loving-kindness of the Lord, and the best we can do in return is to gratefully acknowledge together, His goodness to us as a family. Excuses against the discharge of this sacred duty are idle and worthless. Of what avail will it be when we render an account to God for the stewardship of our families to say that we had no time available, working hard from morn till eve? The more pressing be our temporal duties, the greater our need of seeking spiritual succor. Nor may any Christian plead that he is not qualified for such a work: gifts and talents are developed by use and not by neglect.

Family worship should be conducted reverently, earnestly and simply. It is then that the little ones will receive their first impressions and form their initial conceptions of the Lord God. Great care needs to be taken lest a false idea be given them of the Divine Character, and for this the balance must be preserved between dwelling upon His transcendency and imminency, His holiness and His mercy, His might and His tenderness. His justice and His grace. Worship should begin with a few words of prayer invoking God's presence and blessing. A short passage from His Word should follow, with brief comments thereon. Two or three verses of a Psalm may be sung. Close with a prayer of committal into the hands of God. Though we may not be able to pray eloquently, we

should earnestly. Prevailing prayers are usually brief ones. Beware of wearying the young ones.

The advantages and blessings of family worship are incalculable. First, family worship will prevent much sin. It awes the soul, conveys a sense of God's majesty and authority, sets solemn truths before the mind, brings down benefits from God on the home. Personal piety in the home is a most influential means, under God, of conveying piety to the little ones. Children are largely creatures of imitation, loving to copy what they see in others. "He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel. which He commanded our fathers that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments" (Ps. 78:5, 7). How much of the dreadful moral and spiritual conditions of the masses today may be traced back to the neglect of their fathers in this duty? How can those who neglect the worship of God in their families look for peace and comfort therein? Daily prayer in the home is a blessed means of grace for allaying those unhappy passions to which our common nature is subject. Finally, family prayer gains for us the presence and blessing of the Lord. There is a promise of His presence which is peculiarly applicable to this duty: see Matthew 18:19, 20. Many have found in family worship that help and communion with God which they sought for with less effect in private prayer.

## **"The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wisdom."**

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." (Prov. 1:7)



HAPPY the soul that has been awed by a view of God's majesty, that has had a vision of God's awful greatness, His ineffable holiness, His perfect righteousness, His irresistible power, His sovereign grace. Does someone say, "But it is only the unsaved, those outside of Christ, who need to fear God?" Then the sufficient answer is that the saved, those who are in Christ, are admonished to work out their own salvation with "fear and trembling." Time was when it was the general custom to speak of a believer as a "God-fearing man." That such an appellation has become nearly extinct only serves to show whither we have drifted. Nevertheless, it still stands written, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him" (Psalm 103:13).

When we speak of godly fear, of course we do not mean a servile fear, such as prevails among the heathen in connection with their gods. No, we mean that spirit which Jehovah is pledged to bless, that spirit to which the prophet referred when he said, "To this man will I (the Lord) look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" (Isa. 66:2). It was this the apostle had in view when he wrote, "Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king" (1 Pet. 2:17). And nothing will foster this godly fear like a recognition of the Sovereign Majesty of God.

## **A Fourfold Salvation**

IN 1929 we wrote a booklet entitled "A Threefold Salvation" based upon the instruction we had received during our spiritual infancy. Like most of that early teaching, it was defective because inadequate. As we continued our study of God's Word further light has been granted us on this subject—yet alas how ignorant we still are—and this has enabled us to see that, in the past, we had started at the wrong point, for instead of beginning at the beginning, we commenced almost in the middle. Instead of salvation from sin being threefold, as we once supposed, we now perceive it to be fourfold. How good is the Lord in vouchsafing us additional light, yet it is now our duty to walk therein, and, as Providence affords us opportunity, to give it out. May the Holy Spirit so graciously guide us that God may be glorified and His people edified.

The subject of God's "so-great-salvation" (Heb. 2:3), as it is revealed to us in the Scriptures and made known in Christian experience, is worthy of a life's study. Any one who supposes that there is now no longer any need for him to prayerfully search for a fuller understanding of the same needs to ponder "If any man think he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know" (1 Cor. 8:2). The fact is that the moment any of us really takes it for granted that he already knows all that there is to be known on any subject treated of in Holy Writ, he at once cuts himself off from any further light thereon. That which is most needed by all of us in order to a better understanding of Divine things is not a brilliant intellect, but a truly humble heart and a teachable spirit, and for that we would daily and fervently pray, for we possess it not by nature.

The subject of Divine salvation has, sad to say, provoked age-long controversy and bitter contentions even among Christians. There is comparatively little agreement even upon this elementary yet vital truth. Some have insisted that salvation is by Divine grace, others

have argued that it is by human endeavor. A number have sought to defend the middle position, and while allowing that the salvation of a lost sinner must be by Divine grace, were not willing to concede that it is by Divine grace alone, alleging that God's grace must be plussed by something from the creature, and very varied have been the opinions of what that 'something must be—baptism, church-membership, the performing of good works, holding out faithful to the end, etc. On the other hand, there are those who not only grant that salvation is by grace alone, but who deny that God uses any means whatever in the accomplishment of His eternal purpose to save His elect—overlooking the fact that the sacrifice of Christ is the grand "means."

It is true that the Church of God was blessed with super-creation blessings, being chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world and predestinated unto the adoption of children, and nothing could or can alter that grand fact. It is equally true that if sin had never entered the world, none had been in need of salvation from it. But sin has entered, and the Church fell in Adam and came under the curse and condemnation of God's Law. Consequently, the elect, equally with the reprobate, shared in the capital offence of their federal head, and partake of its fearful entail: "In Adam all die" (1 Cor. 15:22): "By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation" (Rom. 5:18). The result of this is, that all are "alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts" (Eph. 4:18), so that the members of the mystical Body of Christ are "by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:3), and hence they are alike in dire need of God's salvation.

Even when there is fundamental soundness in their views upon Divine salvation many have such inadequate and one-sided conceptions that other aspects of this truth, equally important and essential, are often overlooked and tacitly denied. How many, for example, would be capable of giving a simple exposition of the following texts: "Who hath saved us" (2 Tim. 1:9), "Work out your

own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12), "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Rom. 13:11). Now those verses do not refer to three different salvations, but to three separate aspects of one, and unless we learn to distinguish sharply among them, there can be naught but confusion and cloudiness in our thinking. Those passages present three distinct phases and stages of salvation: salvation as an accomplished fact, as a present process, and as a future prospect.

So many today ignore these distinctions, jumbling them together. Some contend for one and some argue against the other two; and vice versa. Some insist they are already saved, and deny that they are now being saved. Some declare that salvation is entirely future, and deny that it is in any sense already accomplished. Both are wrong. The fact is that the great majority of professing Christians fail to see that "salvation" is one of the most comprehensive terms in all the Scriptures, including predestination, regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. They have far too cramped an idea of the meaning and scope of the word "salvation" (as it is used in the Scriptures), narrowing its range too much, generally confining their thoughts to but a simple phase. They suppose "salvation" means no more than the new birth or the forgiveness of sins. Were one to tell them that salvation is a protracted process, they would view him with suspicion; and if he affirmed that salvation is something awaiting us in the future, they would at once dub him a heretic. Yet they would be the ones to err.

Ask the average Christian, Are you saved? and he answers, Yes, I was saved in such and such a year; and that is as far as his thoughts on the subject go. Ask him, To what do you owe your salvation? and "the finished work of Christ" is the sum of his reply. Tell him that each of those answers is seriously defective, and he strongly resents your aspersion. As an example of the confusion that now prevails, we quote the following from a tract on Philippians 2:12: "To whom are those instructions addressed? The opening words to the Epistle tell us: 'To the saints in Christ Jesus.' ... Thus they were all believers! and

could not be required to work for their salvation, for they already possessed it." Alas that so few people today perceive anything wrong in such a statement. Another "Bible teacher" tells us that "save thyself" (1 Tim. 4:16) must refer to deliverance from physical ills, as Timothy was already saved spiritually. True, yet it is equally true that he was then in the process of being saved, and also a fact that his salvation was then future.

Let us now supplement the first three verses quoted and show that there are other passages in the New Testament which definitely refer to each distinct tense of salvation. First salvation is an accomplished fact: "Thy faith hath saved thee" (Luke 7:50); "by grace ye have been saved" (Greek, and so translated in the R. V.—Eph. 2:8); "according to his mercy he saved us" (Titus 3:5). Second, salvation as a present process, in course of accomplishment; not yet completed: "Unto us which are being saved" (1 Cor. 1:18—R. V. and Bagster Interlinear); "Them that believe to the saving (not the 'salvation') of the soul" (Heb. 10:39). Third, salvation as a future process: "Sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1:14); "receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21); "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet. 1:5). Thus, by putting together these different passages we are clearly warranted in formulating the following statement: every genuine Christian has been saved, is now being saved, and will yet be saved—how and from what we shall endeavor to show.

As further proof of how many-sided is the subject of God's great salvation, and how that in Scripture it is viewed from various angles, take the following: "by grace are ye saved" (Eph. 2:8); "saved by his (Christ's) life," i.e., by His resurrection life (Rom. 5:9); "thy faith hath saved thee" (Luke 7:50); "the engrafted Word which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21); "saved by hope" (Rom. 8:24); "saved; yet so as by fire" (1 Cor. 3:15); "the like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us" (1 Pet. 3:21). Ah, my reader, the Bible is not a lazy man's book, nor can it be soundly expounded by those who do

not devote the whole of their time, and that for years, to its prayerful study. It is not that God would bewilder us, but that He would humble us, drive us to our knees, make us dependent upon His Spirit. Not to the proud—those who are wise in their own esteem—are its heavenly secrets opened.

In like manner it may be shown from Scripture that the cause of salvation is not a single one, as so many suppose—the blood of Christ. Here, too, it is necessary to distinguish between things which differ. First, the originating cause of salvation is the eternal purpose of God, or, in other words, the predestinating grace of the Father. Second, the meritorious cause of salvation is the mediation of Christ, this having particular respect to the legal side of things, or, in other words, His fully meeting the demands of the Law on the behalf and in the stead of those He redeems. Third, the efficient cause of salvation is the regenerating and sanctifying operations of the Holy Spirit, which respect the experimental side of it; or, in other words, the Spirit works in us what Christ purchased for us. Thus, we owe our personal salvation equally to each Person in the Trinity, and not to one (the Son) more than to the others. Fourth, the instrumental cause is our faith, obedience, and perseverance: though we are not saved because of them, equally true is it that we cannot be saved (according to God's appointment) without them.

In the opening paragraph, we have stated that in our earlier effort we erred as to the starting point. In writing upon a threefold salvation we began with salvation from the penalty of sin, which is our justification. But our salvation does not begin there, as we knew well enough even then: alas that we so blindly followed our erring preceptors. Our salvation originates, of course, in the eternal purpose of God, in His predestinating of us to everlasting glory. "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Tim. 1:9). That has reference to God's decree of election: His chosen people were then saved completely, in the Divine purpose, and all that we shall now

say has to do with the performing of that purpose, the accomplishing of that decree, the actualization of that salvation.

### **Salvation from the Pleasure of Sin**

It is here that God begins His actual application of salvation unto His elect. God saves us from the pleasure or love of sin before He delivers us from the penalty or punishment of sin. Necessarily so, for it would be neither an act of holiness nor of righteousness were He to grant full pardon to one who was still a rebel against Him, loving that which He hates. God is a God of order throughout, and nothing ever more evidences the perfections of His works than the orderliness of them. And how does God save His people from the pleasure of sin? The answer is, By imparting to them a nature which hates evil and loves holiness. This takes place when they are born again, so that actual salvation begins with regeneration. Of course it does: where else could it commence? Fallen man can never perceive his desperate need of salvation nor come to Christ for it, till he has been renewed by the Holy Spirit.

"He hath made everything beautiful in his time" (Eccl. 3:11), and much of the beauty of God's spiritual handiwork is lost upon us unless we duly observe their "time." Has not the Spirit Himself emphasized this in the express enumeration He has given us in "For whom he did foreknow, he did also predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified" (Rom. 8:29–30). Verse 29 announces the Divine foreordination; verse 30 states the manner of its actualization. It seems passing strange that with this Divinely defined method before them, so many preachers begin with our justification, instead of with that effectual call (from death unto life, our regeneration) which precedes it. Surely it is most obvious that regeneration must first take place in order to lay a foundation for our justification. Justification is by faith (Acts 13:39; Rom. 5:1; Gal. 3:8),

and the sinner must be Divinely quickened before he is capable of believing savingly.

Does not the last statement made throw light upon and explain what we have said is so "passing strange?" Preachers today are so thoroughly imbued with free-willism that they have departed almost wholly from that sound evangelism which marked our forefathers. The radical difference between Arminianism and Calvinism is that the system of the former revolves about the creature, whereas the system of the latter has the Creator for its centre of orbit. The Arminian allots to man the first place, the Calvinist gives God that position of honor. Thus the Arminian begins his discussion of salvation with justification, for the sinner must believe before he can be forgiven; further back he will not go, for he is unwilling that man should be made nothing of. But the instructed Calvinist begins with election, descends to regeneration, and then shows that being born again (by the sovereign act of God, in which the creature has no part) the sinner is made capable of savingly believing the Gospel.

Saved from the pleasure and love of sin. What multitudes of people would strongly resent being told that they delighted in evil! They would indignantly ask if we supposed them to be moral perverts. No indeed: a person may be thoroughly chaste and yet delight in evil. It may be that some of our own readers repudiate the charge that they have ever taken pleasure in sin, and would claim, on the contrary, that from earliest recollection they have detested wickedness in all its forms. Nor would we dare to call into question their sincerity; instead we point out that it only affords another exemplification of the solemn fact that "the heart is deceitful above all things" (Jer. 17:9). But this is a matter that is not open to argument: the plain teaching of God's Word decides the point once and for all, and beyond its verdict there is no appeal. What, then, say the Scriptures?

So far from God's Word denying that there is any delight to be found therein, it expressly speaks of "the pleasures of sin," it immediately warns that those pleasures are but "for a season" (Heb. 11:25), for the



aftermath is painful and not pleasant; yea, unless God intervenes in His sovereign grace, they entail eternal torment. So too the Word refers to those who are "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God" (2 Tim. 3:4). It is indeed striking to observe how often this discordant note is struck in Scripture. It mentions those who "love vanity" (Ps. 4:2); "him that loveth violence" (Ps. 11:5); "thou lovest evil more than good" (Ps. 52:3); "he loved lies" (Prov. 1:22); "they which delight in their abominations" (Isa. 66:3); "their abominations were according as they loved" (Hos. 9:10); who hated the good and "loved the evil" (Micah 3:2); "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15). To love sin is far worse than to commit it, for a man may be suddenly tripped up or commit it through frailty.

The fact is, my reader, that we are not only born into this world with an evil nature, but with hearts that are thoroughly in love with sin. Sin is our native element. We are wedded to our lusts, and of ourselves are no more able to alter the bent of our corrupt nature than the Ethiopian can change his skin or the leopard his spots. But what is impossible with man, is possible with God, and when He takes us in hand this is where He begins—by saving us from the pleasure or love of sin. This is the great miracle of grace, for the Almighty stoops down and picks up a loathsome leper from the dunghill and makes him a new creature in Christ, so that the things he once hated he now loves. God commences by saving us from ourselves. He does not save us from the penalty until He has delivered us from the love of sin.

And how is this miracle of grace accomplished, or rather, exactly what does it consist of? Negatively, not by eradicating the evil nature, nor even by refining it. Positively, by communicating a new nature, a holy nature, which loathes that which is evil, and delights in all that is truly good. To be more specific. First, God save His people from the pleasure or love of sin by puffing His holy awe in their hearts, for "the fear of the Lord is to hate evil" (Prov. 8:13), and again, "the fear of the Lord is to depart from evil" (Prov. 6:16). Second. God saves

His people from the pleasure of sin by communicating to them a new and vital principle: "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit" (Rom 5:5), and where the love of God rules the heart, the love of sin is dethroned. Third, God saves His people from the love of sin by the Holy Spirit's drawing their affections unto things above, thereby taking them off the things which formerly enthralled them.

If on the one hand the unbeliever hotly denies that he is in love with sin, many a believer is often hard put to persuade himself that he has been saved from the love thereof. With an understanding that has in part been enlightened by the Holy Spirit, he is the better able to discern things in their true colors. With a heart that has been made honest by grace, he refuses to call sweet bitter. With a conscience that has been sensitized by the new birth, he the more quickly feels the workings of sin and the hankering of his affections for that which is forbidden. Moreover, the flesh remains in him, unchanged, and as the raven constantly craves carrion, so this corrupt principle in which our mothers conceived us, lusts after and delights in that which is the opposite of holiness. It is these things which occasion and give rise to the disturbing questions that clamour for answer within the genuine believer.

The sincere Christian is often made to seriously doubt if he has been delivered from the love of sin. Such questions as these plainly agitate his mind: Why do I so readily yield to temptation? Why do some of the vanities and pleasures of the world still possess so much attraction for me? Why do I chafe so much against any restraints being placed upon my lusts? Why do I find the work of mortification so difficult and distasteful? Could such things as these be if I were a new creature in Christ? Could such horrible experiences as these happen if God had saved me from taking pleasure in sin? Well do we know that we are here giving expression to the very doubts which exercise the minds of many of our readers, and those who are strangers thereto are to be pitied. But what shall we say in reply? How is this distressing problem to be resolved?

How may one be assured that he has been saved from the love of sin? Let us point out first that the presence of that within us which still lusts after and takes delight in some evil things, is not incompatible with our having been saved from the love of sin, paradoxical as that may sound. It is part of the mystery of the Gospel that those who be saved are yet sinners in themselves. The point we are here dealing with is similar to and parallel with faith. The Divine principle of faith in the heart does not cast out unbelief. Faith and doubts exist side by side within a quickened soul, which is evident from those words, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:24). In like manner the Christian may exclaim and pray, "Lord, I long after holiness, help Thou my lustings after sin." And why is this? Because of the existence of two separate natures, the one at complete variance with the other within the Christian.

How, then, is the presence of faith to be ascertained? Not by the ceasing of unbelief, but by discovering its own fruit and works. Fruit may grow amid thorns as flowers among weeds, and yet it is fruit nonetheless. Faith exists amid many doubts and fears. Notwithstanding opposing forces within as well as from without us, faith still reaches out after God. Notwithstanding innumerable discouragements and defeats, faith continues to fight. Notwithstanding many refusals from God, it yet clings to Him and says, Except Thou bless me I will not let Thee go. Faith may be fearfully weak and fitful, often eclipsed by the clouds of unbelief, nevertheless the Devil himself cannot persuade its possessor to repudiate God's Word, despite His Son, or abandon all hope. The presence of faith, then, may be ascertained in that it causes its possessor to come before God as an empty-handed beggar beseeching Him for mercy and blessing.

Now just as the presence of faith may be known amid all the workings of unbelief, so our salvation from the love of sin may be ascertained notwithstanding all the lustings of the flesh after that which is evil. But in what way? How is this initial aspect of salvation to be identified? We have already anticipated this question in an

earlier paragraph, wherein we stated that God saved us from delighting in sin by imparting a nature that hates evil and loves holiness, which takes place at the new birth. Consequently, the real question to be settled is, How may the Christian positively determine whether that new and holy nature has been imparted to him? The answer is, By observing its activities, particularly the opposition it makes (under the energizings of the Holy Spirit) unto indwelling sin. Not only does the flesh (that principle of sin) lust against the spirit, but the spirit (the principle of holiness) lusts and wars against the flesh.

First, our salvation from the pleasure or love of sin may be recognized by sin's becoming a burden to us. This is truly a spiritual experience. Many souls are loaded down with worldly anxieties, who know nothing of what it means to be bowed down with a sense of guilt. But when God takes us in hand, the iniquities and transgressions of our past life are made to lie as an intolerable load upon the conscience. When we are given a sight of ourselves as we appear before the eyes of the thrice holy God, we will exclaim with the Psalmist, "For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me" (Ps. 40:12). So far from sin being pleasant, it is now felt as a cruel incubus, a crushing weight, and unendurable load. The soul is "heavy laden" (Matthew 11:28) and bowed down. A sense of guilt oppresses and the conscience cannot bear the weight of it. Nor is this experience restricted to our first conviction: it continues with more or less acuteness throughout the Christian's life.

Second, our salvation from the pleasure of sin may be recognized by sin's becoming bitter to us. True, there are millions of unregenerate who are filled with remorse over the harvest reaped from their sowing of wild oats. Yet that is not hatred of sin, but dislike of its consequences—ruined health, squandered opportunities, financial straitness, or social disgrace. No, what we have reference to is that anguish of heart which ever marks the one the Spirit takes in hand.

When the veil of delusion is removed and we see sin in the light of God's countenance; when we are given a discovery of the depravity of our very nature, then we perceive that we are sunk in carnality and death. When sin is opened to us in all its secret workings, we are made to feel the vileness of our hypocrisy, self-righteousness, unbelief, impatience, and the utter filthiness of our hearts. And when the penitent soul views the sufferings of Christ, he can say with Job, "God maketh my heart soft" (23:16).

Ah, my reader, it is this experience which prepares the heart to go out after Christ: those that are whole need not a physician, but they that are quickened and convicted by the spirit are anxious to be relieved by the great Physician. "The Lord killeth, and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich; he bringeth low, and lifteth up" (1 Sam. 2:6–7). It is in this way that God slayeth our self righteousness, maketh poor and bringeth low—by making sin to be an intolerable burden and as bitter wormwood to us. There can be no saving faith till the soul is filled with evangelical repentance, and repentance is a godly sorrow for sin, a holy detestation of sin, a sincere purpose to forsake it. The Gospel calls upon men to repent of their sins, forsake their idols, and mortify their lusts, and thus it is utterly impossible for the Gospel to be a message of good tidings to those who are in love with sin and madly determined to perish rather than part with their idols.

Nor is this experience of sin's becoming bitter to us limited to our first awakening—it continues in varying degrees, to the end of our earthly pilgrimage. The Christian suffers under temptations, is pained by Satan's fiery assaults, and bleeds from the wounds inflicted by the evil he commits. It grieves him deeply that he makes such a wretched return unto God for His goodness, that he requites Christ so evilly for His dying love, that he responds so fitfully to the promptings of the Spirit. The wanderings of his mind when he desires to meditate upon the Word, the dullness of his heart when he seeks to pray, the worldly thoughts which invade his mind on the Holy Sabbath, the coldness of his affections towards the Redeemer,

cause him to groan daily; all of which goes to evidence that sin has been made bitter to him. He no longer welcomes those intruding thoughts which take his mind off God: rather does he sorrow over them. But, "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted:" (Matthew 5:4).

Third, our salvation from the pleasure of sin may be recognized by the felt bondage which sin produces. As it is not until a Divine faith is planted in the heart that we become aware of our native and inveterate unbelief, so it is not until God saves us from the love of sin that we are conscious of the fetters it has placed around us. Then it is we discover that we are "without strength," unable to do anything pleasing to God, incapable of running the race set before us. A Divinely drawn picture of the saved soul's felt bondage is to be found in Rom. 7: "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do ... For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin" (vs. 18, 19, 22, 23). And what is the sequel? this the agonizing cry "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" If that be the sincere lamentation of your heart, then God has saved you from the pleasure of sin.

Let it be pointed out though, that salvation from the love of sin is felt and evidenced in varying degrees by different Christians, and in different periods in the life of the same Christian, according to the measure of grace which God bestows, and according as that grace is active and operative. Some seem to have a more intense hatred of sin in all its forms than do others, yet the principle of hating sin is found in all real Christians. Some Christians, rarely if ever, commit any deliberate and premeditated sins: more often they are tripped up, suddenly tempted (to be angry or tell a lie) and are overcome. But with others the case is quite otherwise: they—fearful to say—actually plan evil acts. If any one indignantly denies that such a thing is

possible in a saint, and insists that such a character is a stranger to saving grace, we would remind him of David: was not the murder of Uriah definitely planned? This second class of Christians find it doubly hard to believe they have been saved from the love of sin.

### **Salvation from the Penalty of Sin**

This follows upon our regeneration which is evidenced by evangelical repentance and unfeigned faith. Every soul that truly puts his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ is then and there saved from the penalty—the guilt, the wages, the punishment—of sin. When the apostle said to the penitent jailor, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," he signified that all his sins would be remitted by God; just as when the Lord said to the poor woman, "thy faith hath saved thee: go in peace" (Luke 7:50). He meant that all her sins were now forgiven her, for forgiveness has to do with the criminality and punishment of sin. To the same effect when we read "by grace are ye saved through faith" (Eph. 2:8), it is to be understood the Lord has actually "delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. 1:10).

This aspect of our salvation is to be contemplated from two separate viewpoints: the Divine and the human. The Divine side of it is found in the mediatorial office and work of Christ, who as the Sponsor and Surety of His people met the requirements of the law on their behalf, working out for them a perfect righteousness and enduring Himself the curse and condemnation which are due them, consummated at the Cross. It was there that He was "wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities" (Isa. 53:5). It was there that He, judicially, "his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Pet. 2:24). It was there that He was "smitten of God and afflicted" while He was making atonement for the offenses of His people. Because Christ suffered in my stead, I go free; because He died, I live; because He was forsaken of God, I am reconciled to Him. This is the great marvel of grace, which will evoke ceaseless praise from the redeemed throughout eternity.

The human side of our salvation from the penalty of sin respects our repentance and faith. Though these possess no merits whatever, and though they in no sense purchase our pardon, yet according to the order which God has appointed, they are (instrumentally) essential, for salvation does not become ours experimentally until they are exercised. Repentance is the hand releasing those filthy objects it had previously clung to so tenaciously; faith is extending an empty hand to God to receive His gift of grace. Repentance is a godly sorrow for sin; faith is receiving a sinner's Saviour. Repentance is a revulsion of the filth and pollution of sin; faith is a seeking of cleansing therefrom. Repentance is the sinner covering his mouth and crying, "Unclean, unclean!;" faith is the leper coming to Christ and saying, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean."

So far from repentance and faith being meritorious graces, they are self-emptying ones. The one who truly repents takes his place as a lost sinner before God, confessing himself to be a guilty wretch deserving naught but unsparing judgment at the hands of Divine justice. Faith looks away from corrupt and ruined self, and views the amazing provision which God has made for such a Hell-deserving creature. Faith lays hold of the Son of God's love, as a drowning man clutches at a passing spar. Faith surrenders to the Lordship of Christ, rests upon the merits and efficacy of His sacrifice, his sins are removed from God's sight "as far as the east is from the west:" he is now eternally saved from the wrath to come.

We cannot do better here than quote these sublime lines of Augustus Toplady:

From whence this fear and unbelief?

Hast Thou, O Father, put to grief

Thy spotless Son for me?

And will the righteous Judge of men



Condemn me for that debt of sin  
Which, Lord, was laid on Thee?  
If Thou hast my discharge procured,  
And freely in my place endured  
The whole of wrath Divine;  
Payment God cannot twice demand  
First at my bleeding Surety's hand,  
And then again at mine.  
Complete atonement Thou hast made,  
And to the utmost farthing paid,  
What e'er Thy people owed;  
How then can wrath on me take place,  
If sheltered in Thy righteousness,  
And sprinkled with Thy blood?  
Turn, then, my soul, unto thy rest,  
The merits of thy great High Priest  
Speak peace and liberty.  
Trust in His efficacious blood,  
Nor fear thy banishment from God,  
Since Jesus died for thee.

While deliverance from the love of sin has to do entirely with the experimental side of our salvation, remission of the penalty of sin concerns the legal aspect only, or in other words, the believer's justification. Justification is a forensic term and has to do with the law-courts, for it is the decision or verdict of the judge. Justification is the opposite of condemnation. Condemnation means that a man has been charged with a crime, his guilt is established, and accordingly the law pronounces upon him sentence of punishment. On the contrary, justification means that the accused is found to be guiltless, the law has nothing against him, and therefore he is acquitted and exonerated, leaving the court without a stain upon his character. When we read in Scripture that believers are "justified from all things" (Acts 13:39), it signifies that their case has been tried in the high court of Heaven and that God, the Judge of all the earth, has acquitted them: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1).

But to be without condemnation is only the negative side: justification means to declare or pronounce righteous, up to the Law's requirements. Justification implies that the Law has been fulfilled, obeyed, magnified, for nothing short of this would meet the just demands of God. Hence, as His people, fallen in Adam, were unable to measure up to the Divine standard, God appointed that His own Son should become incarnate, be the Surety of His people, and answer the demands of the Law in their stead. Here, then, is the sufficient answer which may be made to the two objections which unbelief is ready to raise: how can God acquit the guilty? How can He declare righteous one who is devoid of righteousness? Bring in the Lord Jesus Christ and all difficulty disappears. The guilt of our sins was imputed or legally transferred to Him, so that He suffered the full penalty of what was due them; the merits of His obedience are imputed or legally transferred to us, so that we stand before God in all the acceptableness of our Sponsor (Rom. 5:18, 19; 2 Cor. 5:21, etc.). Not only has the Law nothing against us, but we are entitled to its reward.

## **Salvation from the Power of Sin**

This is a present and protracted process, and is as yet incomplete. It is the most difficult part of our subject, and upon it the greatest confusion of thought prevails, especially among young Christians. Many there are who, having learned that the Lord Jesus is the Saviour of sinners, have jumped to the erroneous conclusion that if they but exercise faith in Him, surrender to His Lordship, commit their souls into His keeping, He will remove their corrupt nature and destroy their evil propensities. But after they have really trusted in Him, they discover that evil is still present with them, that their hearts are still deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, and that no matter how they strive to resist temptation, pray for overcoming grace, and use the means of God's appointing, they seem to grow worse and worse instead of better, until they seriously doubt if they are saved at all. They are not being saved.

Even when a person has been regenerated and justified, the flesh or corrupt nature remains within him, and ceaselessly harasses him. Yet this ought not to perplex him. To the saints at Rome Paul said, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body" (6:12), which would be entirely meaningless had sin been eradicated from them. Writing to the Corinthian saints he said, "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" (2 Cor. 7:1): obviously such an exhortation is needless if sin has been purged from our beings. "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" (1 Pet. 5:6): what need have Christians for such a word as this, except pride lurks and works within them. But all room for controversy on this point is excluded if we bow to that inspired declaration, "If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8).

The old carnal nature remains in the believer: he is still a sinner, though a saved one. What, then, is the young Christian to do? Is he powerless? Must he resort to stoicism, and make up his mind there is

naught but a life of defeat before him? Certainly not! The first thing for him to do is to learn the humiliating truth that in himself he is "without strength." It was here that Israel failed: when Moses made known to them the Law they boastfully declared "all that the Lord has said we will do and be obedient" (Ex. 24:7). Ah! how little did they realize that "in the flesh there dwelleth no good thing." It was here, too, that Peter failed: he was self-confident and boasted that "though all men be offended because of thee, yet will I not deny thee"—how little he knew his own heart. This complacent spirit lurks within each of us. While we cherish the belief we can "do better next time" it is evident that we still have confidence in our own powers. Not until we heed the Saviour's words "without me ye can do nothing" do we take the first step toward victory. Only when we are weak (in ourselves) are we strong.

The believer still has the carnal nature within him, and he has no strength in himself to check its evil propensities, nor to overcome its sinful solicitations. But the believer in Christ also has another nature within him which is received at the new birth: "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). The believer, then, has two natures within him: one which is sinful, the other which is spiritual. These two natures being totally different in character, are antagonistic to each other. To this antagonism or conflict the apostle referred when he said, "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh" (Gal. 5:17). Now which of these two natures is to regulate the believer's life? It is manifest that both cannot, for they are contrary to each other. It is equally evident that the stronger of the two will exert the more controlling power. It is also clear that in the young Christian the carnal nature is the stronger, because he was born with it, and hence it has many years start of the spiritual nature, which he did not receive until he was born again.

Further, it is unnecessary to argue at length that the only way by which we can strengthen and develop the new nature, is by feeding it. In every realm growth is dependent upon food, suitable food, daily food. The nourishment which God has provided for our spiritual

nature is found in His own Word, for "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). It is to this that Peter has reference when he says, "As newborn babes desire the sincere (pure) milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2:2). In proportion as we feed upon the heavenly Manna, such will be our spiritual growth. Of course there are other things besides food needful to growth: we must breathe, and in a pure atmosphere. This, translated into spiritual terms, signifies prayer. It is when we approach the throne of grace and meet our Lord face to face that our spiritual lungs are filled with the ozone of Heaven. Exercise is another essential to growth, and this finds its accomplishment in walking with the Lord. If, then, we heed these primary laws of spiritual health, the new nature will flourish.

But not only must the new nature be fed, it is equally necessary for our spiritual well-being that the old nature should be starved. This is what the apostle had in mind when he said, "Make not provision for the flesh, unto the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:14). To starve the old nature, to make not provision for the flesh, means that we abstain from everything that would stimulate our carnality; that we avoid, as we would a plague, all that is calculated to prove injurious to our spiritual welfare. Not only must we deny ourselves the pleasures of sin, shun such things as the saloon, theatre, dance, card-table, etc., but we must separate ourselves from the worldly companions, cease to read worldly literature, abstain from everything upon which we cannot ask God's blessing. Our affections are to be set upon things above, and not upon things upon the earth (Col. 3:2). Does this seem a high standard, and sound impracticable? Holiness in all things is that at which we are to aim, and failure to do so explains the leanness of so many Christians. Let the young believer realize that whatever does not help his spiritual life hinders it.

Here, then, in brief is the answer to our question, What is the young Christian to do in order for deliverance from indwelling sin. It is true that we are still in this world, but we are not "of" it (John 17:14). It is true that we are forced to associate with godless people, but this is

ordained of God in order that we may "let our light so shine before men that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). There is a wide difference between associating with sinners as we go about our daily tasks, and making them our intimate companions and friends. Only as we feed upon the Word can we "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18). Only as we starve the old nature can we expect deliverance from its power and pollution. Then let us earnestly heed the exhortation "put ye off concerning the former conversation (behaviour) the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that ye put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:22–24).

Above, we have dealt only with the human side of the problem as to how to obtain deliverance from the dominion of sin. Necessarily there is a Divine side too. It is only by God's grace that we are enabled to use the means which He has provided us, as it is only by the power of His Spirit who dwells within us that we can truly "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race that is set before us" (Heb. 12:1). These two aspects (the Divine and the human) are brought together in a number of scriptures. We are bidden to "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling" but the apostle immediately added, "for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12, 13). Thus, we are to work out that which God has wrought within us; in other words, if we walk in the Spirit we shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh (Gal. 5:16). It has now been shown that salvation from the power of sin is a process which goes on throughout the believer's life. It is to this Solomon referred when he said, "The path of the just is as a shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. 4:18).

As our salvation from the pleasure of sin is the consequence of our regeneration, and as salvation from the penalty of sin respects our justification, so salvation from the power of sin has to do with the

practical side of our sanctification. The word sanctification signifies "separation"—separation from sin. We need hardly say that the word holiness is strictly synonymous with "sanctification," being an alternative rendering of the same Greek word. As the practical side of sanctification has to do with our separation from sin, we are told, "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1). That practical sanctification or holiness is a process, a progressive experience, is clear from this: "Follow ... holiness without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14). The fact that we are to "follow" holiness clearly intimates that we have not yet attained unto the Divine standard which God requires of us. This is further seen in the passage just quoted: "perfecting holiness" or completing it.

### **The Divine Side of Our Salvation**

We must now enter into a little fuller detail of the Divine side of our salvation from the power and pollution of sin. When a sinner truly receives Christ as his Lord and Saviour, God does not then and there take him to Heaven; on the contrary, he is likely to be left down here for many years, and this world is a place of danger, for it lieth in the Wicked one (1 John 5:19) and all pertaining to it is opposed to the Father (1 John 2:16). Therefore the believer needs daily salvation from this hostile system. Accordingly we read that Christ "gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God our Father" (Gal. 1:4). Not only is the sinner not taken to Heaven when he first savingly believes, but, as we have seen, the evil nature is not taken out of him; nevertheless God does not leave him completely under its dominion, but graciously delivers him from its regal power. He uses a great variety of means to accomplish this.

First, by granting us a clearer view of our inward depravity, so that we are made to abhor ourselves. By nature we are thoroughly in love with ourselves, but as the Divine work of grace is carried forward in our souls we come to loathe ourselves; and that, my reader, is a very

distressing experience—one which is conveniently shelved by most of our modern preachers. The concept which many young Christians form from preachers is, that the experience of a genuine believer is a smooth, peaceful, and joyous one; but he soon discovers that this is not verified in his personal history, but rather is it completely falsified. And this staggers him: supposing the preacher to know more about such matters than himself, he is now filled with disturbing doubts about his very salvation, and the Devil promptly tells him he is only a hypocrite, and never was saved at all.

Only those who have actually passed through or are passing through this painful experience have any real conception thereof: there is as much difference between an actual acquaintance with it and the mere reading a description of the same, as there is between personally visiting a country and examining it first hand and simply studying a map of it. But how are we to account for one who has been saved from the pleasure and penalty of sin, now being made increasingly conscious not only of its polluting presence but of its tyrannizing power? How explain the fact that the Christian now finds himself growing worse and worse, and the more closely he endeavours to walk with God, the more he finds the flesh bringing forth its horrible works in ways it had not done previously? The answer is because of increased light from God, by which he now discovers filth of which he was previously unaware: the sun shining into a neglected room does not create the dust and cobwebs, but simply reveals them.

Thus it is with the Christian. The more the light of the Spirit is turned upon him inwardly, the more he discovers the horrible plague of his heart (1 Kings 8:38), and the more he realizes what a wretched failure he is. The fact is, dear discouraged soul, that the more you are growing out of love with yourself, the more you are being saved from the power of sin. Wherein lies its fearful potency? Why, in its power to deceive us. It lies to us. It did so to Adam and Eve. It gives us false estimates of values so that we mistake the tinsel for real gold. To be saved from the power of sin, is to have our eyes opened so that we



see things in God's light: it is to know the truth about things all around us, and the truth about ourselves. Satan has blinded the minds of them that believe not, but the Holy Spirit hath shined in our hearts "unto the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:4, 6).

But further: sin not only deceives, it puffs up, causing its infatuated victims to think highly of themselves. As 1 Tim. 3:6 tells us, to be "lifted up with pride" is to "fall into the condemnation of the devil." Ah, it was insane egotism which caused him to say, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds: I will be like the Most High" (Isa. 14:13, 14). Is there any wonder then, that those in whom he works are filled with pride and complacency! Sin ever produces self-love and self-righteousness: the most abandoned of characters will tell you, "I know that I am weak, yet I have a good heart." But when God takes us in hand, it is the very opposite: the workings of the Spirit subdues our pride. How? By giving increasing discoveries of self and the exceeding sinfulness of sin, so that each one cries with Job "Behold! I am vile" (40:4): such an one is being saved from the power of sin—its power to deceive and to inflate.

Second, by sore chastenings. This is another means which God uses in delivering His people from sin's dominion. "We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their pleasure: but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness" (Heb. 12:9, 10). Those chastenings assume varied forms: sometimes they are external, sometimes internal, but whatever be their nature they are painful to flesh and blood. Sometimes these Divine chastisements are of long duration, and then the soul is apt to ask "why standest Thou afar off, O Lord? Why dost Thou hide Thyself in times of trouble?" (Ps. 10:1), for it seems as though God has deserted us. Earnest prayer is made for a mitigation of suffering, but no relief

is granted; grace is earnestly sought for meekly bowing to the rod, but unbelief, impatience, rebellion, seems to wax stronger and stronger, and the soul is hard put to it to believe in God's love; but as Heb. 12:11 tells us, "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceful (peaceable, AV) fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

This life is a schooling, and chastenings are one of the chief methods God employs in the training of His children. Sometimes they are sent for the correcting of our faults, and therefore we must pray, "Cause me to understand wherein I have erred" (Job 6:24). Let us steadily bear in mind that it is the "rod" and not the sword which is smiting us, held in the hand of our loving Father and not the avenging Judge. Sometimes they are sent for the prevention of sin, as Paul was given a thorn in the flesh, "lest he should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of the revelations" given him. Sometimes they are sent for our spiritual education, that by them we may be brought to a deeper experimental acquaintance with God: "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes" (Ps. 119:71). Sometimes they are sent for the testing and strengthening of our graces: "We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope" (Rom. 5:3, 4); "count it all joy when ye fall into varied trials: knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience" (James 1:2, 3).

Chastening is God's sin-purging medicine, sent to wither our fleshly aspirations, to detach our hearts from carnal objects. to deliver us from our idols, to wean us more thoroughly from the world. God has bidden us "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers ... come out from among them, and be ye separate" (2 Cor. 6:14, 17); and we are slow to respond, and therefore does He take measures to drive us out lie has bidden us "love not the world," and if we disobey we must not be surprised if He causes some of our worldly friends to hate and persecute us. God has bidden us "mortify ye therefore your members which are upon the earth" (Col. 3:5): if we refuse to comply with this

unpleasant task, then we may expect God Himself to use the pruning-knife upon us. God has bidden us "cease ye from man" (Isa. 2:22), and if we will trust our fellows, we are made to suffer for it.

"Despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him" (Heb. 12:5). This is a salutary warning. So far from despising it, we should be grateful for the same: that God cares so much and takes such trouble with us, and that His bitter physic produces such healthful effects. "In their affliction they will seek Me early" (Hos. 5:15): while everything is running smoothly for us, we are apt to be self-sufficient; but when trouble comes, we promptly turn unto the Lord. Own, then, with the Psalmist "In faithfulness Thou hast afflicted me" (119:75). Not only do God's chastisements, when sanctified to us, subdue the workings of pride and wean us more from the world, but they make the Divine promises more precious to the heart: such an one as this takes on new meaning; "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, ... when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned" (Isa. 43:2). Moreover, they break down selfishness and make us more sympathetic to our fellow-sufferers: "Who comfortest us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble" (2 Cor. 1:4).

Third, by bitter disappointments. God has plainly warned us that "all is vanity and vexation of spirit, and there is no profit under the sun" (Ecc. 2:11), and that by one who was permitted to gratify the physical senses as none other ever has been. Yet we do not take this warning to heart, for we do not really believe it. On the contrary, we persuade ourselves that satisfaction is to be found in things under the sun, that the creature can give contentment to our hearts. As well attempt to fill a circle with a square! The heart was made for God, and He alone can meet its needs. But by nature we are idolaters, putting things into His place. Those things we invest with qualities they possess not, and sooner or later our delusions are rudely exposed to us, and we discover that the images in our minds are only dreams, that our golden idol is but clay after all.

God so orders His providences that our earthly nest is destroyed. The winds of adversity compel us to leave the downy bed of carnal ease and luxuriation. Grievous losses are experienced in some form or other. Trusted friends prove fickle, and in the hour of need fail us. The family circle, which had so long sheltered us and where peace and happiness was found, is broken up by the grim hand of death. Health fails and weary nights are our portion. These frying experiences, these bitter disappointments, are another of the means which our gracious God employs to save us from the pleasure and pollution of sin. By them He discovers to us the vanity and vexation of the creature. By them He weans us more completely from the world. By them He teaches us that the objects in which we sought refreshment are but "broken cisterns," and this that we may turn to Christ and draw from Him who is the Well of living water, the One who alone can supply true satisfaction of soul.

It is in this way we are experimentally taught to look off from the present to the future, for our rest is not here. "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" (Rom. 8:24). Let it be duly noted that this comes immediately after "we ourselves groan within ourselves." Thus to be "saved by hope" respects our present salvation from the power of sin. Complete salvation is now the Christian's only in title and expectation. It is not here said that we "shall be saved by hope," but we are saved by hope—that hope which looks for the fulfilling of God's promises. Hope has to do with a future good, with something which as yet "is seen not:" we "hope" not for something which is already enjoyed. Herein hope differs from faith. Faith, as it is an assent, is in the mind; but hope is seated in the affections, stirred by the desirability of the things promised.

And, my reader, the bitter disappointments of life are naught but a dark background upon which hope may shine forth the more brightly. Christ does not immediately take to Heaven the one who puts his trust in Him. No, He keeps him here upon earth for a while to be exercised and tried. While he is awaiting his complete

blessedness there is such a difference between him and it, and he encounters many difficulties and trials. Not having yet received his inheritance, there is need and occasion of hope, for only by its exercise can things future be sought after. The stronger our hope, the more earnestly shall we be engaged in the pursuit of it. We have to be weaned from present things in order for the heart to be fixed upon a future good.

Fourth, by the gift of the Spirit and His operations within us. God's great gift of Christ for us is matched by the gift of the Spirit for us, for we owe as much to the One as we do to the Other. The new nature in the Christian is powerless apart from the Spirit's daily renewing. It is by His gracious operations that we have discovered to us the nature and extent of sin, are made to strive against it, are brought to grieve over it. It is by the Spirit that faith, hope, prayer, is kept alive within the soul. It is by the Spirit we are moved to use the means of grace which God has appointed for our spiritual preservation and growth. It is by the spirit that sin is prevented from having complete dominion over us, for as the result of His indwelling us, there is something else besides sin in the believer's heart and life, namely, the fruits of holiness and righteousness.

To sum up this aspect of our subject. Salvation from the power of indwelling sin is not the taking of the evil nature out of the believer in this life, nor by effecting any improvement in it: "that which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John 3:6) and it remains so, unchanged to the end. Nor is it by the Spirit so subduing indwelling sin that it is rendered less active, for the flesh not merely lusts, but "lusteth (ceaselessly) against the spirit:" it never sleeps, not even when our bodies do, as our dreams evidence. No, and in some form or other, the flesh is constantly producing its evil works. It may not be in external acts, seen by the eyes of our fellows, but certainly so internally, in things seen by God—such as covetousness, discontent, pride, unbelief, self-will, ill-will towards others, and a hundred other evils. No, none is saved from sinning in this life.

Present salvation from the power of sin consists in, first, delivering us from the love of it, which though begun at our regeneration is continued throughout out practical sanctification. Second, from its blinding delusiveness, so that it can no more deceive as it once did. Third, from our excusing it: "that which I do, I allow not" (Rom. 7:15). This is one of the surest marks of regeneration. In the fullest sense of the word the believer "allows" it not before he sins, for every real Christian when in his right mind desires to be wholly kept from sinning. He "allows" it not fully when doing it, for in the actual committing thereof there is an inward reserve—the new nature consents not. He "allows" it not afterwards, as Psalm 51 evidences so plainly of the case of David.

The force of this word "allow" in Romans 7:15 may be seen from "truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they killed them (the prophets) and ye build their sepulchers" (Luke 11:48). So far from those Jews being ashamed of their fathers and abhorring their wicked conduct, they erected a monument to their honour. Thus, to "allow" is the opposite of to be ashamed of and sorrow over: it is to condone and vindicate. Therefore, when it is said that the believer "allows not" the evil of which he is guilty, it means that he seeks not to justify himself or throw the blame on some one else, as both Adam and Eve did. That the Christian allows not sin is evident by his shame over it, his sorrow for it, his confession of it, his loathing himself because of it, his renewed resolution to forsake it.

### **Salvation from the Presence of Sin**

We now turn to that aspect of our subject which has to do solely with the future. Sin is yet to be completely eradicated from the believer's being, so that he shall appear before God without any spot or blemish. True, this is his legal status even now, yet it has not become so in his state or experience. As God views the believer in Christ, he appears before Him in all the excellency of his Sponsor; but as God views him as he yet is in himself (and that he does do so is proved by His chastenings), he beholds all the ruin which the Fall has wrought

in him. But this will not always be the case: no, blessed be His name, the Lord is reserving the best wine for the last. And even now we have tasted that He is gracious, but the fullness of His grace will only be entered into and enjoyed by us after this world is left behind.

Those Scriptures which present our salvation as a future prospect are all concerned with our final deliverance from the very inbeing of sin. To this Paul referred when he said, "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Rom. 13:11)—not our salvation from the pleasure, the penalty, or the power of sin, but from its very presence. "For our citizenship is in heaven: from whence we also look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20). Yes, it is the "Saviour" we await, for it is at His return that the whole election of grace shall enter into their full salvation; as it is written, "Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28). In like manner, when another apostle declares, "We are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed at the last time" (1 Pet. 1:5), he had reference to this grand consummation of the believer's salvation, when he shall be forever rid of the very presence of sin.

Our salvation from the pleasure of sin is effected by Christ's taking up His abode in our hearts: "Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20). Our salvation from the penalty of sin was secured by Christ's sufferings on the cross, where He endured the punishment due our iniquities. Our salvation from the power of sin is obtained by the gracious operations of the Spirit which Christ sends to His people—therefore is He designated "the Spirit of Christ" (Rom. 8:9 and cf. Gal. 4:6, Rev. 3:1). Our salvation from the presence of sin will be accomplished at Christ's second advent: "for our citizenship is in Heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. 3:20, 21). And again we are told, "We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like

Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2). It is all of Christ from beginning to end.

Man was originally created in the image and likeness of God, reflecting the moral perfections of his Maker. But sin came in and he fell from his pristine glory, and by that fall God's image in him was broken and His likeness marred. But in the redeemed that image is to be restored, yea, they are to be granted a far higher honour than what was bestowed upon the first Adam: they are to be made like the last Adam. It is written, "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29). This blessed purpose of God in our predestination will not be fully realized until the second coming of our Lord: then it will be that His people shall be completely emancipated from the thralldom and corruption of sin. Then shall Christ "present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having any spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27).

Salvation from the pleasure or love of sin takes place at our regeneration; salvation from the penalty or punishment of sin occurs at our justification; salvation from the power or dominion of sin is accomplished during our practical sanctification; salvation from the presence or inbeing of sin is consummated at our glorification: "Whom he justified, them He also glorified" (Rom. 8:30). Not so much is revealed in Scripture on this fourth aspect of our subject, for God's Word was not given us to gratify curiosity. Yet sufficient is made known to feed faith, strengthen hope, draw out love, and make us "run with patience the race that is set before us." In our present state we are incapable of forming any real conception of the bliss awaiting us: yet as Israel's spies brought back the bunch of "the grapes of Eschol" as a sample of the good things to be found in the land of Canaan, so the Christian is granted a foretaste and earnest of his inheritance on High.



"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). It is to the image of a glorified Christ that we are predestinated to be conformed. Behold Him on the mount of transfiguration, when a fore-view of His glory was granted the favoured disciples. Such is the dazzling splendour of His person that Saul of Tarsus was temporarily blinded by a glimpse of it, and the beloved John in the isle of Patmos "fell at His feet as dead" (Rev. 1:7) when he beheld Him. That which awaits us can best be estimated as it is contemplated in the light of God's wondrous love. The portion which Christ Himself has received, is the expression of God's love for Him; and, as the Saviour has assured His people concerning His Father's love unto them, "and hast loved them as Thou lovest Me" (John 17:23), and therefore, as He promised, "where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3).

But is not the believer forever done with sin at death? Yes, thank God, such is the case; yet that is not his glorification, for his body goes to corruption, and that is the effect of sin. But it is written of the believer's body, "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body" (1 Cor. 15:42-44). Nevertheless, at death itself the Christian's soul is entirely freed from the presence of sin. This is clear from "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Rev. 14:13). What is signified by "that they may rest from their labours?" Why, something more blessed than ceasing from earning their daily bread by the sweat of their brows, for that will be true of the unsaved also. Those who die in the Lord rest from their "labours" with sin: their painful conflicts with indwelling corruption, Satan, and the world. The fight which faith now wages is then ended, and full relief from sin is theirs forever.

The fourfold salvation from sin of the Christian was strikingly typified in God's dealings with the nation of Israel of old. First, we

have a vivid portrayal of their deliverance from the pleasure or love of sin: "And the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning" (Ex. 2:23, 24). What a contrast does that present from what we read of in the closing chapters of Genesis! There we hear the king of Egypt saying to Joseph, "The land of Egypt is before thee: in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen" (47:6). Accordingly we are told, "And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein, and grew and multiplied exceedingly" (47:27). Now Egypt is the OT. symbol of the world, as a system opposed to God. And it was there, in the "best pan" of it, the descendants of Abraham had settled. But the Lord had designs of mercy and something far better for them: yet before they could appreciate Canaan they had to be weaned from Egypt. Hence we find them in cruel bondage there, smarting under the lash of the taskmasters. In this way they were made to loathe Egypt and long for deliverance therefrom. The theme of Exodus is redemption: how striking, then, to see that God begins His work of redemption by making His people to groan and cry out under their bondage! The portion Christ bestows is not welcome till we are made sick of this world.

Second, in Exodus 12 we have a picture of God's people being delivered from the penalty of sin. On the Passover night the angel of death came and slew all the firstborn of the Egyptians. But why spare the firstborn of the Israelites? Not because they were guiltless before God, for all had sinned and come short of His glory. The Israelites, equally with the Egyptians, were guilty in His sight, and deserving of unsparing judgment. It was at this very point that the grace of God came in and met their need. Another was slain in their room and died in their stead. An innocent victim was killed and its blood shed, pointing to the coming of "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." The head of each Israelitish household sprinkled the lamb's blood on the lintel and posts of his door, and hence the firstborn in it was spared from the avenging angel: God promised,

"when I see the blood I will pass over you" (Ex. 12:13). Thus, Israel was saved from the penalty of sin by means of the lamb dying in their stead.

Third, Israel's wilderness journey adumbrated the believer's salvation from the power of sin. Israel did not enter Canaan immediately upon their exodus from Egypt: they had to face the temptations and trials of the desert where they spent not less than forty years. But what a gracious and full provision did God make for His people! Manna was given them daily from heaven—figure of that food which God's Word now supplies for our spiritual nourishment. Water was given from the smitten rock—emblem of the Holy Spirit sent by the smitten Christ to dwell within us: John 7:38, 39. A cloud and a pillar of fire guided them by day and guarded them by night, reminding us of how God directs our steps and shields us from our foes. Best of all, Moses, their great leader, was with them, counseling, admonishing, and interceding for them—figure of the Captain of our salvation: "In I am with you alway."

Fourth, the actual entrance of Israel into the promised land foreshadowed the believer's glorification, when he enters into the full enjoyment of that possession which Christ has purchased for him. The experiences Israel met with in Canaan have a double typical significance. From one viewpoint they presaged the conflict which faith encounters while the believer is left upon earth, for as the Hebrews had to overcome the original inhabitants of Canaan before they could enjoy their portion, so faith has to surmount many obstacles if it is to "possess its possessions." Nevertheless, that land of milk and honey into which Israel entered after the bondage of Egypt and the hardships of the wilderness were left behind, was manifestly a figure of the Christian's portion in Heaven after he is forever done with sin in this world.

"Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). First, save them from the pleasure or love of sin by bestowing a nature which hates it: this is the great miracle

of grace. Second, save them from the penalty or punishment of sin, by remitting all its guilt: this is the grand marvel of grace. Third, save them from the power or dominion of sin, by the workings of His Spirit: this reveals the wondrous might of grace. Fourth, save them from the presence or inbeing of sin: this will demonstrate the glorious magnitude of grace. May it please the Lord to bless these elementary but most important articles to many of His little ones, and make their "big" brothers and sisters smaller in their own esteem.

## **The God of Jacob**

"The God of Jacob is our refuge." (Psalm 46:7)

THIS divine title—"The God of Jacob"—is found at least fourteen times in the Old Testament, and in addition, three times we read of "The mighty God of Jacob." Such frequent repetition argues a deep significance, and suggests valuable lessons to be learned. We never read of the God of Moses, the God of Joshua, or the God of Solomon. Why then has God identified Himself with Jacob? What is there in the Lord's dealings with this man which will suggest to us the import of this title? What is the particular significance of this expression which occurs and recurs through the Psalms like a familiar refrain?

1. The God of Jacob is the God of Election. Jacob supplies us with the clearest and most unmistakable illustration of God's sovereign choice to be met with in all the Bible. Whatever quibbles may be raised in reference to God's choice of Abraham to be the father of the faithful, or of the nation of Israel to be the recipients of His peculiar favors, there is no getting round God's election of Jacob. The case of Jacob gives the most emphatic refutation to the theory that God's choice is dependent upon something in the creature—something either actual

or foreseen—and shows that the eternal election of certain individuals unto salvation is due to no worthiness in the subjects but results solely from God's sovereign grace. The case of Jacob proves conclusively that God's choice is entirely arbitrary, wholly gratuitous, and based upon nothing save His own good pleasure. "When Rebecca also had conceived by one, even our father Isaac (for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that caller;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Rom. 9:10–13).

The God of Jacob then is the God who chooses one and passes by another. He is the One who exercises and exhibits His own sovereign will. He is one who shows Himself to be the Most High ruling in heaven and earth and disposing Of His creatures according to His own eternal purpose. He is the One who singles out the most unlikely and unworthy objects to be fashioned into vessels of glory. Yet, He is the One who necessarily acts always in harmony with His own perfections.

Election is not as some have supposed, harsh and unjust, but is a most merciful provision on the part of God. Had he not from the beginning chosen some to salvation, all would have perished. Had he not before the foundation of the world chosen certain ones to be conformed to the image of His Son, the death of Christ would have been in vain so far as the human race is concerned.

Reduced to its simplest terms, Election means that God chose me before I chose Him. Said our Lord, "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you" (John 15:16). We love Him because He first loved us. Election means that before I was born, yea, before the foundation of the world, I was chosen in Christ and predestinated unto a place in God's family. Election means that we believed because He made us willing in the day of His power. Election then strips the creature of

all merit, removes all ground of boasting, strikes us helpless in the dust, and ascribes all the glory to God.

2. The God of Jacob is the God of All grace. If ever there was a man who illustrated in his own person that God hath chosen the "base things of the world, things which are despised" (1 Cor. 1:28) it was Jacob. According to the flesh there was nothing winsome, or attractive about him. Selfish, scheming, deceitful, treacherous, untruthful, he was a most unlovely character. What was there in him to attract the love of God. Absolutely nothing. We should have thought that Esau was a fitter subject for God's favors. Exactly. But God's thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are His ways our ways. Spiritual things are hidden from the wise and prudent and are revealed unto babes. Self-righteous Pharisees are passed by, while publicans and harlots are constrained to partake of the Gospel banquet. The rich are ignored, while to the poor the Gospel is preached. Esau is hated while the "worm" Jacob is loved with an everlasting and unfathomable love.

The full force of this divine title, "The God of Jacob," can only be apprehended by a careful study of the patriarch's experiences. The first time we see God entering his life that memorable night at Bethel. A fugitive from his father's house, fleeing from his brother's wrath, with probably no thought of God in his mind at all, the son of Isaac "lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep" (Gen. 28:11). As we see him there, asleep on the bare ground, we get a striking picture of man in his natural state. Man is never so helpless as when asleep! It was while he was in this condition that God appeared to him, and said, "I am the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou sliest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." The God of Jacob then, is the God who met Jacob while he

had nothing, and deserved nothing but wrath, and who gave him everything. Happy indeed are they who have such a God for their God.

3. The God of Jacob is the God of Infinite Patience. A careful study of the whole life of Jacob as it is recorded in Genesis is necessary to discover the whole force of this fact. We can now only call attention to the leading events in that life, leaving our readers to work out the details for themselves. To say that Jacob was naturally a most despicable character, and that as a believer he lived a most God-dishonoring life, is only to state a fact which is well known to all Bible students. What we desire to particularly emphasize in this connection is the continued and marvelous forbearance of God in dealing with His wayward child.

At the hour of his birth God made known the fact that Jacob was to have the firstborn's portion, yet, instead of waiting God's own good time and way to secure for him his inheritance, Jacob resorted to ignoble and underhanded methods to obtain it for himself. The picture presented in Genesis 27 is truly a pathetic one. In brief, the facts were as follows:

God announced to Rebecca that Esau was to serve his younger brother, Jacob, which was the equivalent of saying that the place and portion of the firstborn was promised by God to Jacob. Now Esau was Isaac's favorite son and he rebelled against the idea of Jacob being exalted above him. He thereupon conceives a plot. In the time of his old age he calls Esau to him, speaks of his approaching death, bids his son prepare food for him and at the same time gives him the patriarchal blessing. The hurry and secrecy which marked his actions reveal a determined effort to thwart the purpose of God and to transfer the blessing to his older son. Though Esau must have been acquainted with the divine purpose and though he had actually sold his inheritance to Jacob at an earlier date, yet, seeing an opportunity to recover and regain his lost birthright, he readily falls in with his father's plan. But Rebecca, with whom Jacob was the favorite, had

overheard Isaac's plot, so she sets out to neutralize it with a counter-plot. She is determined to preserve for Jacob the blessing which Jehovah had promised him. She felt a great wrong was about to be done her favorite; she imagined the purpose of God was in danger; she believed that wrong means would justify a right end. Having laid her plans, she takes Jacob into her confidence, and instructs him how to proceed in order to get the better of Esau. Now what ought Jacob to have done? Clearly, it was a sore trial of faith. God's promise seemed about to fail: apparently His purpose was to be defeated. There was only one right course for him to follow, and that was to lay the whole matter before God and supplicate His aid. Man's extremities are God's opportunities. But God was not in his thoughts; he had more confidence in fleshly means, and therefore he agreed to carry out his mother's scheme.

It is important to note here that Jacob's fall was no mere succumbing to a sudden and unexpected temptation. The twelfth verse of Genesis 27 unmistakably brings out the fact that the deception which Jacob practiced upon his father was a deliberate and premeditated act. He clearly saw the sin of it in the sight of God, and feared that he might bring down upon him the divine curse, yet, nevertheless, he defiantly complies with his mother's suggestions. His preparations were quickly and cleverly made, and the food which his mother had prepared is brought to his father. He boldly declares that he is the firstborn, lie follows lie, Isaac is completely deceived, and Jacob obtains the blessing. The sequel is well known. The plot is uncovered, the deception is unveiled, Esau's anger is kindled, and Jacob flees for his life.

It is at this point that the marvelous grace and patience of our God comes out. On the first night of his absence from home God reveals Himself in a vision to Jacob and promises Himself to be with the fugitive, to protect him wherever he went, and to bring him back again into the promised land. Jacob's response to these gracious declarations reveals the conditions of his heart: "And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that



I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God" (Gen. 28:20, 21). This vow which Jacob made well reveals the bargaining spirit of the man, and shows how little he knew of the character of God.

Passing over the years which he spent upon the farm of his father-in-law, we note the next appearance of God to Jacob. "And the Lord said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy father's, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee" (Gen. 31:3). Years before, on the night when He was first revealed to him, God had promised to bring His erring child back again to the land of promise. No doubt an intense longing had filled Jacob's heart throughout his exile. The time had come for God to commence the fulfillment of His promise and to reveal to Jacob that it was now His will for him to start on his homeward journey, and once more God assures him that He will be with him. What is Jacob's response to this? His first thought was to secure the wages which were due him from La ban—wages which were in the form of cattle and sheep, many of which had been gotten by a trick. His next thought was to steal away secretly. Instead of telling his father-in-law that God had commanded him to return to Canaan, "he stole away unawares" (v. 20) taking with him the cattle of his getting which, he had gotten in Padan-Aram" (v. 18). Confidence in God was altogether lacking; faith in His gracious promises was a negative quantity; and his conduct was most unworthy and unbecoming in one so highly favored by Jehovah.

"And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host: and he called the name of this place Mechanism" (Gen. 32:1, 2). This was one of God's tender mercies and provisions for the way. A long and difficult journey lay before Jacob, so the Lord assures His child that angels are his attendants. But no sooner have these heavenly visitants appeared and disappeared than Jacob forgets all about them and acts as though they had no existence. "And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Sir, the country of Edo. And

he commanded them, saying, Thus shall ye speak to my lord Esau; Thy servant Jacob saith thus; I have sojourned with La ban, and stayed there until now: and I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and men servants, and women servants: and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight" (vv. 3–5). As he journeys toward the land of Canaan memory revives and conscience is at work. He thinks of the brother he has wronged and is afraid. You may say that was quite natural. True, had Jacob been an unbeliever. But God had promised to be with him and bring him back again into the land of his fathers, and He was well able to deal with Esau. But again we see that God was not in his thoughts. He has more confidence in his own wisdom and devices than in divine aid. The message which he sent to Esau was utterly beneath the dignity of a child of God: such fawning phrases as "my lord Esau" and "thy servant Jacob" tell their own sad tale. But Jacob's hopes are disappointed. No friendly greeting comes from Esau; on the contrary, there are indications that he has designs upon his brother's life. Esau was coming to meet Jacob, and with him four hundred men.

Jacob is now thoroughly afraid: "And Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed: and he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks, and the herds, and the camels, into two bands; and said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape" (vv. 7, 8). Instead of casting himself upon the Lord, he at once begins to plan and scheme. Having completed his plans, he then turns unto God and supplicates His aid. Alas! how true to human nature. Scarcely had he risen from his knees than once more he leans upon the arm of flesh, Esau's host drove out of his mind "the host of God." Having divided his party and possessions into two companies, so that in case one was attacked and destroyed the other might escape, and thus a part at least be spared, Jacob then prepares and sends on ahead a costly present for Esau, that by this means his brother's wrath might be appeased (vv. 13–20). Thus instead of allowing God to manage Esau, Jacob by his obsequious cringing seeks to buy his brother's favor. Truly, "The fear of man bringeth a snare."

But the above only provides a dark background upon which may shine forth the riches of divine grace. In spite of all his unbelief, lack of confidence in God, and trust in himself; Jehovah once more appears to His servant, this time in the form of a man who wrestled with Jacob all night (Gen. 32:24–30), but even so, Jacob has still to learn that "Whoso putter his trust in the Lord shall be safe." The actual meeting with Esau still had to be faced, and when the crisis is reached the old Jacob once more came to the fore. As Esau approached him, seven times Jacob bowed himself to the ground (33:3)—what an unbecoming position to take for one occupying the relationship to God which Jacob enjoyed. The excessive deference here shown to the brother he had wronged betokened to servile fear; the waning obloquy was evidently designed to suggest that he was still prepared to acknowledge Esau's superiority.

The generous way in which Esau acted put Jacob to shame. He showed himself quite friendly toward this brother, in fact anxious to help him. How often the children of God compare unfavorably with the children of the world! Esau suggests that the two companies unite, and that they journey together to the old home. Jacob meets this generous proposal in a very characteristic way, and by means of a plausible excuse cleverly declined it. Fear still possessed him. Esau's mood perhaps might change. The old enmity might awaken. Jacob therefore suggests that Esau go on ahead, while he with his children and flocks come along more slowly in the rear. He promises to meet him at Sir (33:14). But no sooner had Esau and his four hundred men departed than Jacob deliberately journeys in the opposite directions, and went and settled in Succoth. Thus by his lying and treachery, once more Jacob dishonored the Lord. Moreover, Jacob did not content himself with temporary stay in Succoth; he built him a house there, evidently purposing to abide in that place. This act of his was not only a wrong done to Esau, but in defiance of God's plain command "Return to the land of thy fathers" (Gen. 31:3).

"Where sin abounded grace did much more abound," The more unworthy the subject the more is God's grace glorified. In spite of Jacob's waywardness and wickedness, in spite of his distrust and disobedience, in spite of his repeated failures, God still deals with him in mercy. "And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padan-Aram, and blessed him. And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name; and He called his name Israel. And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins. And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land" (Gen. 35:9–12). How incomparable is God's patience! How infinite is His forbearance! How matchless is His grace!

Jacob is a pattern case. Unless our eyes be dim, we can not help but see in the sad history of the old patriarch a faithful description of our own characters. Our experience is very much like his. The evil heart of unbelief abides in us, and only too often regulates the life of the believer. Like Jacob, we are ever planning and scheming, and then asking God's blessing upon our devices. Like it was with Jacob, God has appeared to us again and again, cheered us with His promises, delivered us out of the hand of the enemy, guided us by His Spirit, protected us with His angels, yet we continue to grieve and dishonor Him. We are slow to learn. Fresh crises invariably result in fresh failures. But blessed be His name, Jacob's God is our God. He bears with us in infinite patience. He suffers our dullness with wondrous forbearance. He never leaves us nor forsakes us. he is with us to the end. Happy, thrice happy, they who can say, "The God of Jacob is our refuge."

4. The God of Jacob is the God of Transforming Power. "At evening time it shall be light." The sunset of Jacob's life reveals the triumph of God's mighty grace. In the closing scenes of his life we see the spirit victorious over the flesh. Not only is it deeply interesting to

study closely the last pages of the patriarch's biography, but they bring before us the marvelous transforming effects of God's power.

"And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father, and told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not. And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto Them and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived. And Israel said, It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die" (Gen. 45:25–28). At first, the news that Joseph was alive seemed too good to be true, but the wagons he had sent to reassure his father convinced him; his spirit revived and he at once set out on the journey to Egypt. It is beautiful to note that the first thing recorded after the journey was begun was an act of worship on the part of the aged patriarch: "And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beers and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac" (46:1). Long years of discipline in the school of experience had at last taught him to put God first. Ere he goes down to Egypt he worships the God of his father Isaac! At once God met him, and said, "Jacob, Jacob." Note the ready response (46:2) —"Here I am." No need now to send an angel—Jacob had learned to recognize the voice of God himself. Another scene brings out the remarkable change which divine grace wrought in Jacob's character. "And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh: and Jacob blessed Pharaoh." (Gen. 47:7) The aged and feeble patriarch is brought before the monarch of the mightiest empire in the world. And what dignity now marks Jacob! What a contrast to the day when he bowed himself seven times before Esau! There is no cringing and fawning here. Jacob takes the true place of a child of God. He was the son of the King of Kings, an ambassador of the Most High. Brief is the record, yet how much the words suggest —"And Jacob said unto Pharaoh. The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years" (v. 9). At last Jacob had learned that his home was not here, that he was but a stranger and sojourner on the earth. He sees now that his life is but a journey,

with a starting-point and a goal—the starting point, conversion; the goal, heavenly glory.

"And the time drew near that Israel must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me: bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt: But I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me Out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying place" (Gen. 47:29, 30). Once more we see the evidences of the change which had been wrought in Jacob. This request of his not to be buried in Egypt but in Canaan, carries with it far more than appears on the surface. God had promised, many years before, to give Jacob and his seed the land of Canaan, and now the promise is "embraced." Jacob had never possessed the land, and now he is dying in a strange country. But he knows God's Word is true, and his faith evidently looks forward to resurrection. At last the easily besetting sin (unbelief) is laid aside and faith triumphs. This is confirmed by the words which immediately follow: "And he swear unto him. And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head" (Gen. 47:31), the word "bowed" signifying "worship."

"By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshiped, leaning upon the top of his staff" (Heb. 11:21). The account of this is found in Genesis 48. All through this chapter we see how God was now in all Jacob's thoughts, and how His promises are the stay of his heart. He recounts to Joseph how God had appeared to him at Lutz (v. 1–4) and how He had promised to give the land of Canaan to him and his seed for an everlasting possession. He spake of God as the One who "fed me all my life long unto this day" (v. 15), and as the One "who redeemed me from all evil." Setting aside the inclinations of the flesh, and the will of man (Joseph's own desire), Jacob bows to God's will and by faith blesses Joseph's sons, setting "Ephraim before Manasseh" (v. 20). After blessing Joseph's sons, Jacob turns to their father and says, "Behold, I die; but God shall be with you. and bring you again unto the land of your fathers" (v. 21).

How unlikely this appeared! Joseph was now thoroughly settled and established in Egypt. No longer is Jacob walking by sight. Firm now was his confidence, and with an unshaken faith he grasps the promises of God (that his seed shall inherit Canaan) and speaks out of a heart filled with a quiet assurance.

The last scene (Gen. 49) presents a fitting climax, and demonstrates the power of God's grace. The whole family is gathered about the dying patriarch, and one by one he blesses them. All through his earlier and mid life, Jacob was occupied solely with himself; but at the end he is occupied solely with others! In days gone by he was mainly concerned with planning about things present, but now (see Gen. 49:1) he has thought for nothing but things future! One word here is deeply instructive:

"I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord" (49:18). We saw at the beginning of his life "waiting" was something quite foreign to his nature: instead of waiting for God to secure for him the promised birthright, he sought to obtain it himself. But now the hardest lesson of all has been learned. Grace has taught him now to wait. Verily, "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day!"

To sum up: God took Jacob as the one through whom he could best show forth His grace and power. What more suited for the display of His grace than the chief of sinners! Whom shall He take up to exhibit His power but the one who by nature was the most intractable! And the God of Jacob is our refuge. He is the God of Sovereign election, the God of matchless grace, the God of infinite patience, the God of transforming power. This is the One "with whom we have to do." Those of us who have already "passed from death unto life" already know something of His wondrous grace and marvelous forbearance. May we experience more and more of His might transforming power.

## **The "god" of This Generation**

THE "god" of this twentieth century no more resembles the Supreme Sovereign of Holy Writ than does the dim flickering of a candle the glory of the mid-day sun. The god who is now talked about in the average pulpit, spoken of in the ordinary Sunday School, mentioned in most of the religious literature of the day, and preached in most of the so-called Bible conferences is a figment of human imagination, an invention of over-emotional sentimentality.

The heathen outside the pale of Christendom form gods out of wood and stone, while the millions of heathen inside Christendom manufacture a god out of their own carnal minds. In reality, they are but atheists; **FOR THERE IS NO OTHER POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE BETWEEN AN ABSOLUTE SUPREME GOD AND NO GOD AT ALL!** A "god" whose will is resisted, whose designs are frustrated, and whose purpose is checkmated, possesses no title to Deity, and **SO FAR FROM BEING A FIT OBJECT OF WORSHIP, MERITS NOUGHT BUT CONTEMPT!**

## **Godly Companions**



"I am a companion of all that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts." (Psalm 119:63)

IN THE above verse we have a description of God's people according to the course of their lives and conduct. They are a people marked by two things: fear and submission, the latter being the fruit of the former. Regenerated souls obey God conscientiously out of reverence to His majesty and goodness, and from a due regard of His will as made known in His Word. The same description is given of them in Acts 10:35, "In every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him." It is a filial fear which is awed by God's greatness and is careful not to offend Him, which is constrained by His love and is anxious to please Him. Such are the only ones fit to be a Christian's "companions."

A "companion" is, properly speaking, one whom I choose to walk and converse with in a way of friendship. Inasmuch as the companions we select is an optional matter, it is largely true that a person may be known by the company he or she keeps; hence the old adage, "Birds of a feather flock together." Scripture asks the searching question, "Can two walk together but except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3). A Christian, before his conversion, was controlled by the Prince of darkness and walked according to the course of this world (Eph. 2:2, 3), and therefore did he seek and enjoy the company of worldlings. But when he was born again the new nature within him prompted new tastes and desires, and so he seeks a new company, delighting only in the saints of God. Alas, that we do not always continue as we began.

The Christian is to have good will toward all with whom he comes in contact, desiring and seeking their best interests (Gal. 6:10), but he is not to be yoked to (2 Cor. 6:14) nor have any fellowship with (Eph. 5:11) those who are unbelievers, nor is he to delight in or have complacency toward those who despise his Master. "Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord?" (2 Chron. 19:2). Would you knowingly take a viper into your bosom? "The wicked is

an abomination unto the righteous" (Prov. 29:26). So said David, "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am I not grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with a perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies" (Ps. 139:21, 22). That holy man could not be confederate with such.

Evil company is to be sedulously avoided by the Christian lest he become defiled by them. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed" (Prov. 13:20). Nor is it only the openly lawless and criminal who are to be shunned, but even, yea especially, those professing to be Christians yet who do not live the life of Christians. It is this latter class particularly against which the real child of God needs to be most on his guard: namely, those who say one thing and do another; those whose talk is pious, but whose walk differs little or nothing from the non-professor, The Word of God is plain and positive on this point: "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (2 Tim. 3:5). This is not merely good advice, but a Divine command which we disregard at our peril.

In selecting your "companions" let not a pleasing personality deceive you. The Devil himself often poses as "an angel of light," and sometimes his wolfish agents disguise themselves in "sheep's clothing" (Matthew 7:15). Be most careful in seeing to it that what draws you toward and makes you desire the companionship of Christian friends is their love and likeness to Christ and not their love and likeness to you. Shun as you would a deadly plague those who are not awed by the fear of God, i.e., a trembling lest they offend Him. Let not the Devil persuade you that you are too well established in the faith to be injured by intimacy with worldly "Christians" (?). "Be not deceived, evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Cor. 15:33). Rather "follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Tim. 2:22).

"Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Cor. 15:33). The Greek word here for "communications" properly

means "a bringing together, companionships." And evil companionships "corrupt." All evil is contagious and association with evildoers, whether they be "church members" or open infidels, has a defiling and debasing effect upon the true child of God. Mark well how the Holy Spirit has prefaced His warning: "be not deceived." Evidently there is a real danger of God's people imagining that they can play with fire without getting burned. Not so: God has not promised to protect us when we fly in the face of his danger signals. Observe too the next verse which is inseparably connected with the one to which we have directed attention. "Awake to righteousness and sin not: for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak (this) to your shame" (1 Cor. 15:34). The word "awake" signifies to arouse as from a torpor or state of lethargy. It is a call to shake off the delusive spell that a Christian may company with Christless companions without being contaminated by them. "And sin not" in this respect. To cultivate friendship with religious worldlings is sin, for such "have not the knowledge of God:" they have no experimental acquaintance with Him, His fear is not on them, His authority has no weight with them. "I speak (this) to your shame." The child of God ought to be abashed and filled with confusion that he needs such a word as this. "I am a companion of all that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts." Such are the only "companions" worth having, the only ones who will give you any encouragement to continue pressing forward along the "Narrow Way." It is not those who merely pretend to "believe" God's precepts, or profess to "stand for" them, but those who actually "keep" them. But where are such to be found these days? Ah, where indeed. They are but "few" in number (Matthew 7:14) one here and one there. Yea, so very "few" are they that we are constrained to cry, "Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men" (Ps. 12:1).

It is indeed solemn to read the words that immediately follow the last-quoted scripture and find how aptly they apply to and how accurately they describe the multitude of godless professing "Christians" all around us: "they speak vanity every one with his

neighbour, with flattering lips, with a double heart do they speak" (v. 2). Note three things about them. First, they "speak vanity" or "emptiness." Their words are like bubbles, there is nothing edifying about them. It cannot be otherwise for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matthew 12:34). Their poor hearts are empty (Matthew 12:44). So their speech is empty too. Second, they have "flattering lips," which is the reason why they are so popular with the ungodly. They will seek to puff you up with a sense of their own importance, pretend to admire the "much light" you have, and tell you it is your duty to "give it out to others." Third, they have a "double heart." They are (vainly) seeking to serve two masters: (cf. 2 Kings 17:32, 33).

"I am a companion of all that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts." There is a very real sense in which this is true even where there is no outward contact with such. Faithfulness to God, obedience to His Word, keeping His precepts, companying only with those who do so, turning away from everybody else, has always involved a lonely path. It was thus with Enoch (Jude 14). It was thus with Abraham (Isa. 51:2). It was thus with Paul (2 Tim. 1:5). It is the same today. Every city in the land is tilled with "churches," "missions," "Gospel Halls," "Bible Institutes," etc., etc., but where are those who give plain evidence that they are living in this world as "strangers and pilgrims" and as such abstaining "from fleshly lusts which war against the soul" (1 Pet. 2:11)?

But thank God, though the path of faithfulness to Him be a lonely one, it brings me into spiritual fellowship with those who have gone before. We are to walk by faith and not by sight, and faith perceives that walking with Christ "outside the camp" (Heb. 13:13) necessarily brings into communion with "all" His redeemed, be they on earth or be they in heaven. Thus the apostle John in his lonely exile on Patmos referred to himself as "your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 1:9). Yes, Christian reader, for a little while it means companionship "in tribulation," but, praise God it will not mean enduring the throes

of the swiftly approaching portion of Christless professors left behind when Christ comes for His own (2 Thess. 2:10–12). For a little while it means companionship in "the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ," soon it will be in the kingdom and glory of Christ. May Divine mercy so enable us to live now that in that Day we shall receive His "Well done."

## **God's Sovereignty and the Human Will**

"It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." (Phil. 4:13)

CONCERNING the nature and the power of fallen man's will, the greatest confusion prevails today and the most erroneous views are held, even by many of God's children. The popular idea now prevailing, and which is taught from the great majority of pulpits, is that man has a "free will," and that salvation comes to the sinner through his will co-operating with the Holy Spirit. To deny the "free will" of man, i.e. his power to choose that which is good, his native ability to accept Christ, is to bring one into disfavour at once, even before most of the those who profess to be orthodox. And yet Scripture emphatically says, "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth. but of God that showeth mercy" (Rom. 9:16). Again the Word expressly declares, "There is none that seeketh after God" (Rom. 3:11). Did not Christ say to the men of His day, "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life" (John 5:40)? Yes, but some did "come" to Him, some did receive Him. True and who were they? John 1:12, 13 tells us: "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His

name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God!" But does not Scripture say, "Whosoever will may come?" It does, but does this signify that everybody has the will to come? What of those who won't come? "Whosoever will may come" no more implies that fallen man has the power in himself to come, than "Stretch forth thine hand" implied that the man with the withered arm had ability in himself to comply. In and of himself the natural man has power to reject Christ; but in and of himself he has not the power to receive Christ. And why? Because he has a mind that is "enmity against" Him (Rom. 8:7); because he has a heart that hates Him (John 15:18). Man chooses that which is according to his nature, and therefore before he will ever choose or prefer that which is divine and spiritual, a new nature must be imparted to him; in other words, he must be born again.

But it may be asked, Does not the Holy Spirit overcome a man's enmity and hatred when He convicts the sinner of his sins and his need of Christ; and does not the Spirit of God produce such conviction in many that perish? Such language betrays confusion of thought: were such a man's enmity really "overcome," then he would readily turn to Christ; that he does not come to the Savior, demonstrates that his enmity is not overcome. But that many are, through the preaching of the Word, convicted by the Holy Spirit, who nevertheless die in unbelief, is solemnly true. Yet it is a fact which must not be lost sight of, that the Holy Spirit does something more in each of God's elect than He does in the non-elect: He works in them "both to will and to do of God's good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13).

In reply to what we have said above. Arminians would answer, No; the Spirit's work of conviction is the same in the converted and in the unconverted. That which distinguishes the one class from the other is that the former yield to His strivings, whereas the latter resist them. But if this were the case, then the Christian would make himself to "differ," whereas the Scripture attributes the "differing" to God's discriminating grace (1 Cor. 4:7). Again; if such were the case, then the Christian would have ground for boasting and self-glorying

over his co-operation with the Spirit; but this would flatly contradict Eph. 2:8, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."

Let us appeal to the actual experience of the Christian reader. Was there not a time (may the remembrance of it bow each of us into the dust!) when you were unwilling to come to Christ? There was. Since then you have come to Him. Are you now prepared to give Him all the glory for that (Ps. 115:1)? Do you acknowledge you came to Christ because the Holy Spirit brought you from unwillingness to willingness? You do. Then is it not also a patent fact that the Holy Spirit has not done in many others what He has in you? Granted that many others have heard the Gospel, been shown their need of Christ; yet, they are still unwilling to come to Him. Thus He has wrought more in you than in them. Do you answer, Yet I remember well the time when the Great Issue was presented to me, and my consciousness testifies that my will acted and that I yielded to the claims of Christ upon me. Quite true! But before you "yielded," the Holy Spirit overcame the native enmity of your mind against God, and this "enmity" He does not overcome in all. Should it be said, That is because they are unwilling for their enmity to be overcome, none are thus "willing" till He has put forth His almighty power and wrought a miracle of grace in the heart.

But let us now inquire, What is the human Will? Is it a self-determining agent, or is it, in turn, determined by something else? Is it sovereign or servant? Is the will superior to every other faculty of our being so that it governs them, or is it moved by their impulses and subject to their pleasure? Does the will rule the mind, or does the mind control the will? Is the will free to do as it pleases, or is it under the necessity of rendering obedience to something outside of itself? "Does the will stand apart from the other great faculties or powers of the soul, a man within a man, who can reverse the man and fly against the man and split him into segments, as a glass snake breaks in pieces? Or, is the will connected with the other faculties, as the tail of the serpent is with his body, and that again with his head,

so that where the head goes, the whole creature goes, and, as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he? First, thought; then, heart (desire or aversion); and then act. Is it this way the dog wags the tail? Or, is it the will—the tail, that wags the dog? Is the will the first and chief thing in the man, or is it the last thing—to be kept subordinate, and in its place beneath the other faculties—and, is the true philosophy of moral action and its process that of Gen. 3:6: 'And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food' (sense—perception, intelligence), 'and a tree to be desired' (affections), 'she took and ate thereof' (the will)." (G. S. Bishop). These are questions of more than academic interest. They are of practical importance. We believe that we do not go too far when we affirm that the answer returned to these questions is one of the fundamental tests of doctrinal soundness.

## **1. The Nature of the Human Will**

What is the Will? We answer, the will is the faculty of choice, the immediate cause of all action. Choice necessarily implies the refusal of one thing and the acceptance of another. The positive and the negative must both be present to the mind before there can be any choice. In every act of the will there is preference—the desiring of one thing rather than another. Where there is no preference, but complete indifference, there is no volition. To will is to choose, and to choose is to decide between alternatives. But there is something which Influences the choice; something which determines the decision. Hence the will cannot be sovereign because it is the servant of that something. The will cannot be both sovereign and servant. It cannot be both cause and effect. The will is not causative, because, as we have said, something causes it to choose; therefore that something must be the causative agent. Choice itself is affected by certain considerations, is determined by various influences brought to bear upon the individual himself; hence, volition is the effect of these considerations and influences, and if the effect, it must be their servant; and if the will is their servant then it is not sovereign, and if the will is not sovereign, we certainly cannot predicate absolute "freedom" of it. Acts of the will cannot come to pass of themselves—



to say they can, is to postulate an uncaused effect. 'Ex nihilo nihil fit'—out of nothing, nothing comes.

In all ages, however, there have been those who contended for the absolute freedom or sovereignty of the human will. Men will argue that the will possesses a self-determining power. For example, they say, I can turn my eyes up or down; the mind is quite indifferent which I do; the will must decide. But this is a contradiction in terms, This case supposes that I choose one thing in preference to another, while I am in a state of complete indifference. Manifestly, both cannot be true. But it may be replied that the mind was quite indifferent until it came to have a preference. Exactly; and at that time the will was quiescent, too! But the moment indifference vanished, choice was made, and the fact that indifference gave place to preference, overthrows the argument that the will is capable of choosing between two equal things. As we have said, choice implies the acceptance of one alternative and the rejection of the other or others.

That which determines the will is that which causes it to choose. If the will is determined, then there must be a determiner. Who is it that determines the will? We reply, The strongest motive power which is brought to bear upon it. What this motive power is, varies in different cases. With one it may be the logic of reason, with another the voice of conscience, with another the impulse of the emotions, with another the whisper of the tempter, with another the power of the Holy Spirit; whichever of these presents the strongest motive power and exerts the greatest influence upon the individual himself, is that which impels the will to act. In other words, the action of the will is determined by that condition of mind (which in turn is influenced by the world, the flesh, and the Devil, as well as by God), which has the greatest degree of tendency to excite volition. To illustrate what we have just said, let us analyze a simple example—

On a certain Lord's day afternoon a friend of ours was suffering from a severe headache. He was anxious to visit the sick, but feared that if

he did so his own condition would grow worse, and as a consequence, he would be unable to attend the preaching of the Gospel that evening. Two alternatives confronted him: to visit the sick that afternoon and risk being sick himself, or, to take a rest that afternoon (and visit the sick the next day), and probably arise refreshed and fit for the evening service. Now what was it that decided our friend in choosing between these two alternatives? The will? Not at all. True, that in the end, the will made a choice, but the will itself was moved to make the choice. In the above case certain considerations presented strong motives for selecting either alternative; these motives were balanced the one against the other by the individual himself, i.e. his heart and mind, and the one alternative being supported by stronger motives than the other, decision was formed accordingly, and then the will acted. On the one side, our friend felt impelled by a sense of duty to visit the sick; he was moved with compassion to do so, and thus a strong motive was presented to his mind. On the other hand, his judgment reminded him that he was feeling far from well himself, that he badly needed a rest, that if he visited the sick his own condition would probably be made worse, and in such case he would be prevented from attending the preaching of the Gospel that night. Furthermore, he knew that on the morrow, the Lord willing, he could visit the sick, and this being so, he concluded he ought to rest that afternoon. Here then were two sets of alternatives presented to our Christian brother: on the one side was a sense of duty plus his own sympathy, on the other side was a sense of his own need plus a real concern for God's glory, for he felt that he ought to attend the preaching of the Gospel that night. The latter prevailed. Spiritual considerations outweighed his sense of duty. His decision being taken, the will acted accordingly, and he retired to rest. An analysis of the above case shows that the mind or reasoning faculty was directed by spiritual considerations, and the mind regulated and controlled the will. Hence we say that, if the will is controlled, it is neither sovereign nor free, but is the servant of the mind.

It is often taught that the will governs the man, but the Word of God teaches that it is the heart which is the dominating centre of our being. Many scriptures might be quoted in substantiation of this. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23). "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders," etc. (Mark 7:21). Here our Lord traces these sinful acts back to their sources, and declares that their fountain is the "heart," and not the will! Again; "This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me" (Matt. 15:8). If further proof were required we might call attention to the fact that the word "heart" is found in the Bible more than three times as often as the word "will," even though nearly half of the references to the latter refer to God's will! When we affirm that it is the heart and not the will which governs the man, we are not merely striving about words, but insisting on a distinction that is of vital importance. Here is an individual before whom two alternatives are placed; which will he choose? We answer, the one which is more agreeable to himself, i.e., his "heart"—the innermost core of his being. Before the sinner is set a life of virtue and piety, and a life of sinful indulgence; which will he follow? The latter. Why? Because this is his choice. But does that prove the will is sovereign? Not at all. Go back from effect to cause. Why does the sinner choose a life of sinful indulgence? Because he prefers it—and he does prefer it, all arguments to the contrary notwithstanding, though of course he does not enjoy the effects of such a course. And why does he prefer it? Because his heart is sinful. The same alternatives, in like manner, confront the Christian, and he chooses and strives after a life of piety and virtue. Why? Because God has given him a new heart or nature. Hence we say it is not the will which makes the sinner impervious to all appeals to "forsake his way," but his corrupt and evil heart. He will not come to Christ, because he does not want to, and he does not want to because his heart hates Him and loves sin: see Jer. 17:9!

## **2. The Bondage of the Human Will**

In any treatise that proposes to deal with the human will, its nature and functions, respect should be had to the will in three different men, namely, unfallen Adam, the sinner, and the Lord Jesus Christ. In unfallen Adam the will was free, free in both directions, free toward good and free toward evil. But with the sinner it is far otherwise. The sinner is born with a will that is not in a condition of moral equipoise, because in him there is a heart that is "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," and this gives him a bias toward evil. So, too, with the Lord Jesus it was far otherwise: He also differed radically from unfallen Adam. The Lord Jesus Christ could not sin because He was "the Holy One of God." Before He was born into this world it was said to Mary, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). Speaking reverently then, we say, that the will of the Son of Man was not in a condition of moral equipoise, that is, capable of turning towards either good or evil. The will of the Lord Jesus was biased toward that which is good because, side by side with His sinless, holy, perfect humanity, was His eternal Deity. Now in contradistinction from the will of the Lord Jesus which was biased toward good, and Adam's will which, before his fall, was in a condition of moral equipoise—capable of turning towards either good or evil—the sinner's will is biased towards evil, and therefore is "free" in one direction only, namely, in the direction of evil. The sinner's will is enslaved because, as we have already said, it is in bondage to a depraved heart.

In what does the sinner's freedom consist? This question is naturally suggested by what we have just said above. The sinner is free in the sense of being unforced from without. The sinner is never forced to sin. But the sinner is not free to do either good or evil, because an evil heart within is ever inclining him toward sin. Let us illustrate what we have in mind. I hold in my hand a book. I release it; what happens! It falls. In which direction? Downwards; always downwards. Why? Because, answering the law of gravity, its own weight sinks it. Suppose I desire the book to occupy a position three

feet higher, then what? I must lift it; a power outside of the book must raise it. Such is the relationship which fallen man sustains toward God. While Divine power upholds him, he is preserved from plunging still deeper into sin; let the power be withdrawn, and he falls—his own weight (of sin) drags him down. God does not push him down, any more than I did the book. Let all Divine restraint be removed, and every man is capable of becoming, would become, a Cain, a Pharaoh, a Judas. How then is the sinner to move heavenwards? By an act of his own will? Not so. A power outside of himself must grasp hold of him and lift him every inch of the way. The sinner is free, but free in one direction only—free to fall, free to sin. As the Word expresses it: "Far when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness" (Rom. 6:20). The sinner is free to do as he pleases, always as he pleases (except as he is restrained by God), but his pleasure is to sin.

In the opening section of this chapter we insisted that a proper conception of the nature and function of the will is of practical importance, nay, that it constitutes a fundamental test of theological orthodoxy or doctrinal soundness. We wish to amplify this statement and attempt to demonstrate its accuracy. The freedom or bondage of the will was the dividing line between Augustinianism and Pelagianism, and in more recent times between Calvinism and Arminianism. Reduced to simple terms, this means, that the difference involved was the affirmation or denial of the total depravity of man. In making the affirmation we shall now consider.

### **3. The Impotency of the Human Will**

Does it lie within the power of man's will to accept or reject the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior? Granted that the Gospel is preached to the sinner, that the Holy Spirit convicts him of his lost condition, does it, in the final analysis, lie within the power of his own will to yield himself up to God? Our answer to this question defines our conception of human depravity. That man is a fallen creature all professing Christians will allow, but what many of them mean by

"fallen" is often difficult to determine. The general impression seems to be that man is now mortal, that he is no longer in the condition in which he left the hands of his Creator, that he is liable to disease, that he inherits evil tendencies; but, that if he employs his powers to the best of his ability, somehow he will be happy at last. O, how far short of the sad truth! Infirmities, sickness, even corporeal death, are but trifles in comparison with the moral and spiritual effects of the Fall! It is only by consulting the Holy Scriptures that we are able to obtain some conception of the extent of that terrible calamity.

When we say that man is totally depraved, we mean that the entrance of sin into the human constitution has affected every part and faculty of man's being. Total depravity means that man is, in spirit and soul and body, the slave of sin and the captive of the Devil—walking "according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2). This statement ought not to need arguing: it is a common fact of human experience. Man is unable to realize his own aspirations and materialize his own ideals. He cannot do the things that he would. There is a moral inability which paralyzes him. This is proof positive that he is no free man, but instead, the slave of sin and Satan. "Ye are of your father the Devil, and the lusts (desires) of your father ye will do" (John 8:44) Sin is more than an act or a series of acts; it is a state or condition: it is that which lies behind and produces the acts. Sin has penetrated and permeated the whole of man's being. It has blinded the understanding, corrupted the heart, and alienated the mind from God. And the will has not escaped. The will is under the dominion of sin and Satan. Therefore, the will is not free. In short, the affections love as they do and the will chooses as it does because of the state of the heart, and because the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. "There is none that seeketh after God" (Rom. 3:11).

We repeat our question: Does it lie within the power of the sinner's will to yield himself up to God? Let us attempt an answer by asking several other questions: Can water (of itself) rise above its own level?

Can a clean thing come out of an unclean? Can the will reverse the whole tendency and strain of human nature? Can that which is under the dominion of sin originate that which is pure and holy? Manifestly not. If ever the will of a fallen and depraved creature is to move Godwards, a Divine power must be brought to bear upon it which will overcome the influences of sin that pull in a counter-direction. This is only another way of saying, "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him" (John 6:44). In other words, God's people must be made willing in the day of His power (Ps. 110:3). As Mr. J. N. Darby said. "If Christ came to save that which is lost, free will has no place. Not that God prevents men from receiving Christ—far from it. But even when God uses all possible inducements, all that is capable of exerting influence in the heart of man, it only serves to show that man will have none of it; that so corrupt is his heart, and so decided his will not to submit to God (however much it may be the devil who encourages him to sin) that nothing can induce him to receive the Lord, and to give up sin. If by the words, 'freedom of man,' they mean that no one forces him to reject the Lord, this liberty fully exists. But if it is said that, on account of the dominion of sin, of which he is the slave, and that voluntarily, he cannot escape from his condition, and make choice of the good—then he has no liberty whatever."

The will is not sovereign; it is a servant, because influenced and controlled by the other faculties of man's being. The will is not free because the man is the slave of sin—this was clearly implied in our Lord's words, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). Man is a rational being and as such responsible and accountable to God, but to affirm that he is capable of choosing that which is spiritually good is to deny that he is totally depraved—i.e., depraved in will as in everything else. Because man's will is governed by his mind and heart, and because these have been vitiated and corrupted by sin, then it follows that if ever man is to turn or move in a Godward direction, God Himself must work in him "both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). Man's boasted freedom is, in truth, "the bondage of corruption;" he "serves

divers lusts and pleasures." Said a deeply—taught servant of God, "Man is impotent as to his will. He has no will favorable to God. I believe in free will; but then it is a will only free to act according to its nature. A dove has no will to eat carrion; a raven has no will to eat the clean food of the dove. Put the nature of the dove into the raven and it will eat the food of the dove. Satan could have no will for holiness. We speak it with reverence. God could have no will for evil. The sinner in his sinful nature could never have a will according to God. For this he must be born again" (J. Denham Smith). This is precisely what we have contended for throughout this chapter—the will is regulated by the nature. Among the "decrees" of the Council of Trent (1569). which is the avowed standard of Popery, we find the following (in the Canons on Justification): "If any one shall affirm, that man's free-will, moved and excited by God, does not, by consenting, co-operate with God, the mover and exciter, so as to dispose and prepare itself for the attainment of justification; if moreover, anyone shall say, that the human will cannot refuse complying, if it pleases; but that it is unactive, and merely passive; let such an one be accursed!"

"If anyone shall affirm, that since the fall of Adam, man's free-will is lost and extinguished; or, that it is a thing titular, yea a name, without a thing, and a fiction introduced by Satan into the Church; let such an one be accursed!"

Thus, those who today insist on the free-will of the natural man believe precisely what Rome teaches on the subject!

In order for any sinner to be saved three things were indispensable: God the Father had to purpose his salvation, God the Son had to purchase it, God the Spirit has to apply it. God does more than "propose" to us. Were He only to "invite," every one of us would be lost. This is strikingly illustrated in the Old Testament. In Ezra 1:1–3 we read, "Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a



proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and He hath charged me to build Him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all His people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel." Here was an "offer" made, made to a people in captivity, affording them opportunity to leave and return to Jerusalem—God's dwelling—place. Did all Israel eagerly respond to this offer? No indeed! The vast majority were content to remain in the enemy's land. Only a "remnant" availed themselves of this overture of mercy! And why did they? Hear the answer of Scripture: "Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all whose spirit God had stirred up, to go up to build the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem" (Ezra 1:5)! In like manner, God "stirs up" the spirits of His elect when the effectual call comes to them, and not till then do they have any willingness to respond to the Divine proclamation.

The superficial work of many of the professional evangelists of the last fifty years is largely responsible for the erroneous views now current upon the bondage of the natural man, encouraged by the laziness of those in the pew in their failure to "prove all things" (1 Thess. 5:21). The average evangelical pulpit conveys the impression that it lies wholly in the power of the sinner whether or not he shall be saved. It is said that "God has done His part, now man must do his." Alas, what can a lifeless man do, and man by nature is "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1)! If the truth were really believed, there would be more dependence upon the Holy Spirit to come in with His miracle-working power, and less confidence in our attempts to "win men for Christ." When addressing the unsaved, preachers often draw analogy between God's sending of the Gospel to the sinner, and a sick man in bed, with healing medicine on a table by his side: all he needs to do is to reach forth his hand and take it. But in order for this illustration to be in any wise true to the picture which Scripture gives us of the fallen and depraved sinner, the sick man in

bed must be described as one who is blind (Eph. 4:18) so that he cannot see the medicine, his hand paralyzed (Rom. 5:6) so that he is unable to reach forth for it, and his heart not only devoid of all confidence in the medicine but filled with hatred against the physician himself (John 15:18). O what superficial views of man's desperate plight are now entertained! Christ came here not to help those who were willing to help themselves, but to do for His people what they were incapable of doing for themselves: "To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house" (Isa. 42:7).

Now, in conclusion, let us anticipate and dispose of the usual and inevitable objection—Why Preach the Gospel if man is Powerless to respond? Why bid the sinner come to Christ if sin has so enslaved him that he has no power in himself to come? We reply:

We do not preach the Gospel because we believe that man has a "free-will" and is therefore able to receive Christ, but we preach it because we are commanded to do so (Mark 16:15); and though to them that perish it is foolishness, yet, "unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18). "The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (1 Cor. 1:25). The sinner is dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1), and a dead man is utterly incapable of willing anything; hence it is that "they that are in the flesh (the unregenerate) cannot please God" (Rom. 8:8).

To fleshly wisdom it appears the height of folly to preach the Gospel to those that are dead, and therefore beyond the reach of doing anything themselves. Yes, but God's ways are different from ours. It pleases God "by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:21). Man may deem it folly to prophesy to "dead bones" and to say unto them, "O, ye dry bones, hear the Word of the Lord" (Ezek. 37:4). Ah! but then it is the Word of the Lord, and the words He speaks "they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). Wise men standing by the grave of Lazarus might pronounce it an evidence of insanity when the Lord addressed a dead man with the

words, "Lazarus, come forth." Ah! but He who thus spake was and is Himself the Resurrection and the Life, and at His word even the dead live! We go forth to preach the Gospel, then, not because we believe that sinners have within themselves the power to receive the Savior it proclaims, but because the Gospel itself is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, and because we know that "as many as were ordained to eternal life" (Acts 13:48), shall believe (John 6:37; 10:16—note the "shall's!") in God's appointed time, for it is written, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power" (Ps. 110:3)!

What we have set forth in this chapter is not a product of "modern thought;" no indeed, it is at direct variance with it. Men of the past few generations have departed far from the teachings of their scripturally-instructed fathers. In the thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England we read, "The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith, and calling upon God: Wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us (being before-hand with us), that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will" (Article 10). In the Westminster Larger Catechism (which used to be recognized by all Presbyterian Churches) we read, "The sinfulness of that state whereinto man fell, consisteth in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of that righteousness wherein he was created, and the corruption of his nature, whereby he is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually" (Answer to question 25). So in the Baptists' Philadelphia Confession of Faith (1742), we read, "Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from good, and dead in sin, is not able by his own strength to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto" (Chapter 9).

## **The Gospel of Satan**

SATAN is the arch-counterfeiter. As we have seen, the Devil is now busy at work in the same field in which the Lord sowed the good seed. He is seeking to prevent the growth of the wheat by another plant, the tares, which closely resembles the wheat in appearance. In a word, by a process of imitation he is aiming to neutralize the Word of Christ. Therefore, as Christ has a Gospel, Satan has a gospel too; the latter being a clever counterfeit of the former. So closely does the gospel of Satan resemble that which it parodies, multitudes of the unsaved are deceived by it.

It is to this gospel of Satan the apostle refers when he says to the Galatians "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another, but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ" (1:6, 7). This false gospel was being heralded even in the days of the apostle, and a most awful curse was called down upon those who preached it. The apostle continues, "But though we, or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." By the help of God we shall now endeavor to expound, or rather, expose, false gospel.

The gospel of Satan is not a system of revolutionary principles, nor yet a program of anarchy. It does not promote strife and war, but aims at peace and unity. It seeks not to set the mother against her daughter nor the father against his son, but fosters the fraternal spirit whereby the human race is regarded as one great

"brotherhood." It does not seek to drag down the natural man, but to improve and uplift him. It advocates education and cultivation and appeals to "the best that is within us." It aims to make this world such a congenial and comfortable habitat that Christ's absence from it will not be felt and God will not be needed. It endeavors to occupy man so much with this world that he has no time or inclination to think of the world to come. It propagates the principles of self-sacrifice, charity and benevolence, and teaches us to live for the good of others, and to be kind to all. It appeals strongly to the carnal mind and is popular with the masses, because it ignores the solemn facts that by nature man is a fallen creature, alienated from the life of God, and dead in trespasses and sins, and that his only hope lies in being born again.

In contradistinction to the Gospel of Christ, the gospel of Satan teaches salvation by works. It inculcates justification before God on the ground of human merits. Its sacramental phrase is "Be good and do good;" but it fails to recognize that in the flesh there dwelleth no good thing. It announces salvation by character, which reverses the order of God's Word-character by, as the fruit of, salvation. Its various ramifications and organizations are manifold. Temperance, Reform movements, "Christian Socialist Leagues," ethical culture societies, "Peace Congresses" are all employed (perhaps unconsciously) in proclaiming this gospel of Satan—salvation by works. The pledge-card is substituted for Christ; social purity for individual regeneration, and politics and philosophy for doctrine and godliness. The cultivation of the old man is considered more "practical" than the creation of a new man in Christ Jesus; whilst universal peace is looked for apart from the interposition and return of the Prince of Peace.

The apostles of Satan are not saloon-keepers and white slave traffickers, but are or the most part ordained ministers. Thousands of those who occupy our modern pulpits are no longer engaged in presenting the fundamentals of the Christian Faith, but have turned aside from the Truth and have given heed unto fables. Instead of

magnifying the enormity of sin and setting forth its eternal consequences, they minimize it by declaring that sin is merely ignorance or the absence of good. Instead of warning their hearers to "flee from the wrath to come" they make God a liar by declaring that He is too loving and merciful to send any of His own creatures to eternal torment.

Instead of declaring that "without shedding of blood is no remission," they merely hold up Christ as the great Exemplar and exhort their followers to "follow in His step." Of them it must be said, "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:3). Their message may sound very plausible and they appear very praiseworthy, yet we read of them, "for such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves (imitating) into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore It is no great thing (not to be wondered at) if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works" (2 Cor. 11:13–15).

In addition to the fact that today hundreds of churches are without a leader who faithfully declares the whole counsel of God and presents His way of salvation, we also have to face the additional fact that the majority of people in these churches are very unlikely to learn the Truth for themselves. The family altar, where a portion of God's Word was wont to be read daily is now, even in the homes of nominal Christians, largely a thing of the past. The Bible is not expounded in the pulpit and it is not read in the pew. The demands of this rushing age are so numerous that the multitudes have little time and still less inclination to make preparation for their meeting with God. Hence the majority who are too indolent to search for themselves are left at the mercy of those whom they pay to search for them; many of which betray their trust by studying and expounding economic and social problems rather than the Oracles of God.

And now, my reader, where do you stand? Are you in the way which "seemeth right," but which ends in death? Or are you in the Narrow Way which leadeth unto life? Have you truly forsaken the Broad Road that leadeth to death? Has the love of Christ created in your heart a hatred and horror of all that is displeasing to Him? Are, you desirous that He should "reign over" (Luke 19:14) you? Are you relying wholly on His righteousness and blood for your acceptance with God?

A yet more specious form of Satan's gospel is to move preachers to present the atoning sacrifice of Christ and then tell their hearers that all God requires from them is to "believe" In His Son. Thereby thousands of impenitent souls are deluded into thinking that they have been saved. But Christ said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). To "repent" is to hate sin, to sorrow over, to turn from it. It is the result of the Spirit's making the heart contrite before God. None except a broken heart can savingly believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Again; thousands are deceived Into supposing that they have "accepted Christ" as their "personal Saviour," who have not first received Him as their LORD. The Son of God did not come here to save people in their sins, but "from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). To be saved from sins, is to be saved from ignoring and despising the authority of God, it is to abandon the course of self-will and self-pleasing, It is to "forsake our way" (Isa. 55:7). It is to surrender to God's authority, to yield to His dominion, to give ourselves over to be ruled by Him. The one who has never taken Christ's "yoke" upon him, who is not truly and diligently seeking to please Him in all the details of his life, and yet supposes that he is "resting on the Finished Work of Christ" is deluded by the Devil.

In the seventh chapter of Matthew there are two scriptures which give us approximate results of Christ's Gospel and Satan's counterfeit. First, in verses 13 and 14, "Enter ye In at the strait gate. For, wide is the gate and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction

and many there be which go in thereat. Because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life and few there be that find it." Second, in verses 22 and 23, "Many will say to Me In that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied (preached) in Thy name? And in Thy name have cast out demons, and in Thy name have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." Yes, my reader, it is possible to work in the name of Christ, and even to preach in His name, and though the world knows us, and the Church knows us, yet to be unknown to the Lord! How necessary it is then to find out where we really are; to examine ourselves to see whether we be in the faith; to measure ourselves by the Word of God and see if we are being deceived by our subtle Enemy; to find out whether we are building our house upon the sand, or whether it is erected on the Rock which is Christ Jesus. May the Holy Spirit search our hearts, break our wills, slay our enmity against God, work in us a deep and true repentance, and direct our gaze to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.

## **Gospel Preaching Commanded**

THERE are those who misrepresent the doctrine of election in this way. Here I am sitting down at my table tonight with my family to tea. It is a cold winter's night, and outside on the street are some hungry starving tramps and children, and they come and knock on my door and they say, "We are so hungry, Sir, Oh, we are so hungry and cold, and we are starving: won't you give us something to eat?"



Give you something to eat? No, you do not belong here, get off with you. Now people say that is what election means, that God has spread the gospel feast and some poor sinners conscious of their deep need come to the Lord and say, "Have mercy upon me," and the Lord says, "No, you are not among My elect." Now, my friends, that is not the teaching of this Book, nor anything like that. That is absolutely a false representation of God's truth. I do not believe anything like that, my friends, and I would not insult you by asking you to come here night by night and listen to anything like that.

### **1. Compel Them to Come in**

Now then, here is the truth. God has spread the feast but the fact is that nobody is hungry. and nobody wants to come to the feast, and everybody makes an excuse to keep away from the feast. and when they are bidden to come they say, "No, we do not want to, or We are not ready yet." Now God knew that from the beginning, and if God had done nothing more than spread the feast every seat at His table would have been vacant for all eternity! I have no hesitation in saying there is not one man or woman in this church tonight, but who made excuses time after time before you first came to Christ. You are just like the rest. You made excuses. so did I, and if God had done nothing more than just spread the feast every chair would have been vacant, therefore what do you read in that parable in Luke 14? Because the feast was not furnished with guests God sent forth His "servants." Oh, put your glasses on. It does not say "servants," it says God sent forth His "servant" and told Him to "compel" them to come in that His feast might be furnished with guests. And there is not a man or a woman In this church tonight or in any other church that would ever sit down at the marriage-supper of the Lamb unless you had been compelled to come in, and compelled by God.

Well, you say, what do you mean by "compelled?" I mean this, that God had to overcome the resistance of your will, God had to overcome the reluctance of your heart, God had to overcome your loving of pleasure more than loving of God, your love of the things of

this world more than Christ. I mean that God had to put forth His power and draw you, and if any of you know anything of the Greek or have a Strong's Concordance, look up that Greek verb for "draw" in John 6:44, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him"—It means "use violence." It means to drag by force. There is not a Greek scholar on earth that can challenge that statement—I mean—and back it up with proof. It's the same Greek word that is used in John 21 when they drew the net to the land full of fishes. They had to pull with all their might for it was full of fishes. They had to drag it, Yes, my friend, and that is how you were brought to Christ. You may not have been conscious of it. you may not have known inside yourself what was taking place, but every last one of us was a rebel against God, fighting against Christ, resisting His Holy Spirit, and God had to put forth almighty power and overcome that resistance and bring us to our knees, and if any of you object to that strong language, then I am here to tell you, you do not believe in the teaching of this Book on the absolute depravity of man.

Man is lost, and man is dead in trespasses and sins by nature. Listen, it is not simply that man is sick and needs a little medicine: it is not simply that man is ignorant and needs a little teaching: it is not simply that man is weak and needs a little hope: man is dead, dead in trespasses and sins, and only almighty power from heaven can ever resurrect him and bring him from death unto life. That is the gospel I believe in and I do not preach the gospel because I believe the sinner has power in himself to respond to it. Well, you say, then what is the use of preaching the gospel if men are dead? What is the use of preaching it? I will tell you. Listen! Here was a man with a withered hand, paralyzed, and Christ says. "Stretch forth thine hand;" It was the one thing that he could not do! Christ told him to do a thing that was impossible in himself. Well then you say why did Christ tell him to stretch forth his hand? Because Divine power went with the very word that commanded him to do it! Divine power enabled him to. The man could not do it of himself. If you think that he could you are ready for the lunatic asylum, I don't not care who you are. Any man or woman here who thinks that man was able to stretch forth his

paralyzed arm by an effort of his own will is ready for the lunatic asylum! How can paralysis move?

Well, I will give you something stronger than that. You need something strong today, you need something more than skim-milk, you need strong meat if ever you are going to be built up and grow and become strong in the Lord and the power of His might—Here is a man who is dead and buried and his body has already begun to corrupt so that it stank. There he was in the grave and someone came to that graveside and said, "Lazarus. come forth," and if that someone had been anyone else than God Himself manifest in flesh. he might have stood there till now calling, "Come forth." What on earth was the use of telling a dead man to come forth? None at all, unless the One Who spoke that word had the power to make that word good.

Now then my friends, I preach the gospel to sinners, not because I believe the sinner has any power at all in himself to respond to it: I do not believe that any sinner has any capacity in himself whatever. But Christ said, "the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life," and by God's grace I go forth preaching this Word because it is a word of power, a word of spirit, a word of life. The power is not in the sinner, it is in the Word when God the Holy Spirit is pleased to use it. And my friends, I say in all reverence; if God told me in this Book to go out and preach to the trees. I would go! Yes sir. God once told one of His servants to go and preach to bones and he went. I wonder if you should have gone! Yes, that has a local application as well as a future interpretation prophetically:

## **2. Preach the Gospel to Every Creature**

Now the question arises again, why are we to preach the gospel to every creature?—if God has only elected a certain number to be saved? The reason is, because God commands us to do so. Well, but, you say, it does not seem reasonable to me That has got nothing to do with it; your business is to obey God and not to argue with Him.

God commands us to preach the gospel to every creature and it means what it says—every creature and it is solemn thing. Every Christian in this room tonight has yet to answer to Christ why he has not done everything in his power to send that gospel to every creature! Yes, I believe in missions—probably stronger than most of you do, and if I preached to you on missions perhaps I would hit you harder than you have been hit yet. The great majority of God's people who profess to believe in missions, are just playing at them—I make so bold as to say of our evangelical denominations today that we are just playing at missions and that is all. Why my friends, there is almost half of the human race—think of it—in this 20th century—travel so easy and cheap. Bibles printed in almost every language under heaven, and as we sit here tonight there is almost half of the human race that never yet heard of Christ, and we have got to answer to Christ for that yet! You have and I have, Oh, yes, I believe in man's responsibility. I do not believe in man's "freedom" but I do in man's responsibility, and I believe in the Christian's responsibility in a double way, and everyone of us here tonight has yet got to face Christ and look into those eyes as a flame of fire, and He is going to say to us, I entrusted to you My gospel. It was committed as a "trust" to you, (See 1 Thess. 2:4) It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.

Oh, my friends, we are playing at things. We have not begun to take religion seriously, any of us. We profess to believe in the coming of Christ, and we profess to believe that the one reason why Christ has not come back yet is because His Church, His Body, is not yet complete. We believe that when His body is complete He will come back. And my friends, His "body" never, never, will be complete until the last of His elect people will be called out, and His elect people are called out under the preaching of the gospel by the power of the Holy Spirit, and if you are really anxious for Christ to come back soon, then you had better be more wide awake to your responsibility in connection with taking or sending the gospel to the heathen!

Christ's word, and it is Christ's word to us, is "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel," He does not say "Send ye," He says "Go ye," and you have to answer to Christ yet because you have not gone! Well, you say, do you mean by that everyone of us here tonight ought to go out to the mission field? I have not said that, I am not any man's judge, Many of you here tonight have a good reason which will satisfy Christ why you have not gone. He gave you work to do here. He put you in a position here. He has given you responsibilities to discharge here, but every Christian who is free to go, and does not go, has got to answer to Christ for it yet.

"Go ye into all the world." Well then you say, Where am I to go? Oh, that is very easy. You say, easy? Yes, I mean it: it is very easy. There is nothing easier in the world than to know where you ought to begin missionary work. You have it in the first chapter of Acts and the eighth verse: "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem (that is the city in which they were) and in all Judea (that is the State in which their city was), and in Samaria (that is the adjoining State), and unto the uttermost part of the earth," If you want to begin missionary work, you have to begin it in your home-town, and my friends if you are not interested in the salvation of the Chinese in Sydney, then you are not really interested in the salvation of the Chinese in China, and you are only fooling yourselves if you think you are! Oh, I am calling a spade a spade tonight. If you are anxious about the souls of the Chinese in China, then you will be equally anxious about the souls of the Chinese here in Sydney, and I wonder how many in this building tonight have ever made any serious effort to reach the Chinese in Sydney with the gospel! I wonder? I wonder how many here tonight have been round to the Bible House in Sydney and have said to the Manager there, "Do you have any New Testaments in the Chinese language, or do you have any Gospels of John in the Chinese language? How much are they per hundred? or per dozen?" And I wonder how many of you have bought a thousand or a hundred, and then have gone round to the houses in the Chinese

quarter and have said, "My friend, this is a little gift that will do your soul good if you will read it."

Ah, my friends, we are playing at missions, it is just a farce, that is all! "Go ye" is the first command. Go where? Those around me first. Go what with? The gospel! Well, you say, "Why should I go?" Because God has commanded you to! Well, you say, "What is the use of doing it if He has just elected certain ones?" Because that gospel is the means that God uses to call out His own elect, that is why! You do not know, and I do not know, and nobody here on earth knows, who are God's elect and who are not. They are scattered over the world, and therefore we are to preach the gospel to every creature, that it may reach the ones that God has marked out among those creatures.

From a sermon preached in Sydney during his Australian ministry in the 1920's.

## **A Great Deception**

ONE of the most popular beliefs of the day is that God loves everybody, and the very fact that it is so popular with all classes ought to be enough to arouse the suspicions of those who are subject to the Word of Truth. God's love towards all His creatures is the favorite tenet of Universalists, Unitarians, Theosophists, Christian Scientists, Spiritualists, Russell, etc.... So widely has this dogma been proclaimed, and so comforting it is to the heart which is at enmity with God, we have little hope of convincing many of there error.

To tell the Christ-rejecter that God loves him is to cauterize his conscience as well as to afford him a sense of security in his sins. The fact is, the love of God is a truth for the saints only, and to present it

to the enemies of God is to take the children's bread and to cast it to the dogs.

## **Have You Truly Come to Christ**

BY THE way of introduction let us bring before the reader the following Scriptures:

1. "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life" (John 5:40).
2. "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).
3. "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him" (John 6:44).
4. "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me: and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37).
5. "If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:26, 27).
6. "To whom coming, as unto a living Stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious" (1 Peter 2:4).
7. "Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make

intercession for them" (Heb 7:25).

The first of these passages applies to every unregenerate man and woman on this earth. While he is in a state of nature, no man can come to Christ. Though all excellencies both Divine and human, are found in the Lord Jesus, though "He is altogether lovely" (Song 5:16), yet the fallen sons of Adam see in Him no beauty that they should desire Him. They may be well instructed in "the doctrine of Christ," they may believe unhesitatingly all that Scripture affirms concerning Him, they may frequently take His name upon their lips, profess to be resting on His finished work, sing His praises, yet their hearts are far from Him. The things of this world have the first place in their affections. The gratifying of self is their dominant concern. They surrender not their lives to Him. He is too holy to suit their love of sin; His claims are too exacting to suit their selfish hearts; His terms of discipleship are too severe to suit their fleshly ways. They will not yield to His Lordship—true alike with each one of us till God performs a miracle of grace upon our hearts.

The second of these passages contains a gracious invitation, made by the compassionate Savior to a particular class of sinners. The "all" is at once qualified, clearly and definitely, by the words which immediately follow it. The character of those to whom this loving word belongs is clearly defined: It is those who "labor" and are "heavy laden." Most clearly then it applies not to the vast majority of our light-headed, gay-hearted, pleasure-seeking fellows who have no regard for God's glory and no concern about their eternal welfare. No, the word for such poor creatures is rather, "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee to judgment" (Eccl. 11:9). But to those who have "labored" hard to keep the law and please God, who are "heavy laden" with a felt sense of their utter inability to meet His requirements, and who long to be delivered from the power and pollution of sin, Christ says: "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest."



The third passage quoted above at once tells us that "coming to Christ" is not the easy matter so many imagine it, nor so simple a thing as most preachers represent it to be. Instead of its so being, the incarnate Son of God positively declares that such an act is utterly impossible to a fallen and depraved creature unless and until Divine power is brought to bear upon him. A most pride-humbling, flesh-withering, man-abasing word is this. "Coming to Christ" is a far, far different thing from raising your hand to be prayed for by some Protestant "priest," coming forward and taking some cheap-jack evangelist's hand, signing some "decision" card, uniting with some "church," or any other of the "many inventions" of man (Eccl 7:29). Before any one can or will "come to Christ" the understanding must be supernaturally enlightened, the heart must be supernaturally changed, the stubborn will must be supernaturally broken.

The fourth passage is also one that is unpalatable to the carnal mind, yet is it a precious portion unto the Spirit-taught children of God. It sets forth the blessed truth of unconditional election, or the discriminating grace of God. It speaks of a favored people whom the Father giveth to His Son. It declares that every one of that blessed company shall come to Christ. Neither the effects of their fall in Adam, the power of indwelling sin, the hatred and untiring efforts of Satan, nor the deceptive delusions of blind preachers, will be able to finally hinder them—when God's appointed hour arrives, each of His elect is delivered from the power of darkness and is translated into the kingdom of His dear Son. It announces no matter how unworthy and vile he be in himself, no matter how black and long the awful catalogue of his sins, He will by no means despise or fail to welcome him, and under no circumstances will He ever cast him off.

The fifth passage is one that makes known the terms on which alone Christ is willing to receive sinners. Here the uncompromising claims of His holiness are set out. He must be crowned Lord of all, or He will not be Lord at all. There must be the complete heart-renunciation of all that stands in competition with Him. He will brook no rival. All that pertains to "the flesh," whether found in a

loved one or in self, has to be hated. The "cross" is the badge of Christian discipleship: not a golden one worn on the body, but the principle of self-denial and self-sacrifice ruling the heart. How evident is it, then, that a mighty, supernatural, Divine work of grace must be wrought in the human heart, if any man will even desire to meet such terms!

The sixth passage tells us the Christian is to continue as he began. We are to "come to Christ" not once and for all, but frequently, daily. He is the only One who can minister unto our needs, and to Him we must constantly turn for the supply of them. In our felt emptiness, we must draw from His "fullness" (John 1:16). In our weakness, we must turn to him for strength. In our ignorance we must apply to Him for wisdom. In our falls into sin, we must seek afresh His cleansing. All that we need for time and eternity is stored up in Him: refreshment when we are weary (Isa 40:31), healing of body when we are sick (Ex. 15:26), comfort when we are sad (1 Pet 5:7), deliverance when we are tempted (Heb 2:18). If we have wandered away from Him, left our first love, then the remedy is to "repent and do the first works" (Rev 2:5), that is, cast ourselves upon Him anew, come just as we did the first time we came to Him—as unworthy, self-confessed sinners, seeking His mercy and forgiveness.

The seventh passage assures us of the eternal security of those who do come. Christ saves "unto the uttermost" or "for ever more" those who come unto God by Him. He is not of one mind today and of another tomorrow. No, He is "the same yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Heb 13:8). "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end" (John 13:1), and blessedly does He give proof of this, for "He ever liveth to make intercession for them." Inasmuch as His prayers are effectual, for He declares that the Father hears Him "always" (John 11:42), none whose name is indelibly stamped on the heart of our great High Priest can ever perish. Hallelujah!



## **"He Instructed Him"**

"He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; He led him about. He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye." (Deuteronomy 32:10)

"HE instructed him." So He does us. It was to instruct us that God, in His great mercy, gave us THE SCRIPTURES. He has not left us to grope our way in darkness, but has provided us with a lamp for our feet and a light for our path. Nor are we left to our own unaided powers in the study of the Word. We are supplied with an infallible Instructor. The Holy Spirit is our teacher, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things ... the anointing ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you" (1 John 2:20, 27).

Right views of God's truth are not an intellectual attainment, but a blessing bestowed on us by God. It is written, "a man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven" (John 3:27). No matter how legibly a letter may be written, if the recipient is blind he cannot read it. So we are told, "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14). And spiritual discernment is imparted only by the Holy Spirit.

"He instructed him." How patiently God bears with our dullness! How graciously He repeats "line upon line and precept upon precept" (Is. 28:10)! Yet slow as we are, He perseveres with us, for He has promised to perfect that which concerns us (Ps. 138:8). Has He "instructed" you, my reader? Has He taught you the total depravity of man and the utter inability of the sinner to deliver himself? Has He taught you the humbling truth "Ye must be born again," and that regeneration is solely the work of God, man having no part or hand in it (Jn. 1:13)? Has He revealed to you the infinite value and

sufficiency of the atoning sacrifice of Christ whose blood cleanses "FROM ALL SIN?" Then what cause you have to be thankful for such Divine instruction.

## **The Holiness of God**

BECAUSE God is holy, acceptance with Him on the ground of creature-doings is utterly impossible. A fallen creature could sooner create a world than produce that which would meet the approval of infinite Purity. Can darkness dwell with Light? Can the Immaculate One take pleasure with "filthy rags" (Isa. 64:6)? The best that sinful man brings forth is defiled. A corrupt tree cannot bear good fruit. God would deny Himself, vilify His perfections, were He to account as righteous and holy that which is not so in itself; and nothing is so which has the least stain upon it contrary to the nature of God. But blessed be His name, that which His holiness demanded His grace has provided in Christ Jesus our Lord. Every poor sinner who has fled to Him for refuge stands "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1:6). Hallelujah!

It has been well said that "true worship is based upon recognized greatness, and greatness is superlatively seen in Sovereignty, and at no other footstool will men really worship." In the presence of the Divine King upon His throne even the seraphim 'veil their faces.' Divine sovereignty is not the sovereignty of a tyrannical Despot, but the exercised pleasure of One who is infinitely wise and good! Because God is infinitely wise He cannot err, and because He is infinitely righteous He will not do wrong. Here then is the preciousness of this truth. The mere fact itself that God's will is

irresistible and irreversible fills me with fear, but once I realize that God wills only that which is good, my heart is made to rejoice. Here then is the final answer to the question (concerning our attitude toward God's sovereignty)—What ought to be our attitude toward the sovereignty of God? The becoming attitude for us to take is that of godly fear, implicit obedience, and unreserved resignation and submission. But not only so: the recognition of the sovereignty of God, and the realization that the Sovereign Himself is my Father, ought to overwhelm the heart and cause me to bow before Him in adoring worship. At all times I must say, "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in Thy sight."

## **The Hope of His Calling**

"The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of His calling." (Ephesians 1:18)

WHAT is meant by "the hope of His calling?" This is really a double question: What is meant by the word hope in this passage, and what is meant by His calling?

In Scripture hope always respects something future, and signifies far more than a mere wish that it may be realized. It sets forth a confident expectation that it will be realized (Ps. 16:9). In many passages hope has reference to its object, that is, to the thing expected (Rom 8:25), the One looked to: "O Lord, the hope of Israel" (Jer. 17:13). In other passages refers to the grace of hope, that is, the faculty by which we expect. Hope is used in this sense in 1 Corinthians 13:13: "Now abideth faith, hope, charity." Sometimes hope expresses the assurance we have of our personal interest in the

thing hoped for: "tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed" (Rom. 5:3, 5). That is, hope deepens our assurance of our personal confidence in God. In still other cases hope has reference to the ground of our expectation. The clause "there is hope in Israel concerning this thing" (Ezra 10:2) means there were good grounds to hope for it. "Who against hope believed in hope" (Rom. 4:18): though contrary to nature, Abraham was persuaded he had sufficient ground to expect God to make good His promise. The unregenerate are without hope (Eph. 2:12). They have hope, but it is based on no solid foundation.

Now in the last mentioned sense we regard the word hope as being used in our present passage: that you may know the ground on which rests your expectation of His calling, that you may be assured of your personal interest therein, that you may stand in no doubt regarding the same, that you may be so enlightened from above as to be able to clearly perceive that you have both part and lot in it. In other words, that your evidence of this ground of faith may be clear and unmistakable. First, Paul prayed for an increased knowledge of God, that is, such spiritual sights and apprehensions of Him as led to more real and intimate fellowship with Him, which is the basic longing of every renewed soul. And what did he desire next to that? Was it not that which contributed most to his peace and comfort, namely, to be assured of his own filial relation to God? What does it avail my soul to perceive the excellency of the divine character unless I have scriptural warrant to view Him as God? That is what I need to have continually kept fresh in my heart.

### **What is meant by "His calling?"**

Here is another term which is used by no means uniformly in the Scriptures. Broadly speaking, there is a twofold calling of God or call from God: an external one and an internal one. The former is made to all who hear the gospel: "Unto you, O men, I call; and My voice is to the sons of man" (Prov. 8:4). "Many are called, but few chosen"

(Matthew 20:16). That external call through the Scriptures is addressed to human responsibility and meets with universal rejection. "I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out My hand, and no man regarded" (Prov. 1:24). "Come, for all things are now ready; and they all with one consent began to make excuse" (Luke 14:18).

But God gives another call to His elect; a quickening call, an inward call, an invincible call, what the theologians term His effectual call. "Whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified" (Rom. 8:30). This is calling from death to life. Out of darkness into God's "marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9). As the closing verses of 1 Corinthians 1 tell us, not many receive this call; it is one of mercy and discriminating grace.

Our text then speaks of the effectual call, and it is called His calling, because God is the Author of it. The regenerate are "the called according to His (eternal) purpose" (Rom. 8:28), because God is the Caller. Yet, having said that much, we have only generalized, and we must bring out the various shades of meaning which the same word bears in different verses. In some passages the effectual call which God gives His people refers to that work of grace itself, as in 1 Peter 2:9. In others it concerns more especially that to which God has called them—"unto His kingdom and glory" (1 Thess. 2:12), "unto holiness" (1 Thess. 4:7). There seems to be nothing in our present verse which requires us to restrict the scope of the word, so we shall interpret it in its double sense; "that ye may be assured ye have been made partakers of God's effectual or regenerative call: that ye may perceive the sure grounds of hope which God has called you unto."

Take the calling itself first. Paul desired that the Ephesians might have a better knowledge or assurance that they had been supernaturally quickened, personally called out of darkness into God's light. If the Christian measures himself impartially by the Word, he should have no difficulty on that score. He should be certain of his salvation. he ought to be able to say, humbly yet



confidently, "one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see" (John 9:25). If I see, with a feeling sense in my heart, what a heinous and filthy thing all sin is, what a depraved and loathsome creature I am by nature, what a sink of iniquity still remains within me, what a suitable and sufficient Savior Christ is for such a wretch as me, what a lovely and desirable thing holiness is, then I must have been called to life. If I am now conscious of holy desires and endeavors to which I was previously a stranger, then I must be alive in Christ.

Take, second, that to which the Christian is called—in this verse, an assured expectation: "that ye may know what is the hope of His calling." As God has called His people to holiness, so also He has called them to be full of hope and good cheer. The apostle prayed in another place, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 15:13). Thus, we may understand that by His calling we may know that hope which God has commanded us as Christians to have;—(1 Thess. 4:7), "God hath called us not to uncleanness, but unto holiness," means that He bids us to be holy, for the third verse of the same chapter declares "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." In that passage the will and calling of God are one and the same thing. Thus it may also be understood here: "That ye may know the hope of His revealed will," which He requires us to have.

"That Ye May Know," not being ignorant or doubtful. This denies one of the doctrines of the Council of Trent: "If any affirm that a regenerate and justified man is bound to believe that he is certainly in the number of the elect, let such a one be accursed."—The very fact that Paul was inspired to place on record this petition shows clearly that it is God's will for His people to have assurance, that it is both their privilege and duty to earnestly seek it, and that an increased experience of assurance should be theirs. A doubting Thomas does not honor God.

Now let us put the whole together. Only as the eyes of our understanding are divinely enlightened are we able to know "what is the hope of His calling"—know it, not by carnal presumption nor by mental acumen but perceive it with anointed vision. Nevertheless, if our eyes are not enlightened, the fault is entirely our own, for it is the revealed will of God that each regenerate person should have assurance that he is a new creature in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit has given us one whole epistle to that very end: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life" (1 John 5:13). Hence, those who would have the Christian believe that a firm and abiding assurance is not desirable, are standing on an unscriptural doctrine.

Note how emphatic it is: "the eyes of your understanding being enlightened that YE may know." That cannot signify less than that your own eyes should see what grounds of assurance the Christian really has to know that eternal life is his, that his own heart may realize the hope which God has bidden him to exercise. Not to see with someone else's eyes, not to read through creedal spectacles, not to take any man's say-so for it, but to live by your own God-given faith and read in the light of Holy Writ your own clear evidences. The apostle prayed here that they might know what great, infallible, multitudinous grounds of hope God had called them to; that they might appreciate what grounds of assurance and evidence they had that heaven was theirs; that they might have assurance of their own interest in heaven! Every time I truly mourn over my sins, feel my poverty of spirit, hunger and thirst after righteousness, I have an indubitable evidence that I am among the "blessed."

Precepts and Petitions are complementary one to the other. The precepts tell me what God requires and therefore what I need to ask Him for most, that enabling grace may be given me to perform the same. The prayers intimate what it is my privilege and duty to make request for, thus they indirectly reveal my duty.

"Give diligence to make your calling and election sure" (2 Pet. 1:10), is the divine precept making known my duty. That "the Father of glory, may give unto you ... wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of His calling" is a request that I may be enabled to successfully carry out that task of making my election sure. This petition tells us we ought to labor after and pray earnestly for a clearer insight into and a fuller acquaintance with the great objects of the Christian's hopes and expectations.

We cannot obtain a true and influential knowledge of the grounds which regeneration gives its subject to hope that he has passed from death to life, nor realize what confidence in God He has bidden him to have (for both things are included) unless our eyes are divinely anointed. No matter how clearly and vividly the landscape appears when the sun is shining, a blind man does not behold it. Christ is manifestly set forth in the gospel, but the hearer must be given spiritual sight before he will perceive the absolute suitability of such a Savior in his own desperate case. Even after regeneration, the Christian is still completely dependent on divine illumination in order for him to continue apprehending spiritual things.

No reading of commentaries can secure an answer to his petition, and even a searching or study of the Scriptures will not of itself convey to the believer a spiritual and influential knowledge. Only as and when the eyes of his understanding are enlightened will that delightful and wondrous experience be his.

Quoting Thomas Watson on Exodus 20:2;

In former times (before the Reformation) we worshipped God after a false manner: we had purgatory, indulgences, the idolatrous mass, the Scriptures locked up in an unknown tongue, invocation of saints and angels, image-worship. O what cause have we to bless God for delivering us from popery!

If it be a great blessing to be delivered from Egypt, popish idolatry; then it shows their sin and folly, who, being brought out of Egypt, are willing to return into Egypt again; having put off the yoke of Rome, would fain put it on again. The apostle says, "Flee from idolatry." But these rather flee to idolatry; herein they are like the people of Israel, who, notwithstanding all the idolatry and tyranny of Egypt, yet longed to go back to Egypt; "Let us make a captain and let us return into Egypt" (Num. 14:4). But how shall they go back into Egypt? How shall they have food in the wilderness? Will God rain down manna any more upon such rebels? How will they get over the sea? Will God divide the water again by miracle for such as leave His service, and go into idolatrous Egypt? Yet they say, Let us make a captain,—And are there not such spirits amongst us, who say, "Let us make a captain, and go back to the Romish Egypt again?" And if we do, what shall we get by it? I am afraid the leeks and onions of Egypt will make us sick. Do we ever think, if we drink in the cup of fornication, we shall drink in the cup of salvation? O that any should so forfeit their reason, as to enslave themselves to the see of Rome! That they should be willing to hold a candle to a mass-priest, and bow down to a strange god. Let us not say we will make a captain; but rather say as Ephraim, "What have I to do any more with idols?" Pray that the true Protestant religion may still flourish among us, that the sun of the gospel may still shine in our horizon.

## **The Impotency of the Human Will**

DOES it lie within the province of man's will to accept or reject the Lord Jesus as Saviour? Granted that the Gospel is preached to the sinner, that the Holy Spirit convicts him of his lost condition, does it,

in the final analysis, lie within the power of his own will to resist or yield himself up to God? The answer to this question defines our conception of human depravity. That man is a fallen creature all professing Christians will allow, but what many of them mean by "fallen" is often difficult to determine. The general impression seems to be that man is now mortal, that he is no longer in the condition in which he left the hands of his Creator, that he is liable to disease, that he inherits evil tendencies; but, that if he employs his powers to the best of his ability, somehow he will be happy at last. O, how far short of the sad truth! Infirmities, sickness, even corporeal death, are but trifles in comparison with the moral and spiritual effects of the Fall! It is only by consulting the Holy Scriptures that we are able to obtain some conception of the extent of that terrible calamity. When we say that man is totally depraved, we mean that the entrance of sin into the human constitution has affected every part and faculty of man's being. Total depravity means that man is, in spirit and soul and body, the slave of sin and the captive of the Devil—walking "according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2). This statement ought not to need arguing: it is a common fact of human experience. Man is unable to realize his own aspirations and materialize his own ideals. He cannot do the things that he would. There is moral inability which paralyzes him. This is proof positive that he is no free man, but instead, the slave of sin and Satan. "Ye are of your father the Devil, and the lusts (desires) of your father ye will do." (John 8:44). Sin is more than an act or a series of acts; it is a man's make-up. It has blinded the understanding, corrupted the heart, and alienated the mind from God. And the will has not escaped. The will is under the dominion of sin and Satan. Therefore, the will is not free. In short, the affections love as they do and the will chooses as it does because of the state of the heart, and because the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked "There is none that seeketh after God" (Rom. 3:11).

## **"It is Finished"**

"When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he gave up the ghost." (John 19:30)

HOW terribly have these blessed words of Christ been misunderstood, misappropriated and misapplied! How many seem to think that on the cross the Lord Jesus accomplished a work which rendered it unnecessary for the beneficiaries of it to live holy lives on earth. So many have been deluded into thinking that, so far as reaching heaven is concerned, it matters not how they walk provided they are "resting on the finished work of Christ." They may be unfruitful, untruthful, disobedient, yet (though they may possibly miss some millennial crown) so long as they repudiate all righteousness of their own and have faith in Christ, they imagine they are "eternally secure."

All around us are people who are worldly-minded, money-lovers, pleasure-seekers, Sabbath-breakers, yet who think all is well with them because they have "accepted Christ as their personal Saviour." In their aspiration, conversation, and recreation, there is practically nothing to differentiate them from those who make no profession at all. Neither in their home-life nor social-life is there anything save empty pretensions to distinguish them from others. The fear of God is not upon them, the commands of God have no authority over them, the holiness of God has no attraction for them.

"It is finished." How solemn to realize that these words of Christ must have been used to lull thousands into a false peace. Yet such is the case. We have come into close contact with many who have no private prayer-life, who are selfish, covetous, dishonest, but who

suppose that a merciful God will overlook all such things provided they once put their trust in the Lord Jesus. What a horrible perversion of the truth! What a turning of God's grace "into lasciviousness!" (Jude 4). Yes, those who now live the most self-seeking and flesh-pleasing lives, talk about their faith in the blood of the Lamb, and suppose they are safe. How the devil has deceived them!

"It is finished." Do those blessed words signify that Christ so satisfied the requirement of God's holiness that holiness no longer has any real and pressing claims upon us? Perish the thought. Even to the redeemed God says, "Be ye holy, for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:16). Did Christ "magnify the law and make it honorable" (Isa. 42:21) that we might be lawless? Did He "fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15) to purchase for us an immunity from loving God with all our hearts and serving Him with all our faculties? Did Christ die in order to secure a divine indulgence that we might live to please self? Many seem to think so. No, the Lord Jesus has left His people an example that they should "follow (not ignore) His steps."

"It is finished." What was "finished?" The need for sinners to repent? No indeed. The need for turning to God from idols? No indeed. The need for mortifying my members which are upon earth? No indeed. The need for being sanctified wholly, in spirit, and soul, and body? No indeed. Christ died not to make my sorrow for, hatred of, and striving against sin, useless. Christ died not to absolve me from the full discharge of my responsibilities unto God. Christ died not so that I might go on retaining the friendship and fellowship of the world. How passing strange that any should think that He did. Yet the actions of many show that this is their idea.

"It is finished." What was "finished?" The sacrificial types were accomplished, the prophecies, of His sufferings were fulfilled, the work given Him by the Father had been perfectly done, a sure foundation had been laid on which a righteous God could pardon the vilest transgressor of the law who threw down the weapons of his

warfare against Him. Christ had now performed all that was necessary in order for the Holy Spirit to come and work in the hearts of His people; convincing them of their rebellion, slaying their enmity against God, and producing in them a loving and obedient heart.

O, dear reader, make no mistake on this point. The "finished work of Christ" avails you nothing if your heart has never been broken through an agonizing consciousness of your sinfulness. The "finished work of Christ" avails you nothing unless you have been saved from the power and pollution of sin (Matthew 1:21). It avails you nothing if you still love the world (1 John 2:15). It avails you nothing unless you are a "new creature" in Him (2 Cor. 5:17). If you value your soul, search the Scriptures to see for yourself; take no man's word for it.

## **Keeping the Heart**

IN CHRISTENDOM today there are thousands of professing Christians against whom little or nothing in the way of fault could be found so far as their outward lives are concerned. They live moral, clean, upright, honest lives while at the same time the state of their hearts is totally neglected. It is not sufficient to bring our outward deportment into harmony with the revealed will of God. He holds us accountable for what goes on inside, and requires us to keep check on the springs of our actions, the motives which inspire and the principles which regulate us. God requires "truth in the inward parts" (Ps. 51:6). Christ has enjoined us to "take heed" to ourselves "lest at any time our hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life" (Luke 21:34). If I do not look within how then shall I be able to ascertain whether I possess that poverty of spirit, mourning for unholiness, meekness, hungering and



thirsting after righteousness and purity of heart upon which the Saviour pronounces His benediction (Matthew 5:1–8)? We must remember that salvation itself is both subjective and objective, for it consists not only of what Christ did FOR His people, but also what He by the Holy Spirit did in them. I have no evidence whatever of my justification apart from my regeneration and sanctification. The one who can say "I am crucified with Christ" judicially can also add "Christ liveth in me" (experimentally), and living by faith in Him is proof that "He loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).

The heart is the center of man's moral nature, of the personality; it equals the whole inner man, it is the fount out of which everything else comes, and is the seat of his thoughts and of his affections and of his will (Gen. 6:5). To guard the heart means that we should live to the glory of God in every respect; that should be the supreme desire of our life, that we desire to know Him, love Him and serve Him.

If we are to be approved of God it is by no means sufficient that "we make clean the outside of the cup and platter," yet many suppose that is all that matters. "Cleanse first that which is within" (Matthew 23:26) is our Lord's command. This is rarely given any attention these days, or none at all. It is the devil who seeks to persuade people that they are not responsible for the state of their hearts, that it is impossible for them to change them. Such is most agreeable unto those who think to be "called to heaven on flowery beds of ease." But no regenerate soul, with God's Word before him, will credit such falsehood. The Divine command is plain: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23). This is the principal task set before us, for it is at the heart God ever looks, and there can be no pleasing Him while it is unattended to; yea, woe be unto those who disregard it. He who makes no honest endeavor to cast out sinful thoughts and evil imaginations, and who does not mourn over their presence, is a moral leper. He who makes no conscience of the workings of unbelief, the cooling of his affections, the surging of pride, is a stranger to any work of grace in his soul.

Not only does God bid thee to "keep thy heart," but He requires that you do it "with all diligence;" that is, that you make it your main concern and constant care. The Hebrew word of "keep" signifies to "guard," to watch over this heart (that is, the soul or inward man) as a precious treasure of which thieves are ever ready to rob thee. The devotions of your lips and the labors of your hands are unacceptable to the Lord if your heart is not right in His sight. What husband would appreciate the domestic attentions of his wife if he had good reasons to believe that her affections were alienated from him?

God takes note not only of the matter of our actions but the springs from which they are done and the design of the same. If we become slack and careless in any of these respects, it shows that our love is cooled and that we have become weary of God. The Lord God is He that "ponders the heart" (Prov. 24:12) observing all its motions. He knows whether your alms-deeds are done in order to be seen of men and admired by them, or whether they issue from disinterested benevolence. He knows whether your expressions of good will and love to your brethren are feigned or genuine!

The Bible lays open, as no other book, the turpitude (shameful depravity) and horrid nature of sin as "that abominable thing" which God "hates" (Jer. 4:4), and which we are to detest and shun. It never gives the least indulgence or disposition to sin, nor do any of its teachings lead to licentiousness. It sternly condemns sin in all its forms, and makes known the awful curse and wrath of God which are its due. It not only reproves sin in the outward lives of men, but discovers the secret faults of the heart which is its chief seat. It warns against the first motions, and legislates for the regulating of our spirits, requiring us to keep clean the fountain from which are "the issues of life." Its promises are made unto holiness, and its blessings bestowed upon "the pure in heart." The ineffable (that which cannot be expressed) and exalted holiness of the Bible is its chief and peculiar excellence, as it is also the principal reason why it is disliked by the majority of the unregenerate. The Bible forbids all impure desires and unjust thoughts as well as deeds. It prohibits envy (Prov.

23:17), and all forms of selfishness (Rom. 15:1). It requires us to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1), and bids us to "abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thess. 5:22). Heavenly doctrine is to be matched with heavenly character and conduct. Its requirements penetrate into the innermost recesses of the soul, exposing and censuring all the corruptions found there. The law of man goes no farther than "Thou shall not steal," but that of God "Thou shalt not covet." The law of man prohibits the act of adultery, but the law of God reprehends (finds fault with, censures, blames) the looking upon a woman "to lust after her" (Matthew 5:28). The law of man says, "Thou shalt not murder," that of God forbids all ill-will, malice or hatred (1 John 3:15). It strikes directly at that which fallen nature most cherishes and craves. "Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you" (Luke 6:26). It prohibits the spirit of revenge enjoins the forgiveness of injuries. and, contrary to the self-righteousness of our hearts, inculcates humility.

Such a task calls for Divine aid, hence help and grace need to be earnestly and definitely sought of the Holy spirit each day. And as, so many today are just playing with the solemn realities of God, never embracing and making them their own. How about you, reader? Is this true of you? Selah.

## **Knowing God**

GOD can only be known by means of a supernatural revelation of Himself Apart from the Scriptures, even a theoretical acquaintance with Him is impossible. It still holds true that 'the world by wisdom

knew not God' (1 Cor. 1:21). Where the Scriptures are ignored, God is "the unknown God" (Acts 17:23). But something more than the Scriptures is required before the soul can know God, know Him in a real, personal, vital way. This seems to be recognized by few today. The prevailing practice assumes that a knowledge of God can be obtained through studying the Word, in the same way as a knowledge of chemistry may be secured by mastering its textbooks. An intellectual knowledge of God maybe; not so a spiritual one. A supernatural God can only be known supernatural (i.e. known in a manner above that which mere nature can acquire), by a supernatural revelation of Himself to the heart. 'God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ' (2 Cor. 4:6). The one who has been favored with this supernatural experience has learned that only 'in thy light shall we see light' (Ps. 36:9).

## **The Law and the Saint**

### **1. Introduction**

IT HAS been said that every unregenerate sinner has the heart of a Pharisee. This is true; and it is equally true that every unregenerate sinner has the heart of an Antinomian. This is the character which is expressly given to the carnal mind: it is "enmity against God;" and the proof of this is, that "it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7). Should we be surprised, then, if we find the underlying principles of Phariseeism and Antinomianism uniting in the same mind? Surely not. There is no more real opposition

between these apparently opposing principles, than there is between enmity and pride. Many a slothful servant has hated his master and his service, and yet had he pride and presumption enough to demand his wages. Phariseeism and Antinomianism unite, like Herod and Pilate did, against the Truth.

The term Antinomian signifies one who is against the Law, hence, when we declare that ours is an age of lawlessness, it is only another way of saying that it is an age characterized by Antinomianism. There is little need for us to pause and offer proof that this is an age of lawlessness. In every sphere of life the sad fact confronts us. In the well-nigh total absence of any real discipline in the majority of the churches, we see the principle exemplified. Not more than two generations ago, thousands, tens of thousands, of the loose-living members whose names are now retained on the membership rolls, would have been dis-fellowshipped. It is the same in the great majority of our homes. With comparatively rare exceptions, wives are no longer in subjection to their husbands (Eph. 5:22, 24); and as for obeying them (1 Pet. 3:1, 2, 5, 6), why, the majority of women demand that such a hateful word be stricken from the marriage ceremony. So it is with the children—how could it be otherwise? Obedience to parents is almost entirely a thing of the past. And what of conditions in the world? The abounding marital unfaithfulness, Sunday trading, banditry, lynchings, strikes, and a dozen other things that might be mentioned, all bear witness to the frightful wave of lawlessness which is flowing over the country.

What, we may well inquire, is the cause of the lawlessness which now so widely obtains? For every effect there is a cause, and the character of the effect usually intimates the nature of the cause. We are assured that the present wide-spread contempt for human law is the inevitable outgrowth of disrespect for Divine Law. Where there is no fear of God, we must not expect there will be much fear of man. And why is it that there is so much disrespect for Divine Law? This, in turn, is but the effect of an antecedent cause. Nor is this hard to find.

Do not the utterances of Christian teachers during the last twenty-five years go far to explain the situation which now confronts us?

History has repeated itself. Of old, God complained of Ephraim, "I have written to him the great things of My Law, but they were counted as a strange thing" (Hos. 8:12). Observe how God speaks of His Law: "The great things of My Law!" They are not precepts of little moment, but to be lightly esteemed, and slighted; but are of great authority, importance, and value. But, as then, so during the last few years—they have been "counted as a strange thing." Christian teachers have vied with each other in denouncing the Law as a "yoke of bondage," "a grievous burden," "a remorseless enemy." They have declared in trumpet tones that Christians should regard the Law as "a strange thing:" that it was never designed for them: that it was given to Israel, and then made an end of at the Cross of Christ. They have warned God's people to have nothing to do with the Ten Commandments. They have denounced as "Legalists" Christians of the past, who, like Paul, "served the Law" (Rom. 7:25). They have affirmed that Grace rules the Law out of the Christian's life as absolutely as it did out of his salvation. They have held up to ridicule those who contended for a Christian Sabbath, and have classed them with Seventh-Day Adventists. Having sown the wind, is it any wonder that we are now reaping the whirlwind?

The characters of the cause determinates the character of the effect. Whatsoever a man soweth that (the same in kind) shall he also reap. Unto them who of old regarded the great things of God's Law as a strange thing, God declared, "Because Ephraim hath made many alters to sin, alters shall be unto him to sin" (Hosea 8:11). And because many of our Christian leaders have publicly repudiated Divine Law, God has visited us with a wave of lawlessness in our churches, homes, and social life. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked!" Nor have we any hope of stemming the onrushing tide, or of causing Christian leaders to change their position. Having committed themselves publicly, the examples of past history warn us that pride will keep them from making the humbling confession that

they have erred. But we have a hope that some who have been under the influence of twentieth century Antinomianism will have sufficient spiritual discernment to recognize the truth when it is presented to their notice; and it is for them we now write.

In the January 1923 issue of a contemporary, appeared the second article from the pen of Dr. McNichol, Principal of Toronto Bible School, under the caption of "Overcoming the Dispensations." The purpose of these articles is to warn God's children against the perils which lie "in the way of much of the positive premillennial teaching of the day." Quoting, Dr. McNicol says:

1. There is danger when the Law is set against Grace. No scheme of prophetic interpretation can be safe which is obliged to represent the dispensations of Law and Grace as opposing systems, each excluding the other and contrary to it. If this were the case, it would mean that God had taken opposing and contradictory attitudes towards men in these two different ages. In the last analysis this representation of the relation of law and grace affects the character of God, as everything which perverts the Scriptures, disturbing thereby the mirror of His mind, ultimately does.

So far from being opposing systems, law and grace as revealed in Scripture are parts of one harmonious and progressive plan. The present dispensation is spoken of as the age of grace, not because grace belongs to it exclusively, but because in it grace has been fully manifested. When John declared that "the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," he was contrasting law and grace, not as two contrary and irreconcilable systems, but as two related parts of one system. The law was the shadow, Christ was the substance. The law was the pattern, Christ was the reality. The grace which had been behind the law came to light through Jesus Christ so that it could be realized. As a matter of fact, grace had been in operation from the beginning. It began in Eden with the first promise of redemption immediately after the fall. All redemption is of grace;

there can be no salvation without it, and even the law itself proceeds on the basis of grace.

The law was given to Israel not that they might be redeemed, but because they had been redeemed. The nation had been brought out of Egypt by the power of God under the blood of the slain lamb, itself the symbol and token of His grace. The law was added at Sinai as the necessary standard of life for a ransomed people, a people who now belonged to the Lord. It began with a declaration of their redemption; "I am the Lord thy God who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (Ex. 20:2). It rested on the basis of grace, and it embodied the principle that redemption implied a conformity to God's moral order. In other words, the very grace that redeemed Israel carried with it the necessity of revealing the law to Israel. The law was given that they might walk worthy of the relation in which they now stood to God, worthy of a salvation which was already theirs. The covenant of the law did not supersede the covenant of promise, but set forth the kind of life which those who were redeemed by the covenant of promise were expected to live.

The law was not a covenant of works in the sense that Israel's salvation depended upon obedience to it. The devout Israelite was saved by faith in the promise of God, which was now embodied in the tabernacle services. He looked forward through the sacrifices to a salvation which they foreshadowed, and by faith accepted it, as we look back to the Cross and by faith accept the salvation which has been accomplished. The Old Testament saints and the New Testament saints are both saved in the same way, and that is, by the grace of God through Jesus Christ alone.

Of course the people did not keep the law. It only brought sin to light and proved that righteousness could not come that way, as Paul points out in the Epistle to the Romans. It made all the more evident that there was a need for the work of Christ. But Christ came not to put the law aside and introduce another plan. "I came not to



destroy," He declared, "but to fulfill;" not to dissolve the obligations of the law and release us from them, but to substantiate the law and make good all that it required. In the Sermon on the Mount He expounded and expanded the law, in all its depth and breadth, and in all its searching sweep. This Sermon spoke to His disciples; it was His law for them. It was not intended for another age and another people; it set forth the kind of life He expected His own people to live in the present age.

Of course we cannot fulfill the law of the Sermon on the Mount as an outward standard of life. Our Lord did not leave it at that. He was Himself going to make it possible for His disciples to fulfill it, but He could not yet tell them how. When He died and rose again and ascended into heaven, and His Holy Spirit—the same Spirit which had fulfilled and exemplified that law completely in His own life—came flowing back into the lives of His disciples, then they had to keep it. The law was written on their hearts. Their lives were conformed to the law, not by slavish obedience to an outward standard, but by the free constraint of an inward spirit. The ordinance of the law was fulfilled in them when they walk not after the flesh but after the spirit.

It is this very feature of grace which seems to make it an entirely different and separate system from the law, for it did not exist in the Old Testament dispensation. It could not be realized before the redemptive work of Christ was done and the Holy Spirit came. The Israelites occupied a different position toward the law from that occupied by the Christian now. The law demanded an obedience which the natural heart could not give. In its practical working, therefore, the law necessarily came to stand over man as a creditor, with claims of justice which had not been satisfied. These claims Christ met on the Cross and put out of the way. More than that, by virtue of our union with Him in His death and resurrection, He has brought us out of the sphere where the law as an outward authority demands obedience of the natural man, into the sphere where the law is written upon the heart by the power of the Holy Spirit. He has

created us "a new man" whose nature it is to fulfill the law by an inward power and principle. This is what Paul meant when he said, "I through the law died unto the law that I might live unto God" (Gal. 2:19), and when he wrote to the Romans, "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law but under grace" (6:14).

This new revelation to the law has been created by the grace of God through the work of Jesus Christ. But the law still remains. It is the reflex of His own character and the revelation of His moral order. He cannot set it aside, for then He would deny Himself. The wonder and glory of grace consists in this, that it came in, not to oppose the law and substitute another plan, but to meet and satisfy all its claims and provide a way of fulfilling all its obligations. It has pleased the Lord by His grace to magnify the law and make it honorable.

With the above remarks we are in hearty accord.\* It is a superficial and erroneous conclusion that supposes the Old and New Testaments are antagonistic. The Old Testament is full of grace: the New Testament is full of Law. The revelation of the New Testament to the Old is like that of the oak tree to the acorn. It has been often said, and said truly, "The New is in the Old contained, the Old is by the New explained!" And surely this must be so. The Bible as a whole, and in its parts, is not merely for Israel or the Church, but is a written revelation from God to and for the whole human race. It is indeed sad to see how little this elementary truth is grasped today and what confusion prevails.

Even the late Mr. F. W. Grant in his notes on Exodus 19 and 20 was so inconsistent with himself as to say, First, "It is plain that redemption, as bringing the soul to God, sets up His throne within it, and obedience is the only liberty. It is plain too, that there is a 'righteousness of the law' which the law itself gives no power to fulfill, but which 'is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit' (Rom. 8:4). What is merely dispensational passes, but not that which is the expression of God's character and required

by it. Nothing of that can pass ... grace still must affirm this, therefore, not set it (obedience) aside; but it does what law does not—it provides for the accomplishment of the condition. First of all, the obedience of Another, who owed none, has glorified God infinitely with regard to those who owed but did not pay. Secondly,—for this even could not release (nor could there be blessing in release) from the personal obligation,—grace apprehended in the heart brings back the heart to God, and the heart brought back in love serves of necessity" (*italics ours*).

With the above quoted words from *The Numerical Bible* we are in entire accord, and only wish they might be echoed by Mr. Grant's followers. But second, and most inconsistently, and erroneously, Mr. Grant says: "In the wisdom of God, that same law, whose principle was 'do and live,' could yet be the type of the obedience of faith in those who are subjects of a spiritual redemption, the principle of which is 'live and do.' Let us remember, however, that law in itself retains none the less its character as opposed to grace, and that as a type it does not represent law any longer: we are not, as Christians in any sense under the law, but under grace" (*italics his*). This is a mistake, the more serious because made by one whose writings now constitute in certain circles the test of orthodoxy in the interpreting of God's Word.

What has been said above reveals the need for a serious and careful examination of the teaching of Holy Scripture concerning the Law. But to what do we refer when we speak of "The Law?" This is a term which needs to be carefully defined. In the New Testament there are three expressions used, concerning which there has been not a little confusion. First, there is "the Law of God" (Rom. 7:22, 25, etc.). Second, there is "the Law of Moses" (John 7:23; Acts 13:39, 15:5, etc.). Third, there is "the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). Now these three expressions are by no means synonymous, and it is not until we learn to distinguish between them, that we can hope to arrive at any clear understanding of our subject.

The "Law of God" expresses the mind of the Creator, and is binding upon all rational creatures. It is God's unchanging moral standard for regulating the conduct of all men. In some places "the Law of God" may refer to the whole revealed will of God, but in the majority it has reference to the Ten Commandments; and it is in this restricted sense we use the term. This Law was impressed on man's moral nature from the beginning, and though now fallen, he still shows the work of it written in his heart. This law has never been repealed, and in the very nature of things, cannot be. For God to abrogate the moral Law would be to plunge the whole universe into anarchy. Obedience to the Law of God is man's first duty. That is why the first complaint that Jehovah made against Israel after they left Egypt was, "How long refuse ye to keep My commandments and My laws" (Ex. 16:27). That is why the first statutes God gave to Israel were the Ten Commandments, i.e. the moral Law. That is why in the first discourse of Christ recorded in the New Testament He declared, "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill" (Matt 5:17), and then proceeded to expound and enforce the moral Law. And that is why in the first of the Epistles, the Holy Spirit has taught us at length the relation of the Law to sinners and saints, in connection with salvation and the subsequent walk of the saved: the word "law" occurs in Romans no less than seventy-five times, though, of course, not every reference is to the Law of God. And that is why sinners (Rom. 3:19) and saints (Jas. 2:12) shall be judged by this Law.

The "Law of Moses" is the entire system of legislation, judicial and ceremonial, which Jehovah gave to Israel during the time they were in the wilderness. The Law of Moses, as such, is binding upon none but Israelites. This Law has not been repealed. That the Law of Moses is not binding on Gentiles is clear from Acts 15.

The "Law of Christ" is God's moral Law, but in the hands of the Mediator. It is the Law which Christ Himself was "made under" (Gal. 4:4). It is the Law which was "in His heart" (Psa. 40:8). It is the Law which He came to "fulfill" (Matt. 5:17). The "Law of God" is now

termed "the Law of Christ" as it relates to Christians. As creatures we are under bonds to "serve the Law of God" (Rom. 7:25). As redeemed sinners we are "the bondslaves of Christ" (Eph. 6:6), and as such we are under bonds to "serve the Lord Christ" (Col. 3:24). The relation between these two appellations, "the law of God" and "the Law of Christ" is clearly intimated in 1 Corinthians 9:21, where the apostle states, that he "was not without Law to God," for he was "under the Law of Christ." The meaning of this is very simple. As a human creature, the apostle was still under obligation to obey the moral Law of God his Creator; but as a saved man he now belonged to Christ, the Mediator, by redemption. Christ had purchased him: he was His, therefore, he was "under the Law of Christ." The "Law of Christ," then, is just the moral Law of God now in the hands of the Mediator and Redeemer—cf. Exodus 34:1 and what follows!

Should any object against our definition of the distinction drawn between God's moral Law and "the Law of Moses" we request them to attend closely to what follows. God took special pains to show us the clear line of demarcation which He has Himself drawn between the two. The moral Law became incorporated in the Mosaic Law,\* yet was it sharply distinguished from it. The proof of this is as follows:—

In the first place, let the reader note carefully the words with which Exodus 20 opens: "And God spake all these words." Observe it is not "The Lord spake all these words," but "God spake." This is the more noticeable because in the very next verse He says, "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt," etc. Now the Divine titles are not used loosely, nor are they employed alternately for the purpose of variation. Each one possesses a definite and distinct signification. "God" is the creational title (see Gen. 1:1). "Lord" is God in covenant relationship, that is why it is "Lord God" all through Genesis 2. In Genesis 1 it is God in connection with His creatures. In Genesis 2 it is the Lord God in connection with Adam, with whom He had entered into a covenant—see Hosea 6:7, margin. The fact, then, that Exodus 20 opens with "And God spake all these words," etc. prove conclusively that the Ten Commandments were

not and are not designed solely for Israel (the covenant people), but for all mankind. The use of the title "God" in Exodus 20:1 is the more forceful because in verses 2, 5, 7, 10, 11, and 12 "the Lord" is named, and named there because Israel is being addressed.

In the second place, the Ten Commandments, and they alone, of all the laws Jehovah gave to Israel, were promulgated by the finger of God, amid the most solemn manifestations and tokens of the Divine presence and majesty.

In the third place, the Ten Commandments, and they alone, of all Jehovah's statutes to Israel, were written directly by the finger of God, written upon tables of stone; and written thus to denote their lasting and imperishable nature.

In the fourth place, the Ten Commandments were further distinguished from all those laws which had merely a local application to Israel, by the fact that they alone were laid up in the ark. A tabernacle was prepared by the special direction of God, and within it an ark was placed, in which the two tables of the Law were deposited. The ark, formed of the most durable wood, was overlaid with gold, within and without. Over it was placed the mercy-seat, which became the throne of Jehovah in the midst of His people. Not until the tabernacle had been erected, and the Law placed in the ark, did Jehovah take up His abode in Israel's midst. Thus did the Lord signify to Israel that the moral Law was the basis of all His governmental dealings with them.

Thus it is clear beyond any room for doubt that the Ten Commandments, the moral Law of God, were sharply distinguished from "the Law of Moses." The "Law of Moses," excepting the moral Law incorporated therein, was binding on none but Israelites, or Gentile proselytes. But the moral Law of God, unlike the Mosaic, is binding on all men. Once this distinction is perceived, many minor difficulties are cleared up. For example: someone says, If we are to keep the Sabbath day holy, as Israel did, why must we not observe

the other Sabbaths—the Sabbatic year, for instance? The answer is, Because the moral Law alone is binding on Gentiles and Christians. Why, it may be asked, does not the death penalty attached to the desecration of the Sabbath day (Ex. 31:14, etc.) still obtain? The answer is, Because though that was a part of the Mosaic Law, it was not a part of the moral Law of God, i.e. it was not inscribed on the tables of stone; therefore it concerned none but Israelites.

In the chapters following this, we propose to offer an exposition of the principal scriptures in the New Testament which refer to the Ten Commandments. First, we will take up the passages which are appealed to by those who deny that the Law is in anywise binding on Christians. Second, we shall treat of some of the many passages which unmistakably prove that all are under lasting obligations to obey the Law of God. Third, a separate booklet\* will be devoted to the Christian Sabbath. Fourth, in another separate booklet\* we shall discuss the nature of true Christian liberty. May Divine grace so illumine our understandings and rule our hearts that we shall run in the way of God's commandments.

## **2. The Negative Side**

What is the relation between the Law and the saint? By the Law we refer to the Ten Commandments engraven upon the tables of stone by the finger of God; by the saint we mean, the believer living in the present dispensation. What, then, is the relation between the Christian living today and the Ten Commandments formally proclaimed in the time of Moses? It is indeed sad that such a question needs to be raised, and that the Divine answer requires to be pressed upon the people of God. There was a time when it would not have been easy to find a Christian who was ignorant upon this subject; a time when the first thing committed to memory by the children of Christian parents was the Ten Commandments. But, alas, today it is far otherwise. Now, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find those who can give a clear and scriptural answer to our opening

question. And as to finding children who can repeat the Ten Commandments, they are rare indeed.

The Law and the saint. Present-day teachings on this subject, as on almost every other scriptural theme, is conflicting and contradictory. There are indeed few Divine doctrines upon which even Christian teachers are uniform in their testimony. What differences of opinion exist concerning Church-truth and the ordinances! What a variety of interpretations of prophecy now confront us! What a lack of harmony concerning the doctrine of sanctification. The same confusion prevails concerning the relation of the Law to the saint. Just as the Confusion of Tongues (Gen. 11) immediately preceded God's call to Abraham (the father of us all) to leave his native home and go forth into that land which he was to receive for an inheritance (Gen. 12), so there is a confusion of tongues in the theological world just before the people of God are to be called away from this earth to their heavenly inheritance (1 Pet. 1:4). That God has a good reason for permitting the present confusion of tongues, we doubt not—"For there must be factions among you; that they that are approved may be made manifest among you" (1 Cor. 11:19, R. V.).

What is the relation of the Law to the saint? Three answers have been given. First, that sinners become saints by obeying the Law. Second, that the Law is a rule of life for believers. Third, that the Law has nothing whatever to do with believers today. Those who give the first answer teach that the Law defines what God requires from man, and therefore man must keep it in order to be accepted by God. Those who give the second answer teach that the Law exhibits a standard of conduct, and that while this Old Testament standard receives amplification in the New, yet the latter does not set aside the former. Those who give the third answer teach that the Law was a yoke of bondage, grievous to be borne, and that it has been made an end of so far as Christians are concerned. The first answer is Legalism pure and simple: salvation by works; the second, relates to true Christian liberty; the third, is Antinomianism—lawlessness, a repudiation of God's governmental authority. The first view prevailed



generally through the Medieval Ages, when Popery reigned almost supreme. The second view prevailed generally during the time of the Reformers and Puritans. The third view has come into prominence during the last century, and now is the popular belief of our day.

How thankful we should be that it is our happy privilege to return from the theological bedlam that surrounds us, and enter the quiet sanctuary of God's truth; that we may turn away from the conflicting voices of men, to hear what God says on the subject. We trust that this is the hearty desire of our readers.

We cherish the hope that few who have read the above paragraphs are so conceited as to suppose they have no need to examine or reexamine what the Scriptures teach about the relation of the Law to believers. We are persuaded, rather, that the reader shares the conviction of the writer, namely, that this is an imperative necessity. It is so easy to conclude that our views of certain Divine truths have been formed from our own study of what we have (correctly or incorrectly) imbibed from human teachers. Our need is that of the Bereans (Acts 17:11)—to "Search the Scriptures daily" to find out whether or not what we hear and read is in accord with the Word of Truth. Moreover, this is sure, "if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know" (1 Cor. 8:2). Therefore it behooves every one of us to definitely look to God for light and help, and then reverently turn to His Word for the needed instruction.

Before we present to the reader some of the leading scriptures which set forth the relation of the Law to believers of this dispensation, it will first be necessary to examine the passages which are appealed to by those who affirm that the Law has no relation to the people of God living today. Let us then turn to these passages, and without prejudice (as far as that is possible) seek to ascertain their true meaning.

"For as many as have sinned without Law shall also perish without Law ... for when the Gentiles which have not the Law, do by nature the things contained in the Law, these, having not the Law, are a Law unto themselves" (Rom. 2:12–14). These verses really have no direct bearing on our present theme, inasmuch as they treat of other than saints. Yet, as this passage does relate to the wider subject of the Law in general, and as it is made use of by those who flatly and hotly deny the Law has any relation to believers today, we give it a brief notice.

It is affirmed by some whom we respect, but from whom on this subject we are obliged to differ, that the Law was given to the nation of Israel and to none else, and therefore, that neither Gentiles nor Christians are under any obligation to keep it. That the Law was formally given to Israel at Sinai is freely granted. But does that prove it was meant for none other than the descendants of Jacob? Surely not. When writing to the saints at Rome (many of whom were Gentiles, see 1:13; 11:13; 15:15, 16, etc.) Paul said, "But now we are delivered from the Law" (7:6). Again, in 8:7 he declares, "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be:" mark, it is not "the Jewish mind," but the "carnal mind" to Jew and Gentile alike. Now, there would be no point to this statement if the mind of man, as man, is not obligated to be in subjection to the Law of God. Man's mind is not subject, and because of its innate depravity "cannot be;" nevertheless, it ought to be. Once more: note how in Ephesians 2:2 the wicked are said to be "children of disobedience;" this is meaningless if they are not under obligation to obey the commandments of God. These scriptures, then, are sufficient to establish the fact that Gentiles, as well as Jews, are "under the Law."

Returning now to Romans 2:12, 13. The simple meaning of these verses is that, the Gentiles never had given to them the two tablets of stone on which the Ten Commandments were inscribed, nor were they in possession of the Scriptures, wherein those Commandments were recorded. But it should be carefully noted that Romans 2:5 goes on to state these very Gentiles "show the work of the Law written on

their hearts." On these verses Professor Stifler has well said, "The argument (of v. 14) lies in this, that Gentiles have what is tantamount to the moral Law." The fact that the Gentiles are "a law unto themselves" shows that God gave them the equivalent of what He gave the Jews, namely, a standard of right and wrong. In the case of the former, it was "written in their hearts," in the case of the latter, it was written on tables of stone, and afterwards in the Scriptures. "From this it is clear that the moral Law given to Israel by Moses was but a transcript, or compendium, of the Law which God, in the creation, had stamped upon the moral nature of man ... The moral Law, therefore, was not altogether new in the time of the exodus; nor was it something exclusively for Israel, but was a gift for the whole race, and therefore, must be of perpetual validity" (Mr. Wm. Mead).

"For ye are not under the Law, but under grace" (Rom. 6:14). This is the favorite verse with those who take the position that the Law has no relation to believers of this dispensation. "Not under the Law" is explicit, and seems final. What, then, have we to say concerning it? This: that like every other verse in the Bible, it must not be divorced from its setting, but is to be studied and faithfully interpreted in the light of its context. What, then, is the context about? First, what is the remote context concerned with? Second, what is the theme of the immediate context? By the remote context we mean, the Epistle as a whole. This is always the first thing to be weighed in connection with the exposition of any passage. Failure here is responsible for the great majority of misinterpretations and erroneous applications of Scripture. It should be carefully noted that the words "Ye are not under the Law" but "under grace" are found not in Hebrews, but in Romans. This, of itself, should warn us that "not under Law" needs to be understood in a modified sense. If it were true that the Law has been abrogated, then the Epistle to the Hebrews would be the one place of all others where we should expect to find this taught. The theme of Hebrews is, The superiority of Christianity over Judaism.\* In the expansion of this theme the apostle, again and again, shows how the prominent things in Judaism are not obsolete—see chapter 7 for the changing of the priesthood, from the Aaronic to the

Melchizedek order; chapters 8 and 9 for the substitution of the new covenant for the old, etc. And yet, not a word is said in it that the Law is now supplanted by grace.

"Not under the Law, but under grace" is found in Romans, the great theme of which is, The righteousness of God: man's need of God's righteousness, how it becomes the believer's, what are the legal consequences of this, and the effect it should have on our conduct. The prominent feature of the first eight chapters of Romans is that they treat of the judicial side of Gospel truth, rather than with the experimental and practical. Romans 5 and 6, especially, treat of justification and its consequences. In the light of this fact it is not difficult to discover the meaning of 6:14. "Ye are not under the Law, but under grace" signifies, Ye are under a system of gratuitous justification. "The whole previous argument explains this sentence. He refers to our acceptance. He goes back to the justification of the guilty, 'without the deeds of the Law,' the act of free grace; and briefly restates it thus, that he may take up afresh the position that this glorious liberation means not license, but Divine order" (Bishop Moule—1893).

"Ye are not under the Law but under grace." The contrast is not between the Law of Moses and the gospel of Christ, as two economies or dispensations, rather is it a contrast between Law and grace as the principles of two methods of justification, the one false, the other true; the one of human devising, the other of Divine provision. " 'Under Law' means, ruled by Law as a covenant of works" (Dr. Griffith-Thomas). "Law" and "grace" here are parallel with "the Law of works" and "the Law of faith" in 3:27! Romans 6:14 was just as true of the Old Testament saints as of New Testament believers. Caleb, Joshua, David, Elijah, Daniel were no more "under Law" in the sense that these words bear in Romans 6:14, than Christians are today. Instead, they were "under grace" in the matter of their justification, just as truly as we are.

"Not under the Law" does not mean, Not under obligation to obey the precepts of the moral Law; but signifies, Not keeping the Law in order to be saved. The apostle asserts in this verse that Christians are not under the Law, as an actual, effectual adequate means of justification or sanctification, and if they are so, their case is utterly hopeless; for ruin must inevitably ensue. That this is all that he means is apparent from the sequel of his remarks (6:15–8:39). What can be plainer, than that the moral Law as 'precept' is altogether approved and recognized by him. See chapter 7:12–14. Nay, so far is the apostle from pleading for oblivion or repeal of moral precepts, that he asserts directly (8:3, 4) that the Gospel is designed to secure obedience to these moral precepts; which the Law was unable to do. It is, then, from the Law viewed in this light, and this only, namely, as inadequate to effect the justification and secure the obedience of sinners, that the apostle declares us to be free.

"Let no one, then, abuse this declaration by imagining that it in anywise affords ground to believe that Christians are freed from obligation to obey the precepts of the moral Law. What is the Divine Law but a transcript of the Divine will? And are not Christians to be conformed to this? Is not all the Law summed up in these two declarations: 'Thou shalt love the Lord with all thine heart; and thy neighbour as thyself!' And are Christians absolved from loving God and their neighbour? If not, then this part of the subject stands unembarrassed by anything which the apostle has said in our text or context" (Prof. Moses Stuart).

The force of Romans 6:14 becomes more apparent if we observe what follows it. In the very next verse we read, "What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the Law, but under grace? God forbid." This anticipates an objection: If we are not under the Law as the ground of our justification, then are we to be lawless? The inspired answer is, God forbid. Nothing is more self-evidently certain then, that if the moral Law is not a rule of life to believers, they are at liberty to disregard its precepts. But the apostle rejects this error with the utmost abhorrence. We quote here a part of Calvin's

comments on Romans 6:15: "But we are much deceived if we think, that the righteousness which God approves of in His Law is abolished, when the Law is abrogated; for the abrogation is by no means to be applied to the precepts which teach the right way of living, as Christ confirms and sanctions these, and does not abrogate them; but the right view is, that nothing is taken away but the curse, to which men without grace are subject."

In what follows, to the end of this chapter, the apostle shows that though the believer is "not under Law" as the ground of his justification, nevertheless, he is under the Law as a rule of his Christian life, that is, he is under obligations to obey its moral precepts. In verse 18 (which contains the positive answer to the question asked in v. 15) the apostle declares, "being then made free from sin, ye became the servants (bond-slaves) of righteousness." Again in verse 22 he says, "But now being made free from sin, and become servants of God, ye have your fruit unto holiness." Observe carefully, it is not here said "servants of Christ," nor "servants of the Father," which would bring in quite another thought, but "servants of God," which enforces the believer's responsibility to the Law-giver. That this is the meaning of Romans 6:18 and 22 is clear from 7:25, where the apostle says, "So then with the mind I myself serve THE LAW OF GOD."

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the Law.... Now we are delivered from the Law" (Rom. 7:4, 6). These statements really call for a full exposition of Romans 7:1–6. but it would occupy too much space to give that here. Perhaps we can arrive at the meaning of these two verses by a shorter route. They occur in a section of the Epistle which treats of the results of Divine righteousness being imputed to the believer. Chapter 4 deals with the imputation of this righteousness; chapters 5 to 8 give the results. The results (summarized) are as follows: 5:1–11 Justification and Reconciliation; 5:12–6:23 Identification with Christ, the last Adam; 7:1–25 Emancipation from the Curse of the Law; 8:1–39 Preservation through time and eternity. Thus it will be seen that

these chapters deal mainly with the Divine rather than the human side of things. "Dead to the Law" in 7:4 is parallel with "dead to sin" in 6:2: parallel in this sense, that it is objective "death" not subjective; the judicial and not the practical aspect of truth which is in view. Observe it is said, we "become dead to the Law by the body of Christ," not by a Divine repeal of the Law. In other words, we died to the Law vicariously, in the person of our blessed Substitute. So, too, we are "delivered from the Law," or as the R. V. more accurately puts it "We have been discharged from the Law," because we have "died to that wherein we were held." In Christ we "died" to the judicial threatenings and ceremonial requirements of the Law.

"Dead to the Law." "By the term the Law, in this place, is intended that Law which is obligatory on both Jews and Gentiles. It is the Law, the work of which is written in the hearts of all men; and that Law which was given to the Jews in which they rested, 2:17. It is the Law taken in the largest extent of the word, including the whole will of God in any way manifested to all mankind, whether Jew or Gentile. All those whom the apostle is addressing, had been under this Law in their unconverted state... To the moral Law exclusively here and throughout the rest of the chapter, the apostle refers ... Dead to the Law means freedom from the power of the Law, as having endured its penalty, and satisfied its demands. It has ceased to have a claim on the obedience of believers in order to life (better, on believers it has ceased to pronounce its curse—A. W. P.), although it still remains their rule of duty" (Robert Haldane). On the words, "Now we are delivered from the Law," Mr. Haldane says: "Christ hath fulfilled the Law, and suffered its penalty for them, and they in consequence are free from its demands for the purpose of obtaining life, or that, on account of the breach of it, the purpose of obtaining life, or that, on account of the breach of it, they should suffer death."

One further word needs to be said on Romans 7:4–6. Some insist that the whole passage treats only of Jewish believers. But this is certainly a mistake. When Paul says in verse 1 "I speak to them that know Law"—there is no article in the Greek—he reasons on the basis

that his readers were fully cognizant of the principle that "the Law hath dominion over a man so long as he liveth." If Paul was here confining his address to Jewish believers, he had said, "I speak to those among you who know the Law." When he says "Know ye not, brethren" (v. 1) and "Wherefore, my brethren" (v. 4) he is addressing his brethren in Christ as the Jews, his brethren by nature, he is careful to so intimate, "My brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (9:3)! Finally, it should be carefully noted how the apostle uses the pronouns "ye" and "we" interchangeably in verses 4 and 5. The emphatic "ye also" in verse 4 seems specifically designed to show that his illustration in the previous verses, with its obvious suggestion of Israel's history, was strictly applicable to all Christians.

"The deliverance from Law in Galatians is that which leads to the sonship of all saints, while the deliverance in Romans leads to the union of all saints with Christ. But in both they are viewed as all alike having been in bondage under Law, and all alike delivered from it. For indeed it is the design of the Holy Spirit ever to lead the saints of all ages to regard themselves as delivered from a common guilt, redeemed from a common curse—"the curse of the Law"—rescued from a common doom; and all this as the result of the curse being fulfilled in the death of Him in whom they all alike died" (Charles Campbell).

"For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10:4). Frequently, only the first half of this verse is quoted, "Christ is the end of the Law." But this is not all that is said here. Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness, that is, before God. The context unequivocally settles the scope and significance of this expression. Paul had just affirmed that Israel, who was ignorant of God's righteousness, had gone about "to establish their own righteousness." Once more it is justification which is in view, and not the walk of a believer. Says Dr. Thos. Chalmers: "There is one obvious sense in which Christ is the end of the Law, and that is when the Law is viewed as a schoolmaster brings us to the conclusion, as to its last lesson, that Christ is our only refuge, our only righteousness."



So also Dr. G. Thomas: "With Christ before us legal righteousness is necessarily at an end, and in not submitting to Christ, the Jews were refusing to submit to the God who gave them the Law."

Another passage frequently appealed to by those who insist on the total abrogation of the Law is 2 Cor. 3. Such expressions as "That which is done away" (v. 11), and "that which is abolished" (v. 13) are regarded as alluding to the Ten Commandments "written and engraven in stones" (v. 7). That this is a mistake, is easily proven. For in Rom. 13:9 and Eph. 6:2 several of the Ten Commandments are quoted and enforced. This is quite sufficient to prove that the moral Law is not "done away." And such scriptures as Isaiah 2:2, 3; Jeremiah 31:33, etc., make it plain that the Law is not abolished.

In 2 Corinthians 3 (and again and again throughout the Epistle) Paul is contending against false "apostles" (note 2:17 and see further 6:1; 11:3, 4, 13, 22) who, preaching the Law to the exclusion of Christ, were seducing the people of God from the blessings of the new covenant. Consequently, the apostle is not here treating of the Law as the moral standard of conduct for believers, but as that which condemns sinners. The inspired penman is pointing out the folly of turning back to the Law as the ground of acceptance before God—which was what the false apostles insisted on. The method he follows is to draw a series of contrasts between the old covenant and the new, showing the immeasurable superiority of the latter over the former. He shows that apart from Christ, the old covenant was but a ministration of condemnation and death; that just as the body without the spirit is dead, so the Law without Christ was but a lifeless "letter." Second Corinthians 3, then contrasts Christianity with Judaism. That which has been "done away" is the old covenant; that which is "abolished" (for the Christian) is the ceremonial law.

In the Galatian Epistle there are quite a number of verses which are used by those who affirm the Law has no relation to believers today—e.g. 2:19; 3:13; 3:23–25; 4:5; 5:18. Now it is impossible to understand these verses unless we first see what is the theme and character of

the Epistle in which they are found. The theme of Galatians is the Believer's Emancipation from the Law. The special character of the Epistle is that it was written to confirm the faith of Christians, who had been troubled and shaken by Judaisers. But a careful reading of the Epistle should show the Emancipation here viewed is not from the Law as the standard of moral conduct, but from the curse or penalty of the Law; and the particular heresy of the Judaisers was not that they pressed the Ten Commandments upon the saints as a rule of life, but that they insisted the works of the Law must be fulfilled before a sinner could be saved. (See Acts 15:1). "The trouble at Galatia was legalism and ritualism. Speaking strictly the two are one; for the attempt to secure Divine favor through law observance leads inevitably to ritualism in its worst form. That the Galatians were going over to the ground of law for acceptance with God is evident from the whole tenor of the Epistle" (Prof. W. G. Morehead on "Galatians"). "The object of the Epistle to the Galatians was to restore among them the pure Gospel which they had received, but which they had so mingled with human works and ceremonies and a notion of their own free will and merits, as to have well-nigh lost it" ("Grace in Galatians" by Dr. George S. Bishop).

The central issue raised in Galatians is not what is the standard of conduct for the believer's life, but what is the ground of a sinner's salvation. In proof of this assertion note carefully that in Galatians 1:7 Paul expressly says the Judaisistic troublers were they who "would pervert the Gospel of Christ." Again, "That no man is justified by the Law in the sight of God is evident," etc. (3:11), shows the trend of the argument. Again; "For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole Law" (5:3 and cf. 6:15) indicates wherein the Judaisers erred. So, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the Law; ye are fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:4) evidences the subject of the Epistle. To "fall from grace" means not for a Christian to obey the Ten Commandments, but to do the works of the Law (moral and ceremonial) in order to be justified. The Law and the Gospel are

irreconcilable. Every attempt to combine them strikes equally at the majesty of the Law and the grace of the Gospel.

On Galatians 3:25 Dr. George Bishop has this to say: "We are no longer 'under a schoolmaster!' i.e., for discipline, for penalty. It does not mean for precept. It does not mean that the Ten Commandments are abolished. It simply says, You are not saved by keeping the Commandments, nor are you lost if you fail. It is Christ who has saved you, and you cannot be lost. Now you will obey from the instinct of the new nature and from gratitude, for these are holiness." On 5:13, 14 he says, "By love serve one another." Here the Law is brought in as a service. 'I am among you,' Saud Hesysm; as One that serveth'—'If ye love Me keep My commandments.' The New Testament repeats and enforces all the Ten Commandments. They were given to be kept, and kept they shall be. Matthew 5:19: 'For all the Law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' 'The Law is fulfilled:' the Law was given to be fulfilled, not only for us, but in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. There is danger here of a mistake on either side—for if we do not preach faith alone for salvation, no one is saved; but if we preach a faith that does not obey, we preach that which nullifies the faith which saves us.

On Galatians 5:18 Dr. John Eadie has this to say: "The Galatians were putting themselves in subjection to Law, and ignoring the free government of the Spirit. To be led by the Spirit is incompatible with being under the Law. So the beginning of Galatians 3. To be under the Law is thus to acknowledge its claim and to seek to obey it in hope of meriting eternal life." To be led by the Spirit is incompatible with being under the Law because the Holy Spirit leads a sinner to trust in Christ alone for salvation.

"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross" (Col. 2:14). Here it is assumed that the "handwriting of ordinances" refers to the Ten Commandments, and, that "which was

contrary to us," refers to Christians. Such a distortion is quickly discovered once this interpretation is exposed to the light. Observe, in the first place, that at the beginning of the previous verse the apostle refers to Gentile believers—"And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh," etc. The "us" of verse 14 refers, then to Jewish believers. But between the "you" and the "us" is a word which supplies the key to what follows, namely, the word "together," which here, as in Ephesians 2:5, 6, points to the spiritual union of believing Gentiles with believing Jews. Believing Jews and gentiles were "quicken together." And how could that be? Because they were "quicken together with Him." Christ acted vicariously, as the Representative of all His people, so that when He died they all died (judicially); when He was quickened they all were; when He rose again they all rose; not merely one part of them did, but all together. But in order for Jew and Gentile to enjoy fellowship, in order for them to be brought "together," that which had hitherto separated them must be made an end of. And it is this which is in view in Colossians 2:14. "The handwriting of ordinances was against us," i.e. against the Jews, for their Divinely-given Law prohibited them for all religious intercourse with the Gentiles. But that which had been against the Jews, was taken out of the way, being nailed to the Cross. Nor does this interpretation stand unsupported: it is indubitably confirmed by a parallel passage.

It is well-known among students of the Word that the Epistles of Ephesians and Colossians are largely complementary and supplementary; and it will frequently be found that the one is absolutely indispensable to the interpretation of the other.

Now in Ephesians 2 there is a passage which is strictly parallel with this portion of Colossians 2. In verse 11 the apostle addresses the Gentile saints, who were of the Uncircumcision—note the reference to "uncircumsion" in Colossians 2:13. Then in verse 12 he reminds them of how in their unconverted state they had been "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel," etc. But in verse 13 he tells them that they had been "made nigh" by the blood of Christ. The result of this

is stated in verse 14: "For He is our peace who hath made both one" (i.e. both believing Jews and believing Gentiles): the "made both one" being parallel with the "quicken together" of Colossians 2:13. Next the apostle tells how this had been made possible: "And hath broken down the middle wall of partition" (that had separated Jew from Gentile); which is parallel with "and took it out of the way," etc. Then the apostle declares, "having abolished in His flesh the enmity, the Law of commandments contained in ordinances," which is parallel with "blotting out the handwriting of ordinances!" Thus has God most graciously made us entirely independent of all human interpretations of Colossians 2:13, 14, by interpreting it for us in Ephesians 2:11–15. How much we lose by failing to compare scripture with scripture.

One other verse we must consider, and that is 1 Timothy 1:9: "Knowing this, that the Law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinner," etc. The key to this is supplied in the immediate context. In verses 3 and 4 the apostle bids Timothy to "charge some that they preach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies," etc. It is clear that he has in mind those who had been infected by Judaisers. In verse 5 the apostle tells his son in the faith what was the "end," of "the commandments"—i.e. the moral Law, as is clear from what precedes and what follows. The design or aim of that Law which is "holy and just and good" (Rom. 7:12) was to direct and advance love to God and men; but this love ("charity") can spring only "out of a pure heart and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned."

Next, in verses 6 and 7 the apostle taxes the Judaisers and those affected by them, as having "swerved" from love and faith, turning aside to "vain jangling," and setting themselves up as teachers of the Law, understanding neither what they said nor affirmed. Then, in verse 8, the apostle guards against His readers drawing a false inference from what he had just said in verse 7, and so he declares "But we know that the Law is good, if a man use it lawfully;" thus

amplifying what he had affirmed in verse 5. Lest they should think that because he had reflected upon the Judaisers, he had also disparaged the Law itself, he added this safeguard in verse 8. To "use" the Law "lawfully," is to use it as God intended it to be used: not as a means of salvation, but as a standard of conduct; not as the ground of our justification, but as the director of our obedience to God. The Law is used unlawfully, not when presented as the rule of the believer's life, but when it is opposed to Christ!

Finally, in verses 9 and 10 the apostle contrasts the design of the Law as it respected believers and unbelievers: "The Law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient," etc. That is to say, the Law as an instrument of terror and condemnation, was not made for the righteous but for the wicked. "The Law, threatening, compelling, condemning, is not made for a righteous man, because he is pushed forward to duty of his own accord, and is no more led by the spirit of bondage and fear of punishment" (Turretin). "By the Law is to be understood, the moral Law, as it is armed with stings and terrors, to restrain rebellious sinners. By the righteous man, is meant, one in whom a principle of Divine grace is planted, and who, for the knowledge and love of God, chooses the things that are pleasing to Him. As the Law has annexed so many severe threatenings to the transgression of it, it is evidently directed to the wicked, who will only be compelled by fear from the outrageous breaking of it" (Poole's Annotations).

We have now examined every passage of any importance in the New Testament which is used by modern Antinomians. And not one of them has a word to say against believers in this dispensation using the Law as the standard of their moral conduct. In our next article, we shall treat of the positive side of the subject, and show that the children of God are obligated to obey the Ten Commandments, not as a condition of salvation, but as the director of their obedience to God.

In this article we have departed from our usual custom, in that we have quoted from quite a number of the commentators of the past. This has been done, not because we desired to buttress our expositions by an appeal to human authorities—though the interpretations of godly men of the past are not to be scorned and regarded as obsolete, rather should they receive the careful examination which they merit, for it was under such teaching was produced Christian conduct that puts to unutterable shame the laxity of the present-day Christian walk. No, we have appealed to the writings of Christian exegetes of the past that it might be seen we have not given a forced and novel interpretation of those passages which stood in the way of what we deem to be the truth on the subject of the relation of the Law to Christians; but instead, an interpretation which, though the result of personal study, is in full accord with that given by many, who for piety, scholarship, spiritual discernment, and knowledge of the Scriptures, few living today are worthy to be compared.

### **3. The Positive Side**

What is the relation of the Law (the Ten Commandments) to Christians? In our previous chapter we pointed out how that three radically different answers have been returned to this question. The first, that sinners become saints by obeying the Law. This is Legalism pure and simple. It is heresy of the most dangerous kind. All who really believe and act on it as the ground of their acceptance by God, will perish eternally. Second, others say that the Law is not binding on Christians because it has been abolished. This is, we are fully assured, a serious error. It arises from a mistaken interpretation of certain passages in the Epistles. The inevitable tendency of such an error is toward Antinomianism, the "turning of the grace of God into lasciviousness" (Jude 4). Third, others affirm, and the writer is among the number, that the Ten Commandments are an expression of the unchanging character and will of God: that they are a moral standard of conduct which we disregard at our peril: that they are, and will ever be, binding upon every Christian.

In our last chapter we sought to prepare the way for the present one. There, we dealt with the negative side; here, we shall treat of the positive. In the former, we sought to give the true meaning of the principal passages in the New Testament appealed to by those who deny that the Ten Commandments are now binding on Christians. In the present chapter, we shall endeavor to expound some of the many passages in the New Testament which affirm that the Ten Commandments are now binding on Christians. We, therefore, invite the reader's most diligent and prayerful attention to the scriptures cited and our comments upon them.

"Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:17–19). It might appear to the disciples of Christ that their Master intended to set aside Moses and the Prophets, and introduce an entirely new standard of morality. It was true indeed that He would expose the error of depending on the work of the Law for acceptance with God (as Moses and the prophets had done before Him); but it was no part of His design to set aside the Law itself. He was about to correct various corruptions, which obtained among the Jews, hence He is careful to preface what He has to say by cautioning them not to misconstrue His designs. So far from having any intention of repudiating Moses, He most emphatically asserts: first, that He had not come to destroy the Law; second, that He had come to "fulfill" it; third, that the Law is of perpetual obligation; fourth, that whoso breaks one of the least of the Law's commandments and teaches other so to do, shall suffer loss; fifth, that he who kept the Law and taught men to respect and obey it should be rewarded.

"I am not come to destroy the Law"—the Prophets simply expounded the Law, and rebuked Israel for their failure to keep it, and



forewarned them of the consequences of continued disobedience. "I am not come to destroy the Law." Nothing could be more explicit. The word "destroy" here means "to dissolve or overthrow." When, then, our Lord said that He had not come to destroy the Law He gave us to understand that it was not the purpose of His mission to repeal or annul the Ten Commandments: that he had not come to free men from their obligations to them. And if He did not "destroy" the Law, then no one had destroyed it; and if no one has destroyed it, then the Law still stands with all its Divine authority; and if the Law still abides as the unchanging expression of God's character and will, then every human creature is under lasting obligation to obey it; and if every human creature, then the Christian!

Second, the Son of God went on to say "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." The word "fulfill" here means "to fill up, to complete." Christ "fulfilled" the Law in three ways: first, by rendering personal obedience to its precepts. God's Law was within His heart (Psa. 40:8), and in thought, word and deed, He perfectly met its requirements; and thus by His obedience He magnified the Law and made it honorable (Isa. 42:21). Second, by suffering (at the Cross) its death-penalty on behalf of His people who had transgressed it. Third, by exhibiting its fulness and spirituality and by amplifying its contents. Thus did Christ, our Exemplar, "fulfill the Law."

So far from Christ having repealed the Law, He expressly affirmed, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled." In these words He announces the perpetuity of the Law. So long as heaven and earth shall last, the Law will endure, and by necessary implication, the lasting obligations of all men to fulfill it.

But this is not all that our Lord here said. With omniscient foresight He anticipated what Mr. Mead has aptly termed "The Modern Outcry against the Law," and proceeds to solemnly warn against it. He said, "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments,

and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven."

"Do we then make void the Law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the Law" (Rom. 3:31). In the previous part of the chapter the apostle had proven that "there is none righteous, no not one" (v. 10); second, he had declared "By the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified" (v. 20); then in verses 21 through 26 he had set forth the Divine way of salvation—"through faith in Christ's blood." In verse 28, he sums up his argument by affirming "a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law." In verses 29 and 30 he proves that this is true for Jew and Gentile alike. Then, in verse 31, he anticipates an objection: What about the Law, then? This was a very pertinent question. Twice had he said that justification was apart from the deeds of the Law. If, then, the Law served no purpose in effecting the salvation of sinners, has it no office at all? If we are saved "through faith" is the Law useless? Are we to understand you to mean (Paul) that the Law has been annulled? Not at all, is the apostle's answer: "We establish the Law."

What did the apostle mean when he said "we establish the Law?" He meant that, as saved men, Christians are under additional obligations to obey the Law, for they are now furnished with new and more powerful motives to serve God. Righteousness imputed to the believer produces in the justified one a kind and an extent of obedience which could not otherwise have been obtained. So far from rendering void or nullifying the authority and use of the Law, it sustains and confirms them. Our moral obligation to God and our neighbor has not been weakened, but strengthened. Below we offer one or two brief excerpts from other expositors.

"Does not the doctrine of faith evacuate the Old Testament of its meaning, and does it not make law void, and lead to disregard of it? Does it not open the door to license of living? To this the apostle replies, that it certainly does not; but that, on the contrary, the

Gospel puts law on a proper basis and establishes it on its foundation as a revelation of God's will" (Dr. Griffith-Thomas).

"We cancel law, then, by this faith of ours? We open the door, then, to moral license? We abolish code and precept, then, when we ask not for conduct, but for faith? Away with the thought; nay, we establish law; we go the very way to give a new sacredness to its every command, and to disclose a new power for the fulfillment of them all. But how this is, and is to be, the later argument is to show" (Dr. Handley Moule).

"Objection. If man is justified by faith without works, does not that do away with law entirely, i.e. teach lawlessness? Answer: By no means. It establishes the law. When a man is saved by grace, that does not make him lawless. There is a power within him which does not destroy, but it strengthens the law, and causes him to keep it, not through fear, but through love of God" (H. S. Miller, M.A.).

"For I delight in the law of God after the inward man ... with the mind I myself serve the Law of God" (Rom 7:22–25). In this chapter the apostle does two things: first, he shows what is not and what is the Law's relation to the believer—judicially, the believer is emancipated from the curse or penalty of the Law (7:1–6); morally, the believer is under bonds to obey the Law (vv. 22, 25). Secondly, he guards against a false inference being drawn from what he had taught in chapter 6. In 6:1–11 he sets forth the believer's identification with Christ as "dead to sin" (vv. 2, 7, etc.). Then, from verse 11 onwards, he shows the effect this truth should have upon the believer's walk. In chapter 7 he follows the same order of thought. In 7:1–6 he treats of the believer's identification with Christ as "dead to the law" (see vv. 4 and 6). Then, from verse 7 onwards he describes the experiences of the Christian. Thus the first half of Romans 6 and the first half of Romans 7 deal with the believer's standing, whereas the second half of each chapter treats of the believer's state; but with this difference: the second half of Rom. 6 reveals what our state

ought to be, whereas the second half of Rom. 7 (vv. 13–25) shows what our state actually is.\*

The controversy which has raged over Rom. 7 is largely the fruitage of the Perfectionism of Wesley and his followers. That brethren, whom we have cause to respect, should have adopted this error in a modified form, only shows how widespread today is the spirit of Laodiceanism. To talk of "getting out of Romans 7 into Romans 8" is excuseless folly. Romans 7 and 8 both apply with undiminished force and pertinence to every believer on earth today. The second half of Romans 7 describes the conflict of the two natures in the child of God: it simply sets forth in detail what is summarized in Galatians 5:17. Romans 7:14, 15, 18, 19, 21 are far short of the standard set before him—we mean God's standard, not that of the so-called "victorious life" teachers. If any Christian reader is ready to say that Romans 7:19 does not describe his life, we say in all kindness, that he is sadly deceived. We do not mean by this that every Christian breaks the laws of men, or that he is an overt transgressor of the laws of God. But we do mean that his life is far, far below the level of the life our Saviour lived here on earth. We do mean that there is much of "the flesh" still evident in every Christian—not the least in those who make such loud boastings of their spiritual attainments. We do mean that every Christian has urgent need to daily pray for the forgiveness of his daily sins (Luke 11:4), for "in many things we all stumble" (James 3:2, R.V.).

The second half of Romans 7, then, is describing the state of the Christian, i.e. the conflict between the two natures within him. In verse 14 the apostle declares, "We know that the Law is spiritual." How different is this language from the disparaging way that many now refer to God's Law! In verse 22 he exclaims, "I delight in the Law of God after the inward man." How far removed is this from the delusion that the Law has been abolished, and that it no longer serves any purpose for the Christian! The apostle Paul did not ignore the Law, still less did he regard it as an enemy. The new nature within him delighted in it: so, too, did the Psalmist, see Psalm 119:72,

97, 140. But the old nature was still within him too, warring against the new, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin, so that he cried, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death" (v. 24)—and we sincerely pity every professing Christian who does not echo this cry. Next the apostle thanks God that he shall be delivered yet "through Jesus Christ our Lord" (v. 25), not "by the power of the Holy Spirit" note! The deliverance is future, at the return of Christ, see Philippians 3:20, etc. Finally, and mark that this comes after he had spoken of the promised "deliverance," he sums up his dual experience by saying, "So then with the mind I myself serve the Law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." Could anything be plainer? Instead of affirming that the Law had nothing to do with him as a Christian, nor he with it, he expressly declared that he served "the Law of God." This is sufficient for us. Let others refuse to "serve" the Law of God at their peril.

"For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. That the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit" (Rom. 8:3, 4). This throws light on Romans 3:31, showing us, in part, how the Law is established. The reference here is to the new nature. The believer now has a heart that loves God, and therefore does it "delight in the Law of God." And it is ever at the heart that God looks, though, of course, He takes note of our actions too. But in heart the believer "fulfills" the holy requirements of God's Law, inasmuch as his innermost desire is to serve, please, and glorify the Law-giver. The righteous requirements of the Law are "fulfilled" in us because we now obey from the heart (Rom. 6:17).

"He that loveth another hath fulfilled the Law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the Law" (Rom.

13:8–10). Here again, the apostle, so far from lending the slightest encouragement to the strange delusion that the Ten Commandments have become obsolete to Christians, actually quotes five of them, and then declares, "Love is the fulfilling of the Law." Love is not a substitution for Law-obedience, but it is that which prompts the believer to render obedience to it. Note carefully, it is not "love is the abrogating of the Law," but "love is the fulfilling of the Law." "The whole Law is grounded on love to God and love to man. This cannot be violated without the breach of Law; and if there is love, it will influence us to the observance of all God's commandments" (Haldane). Love is the fulfilling of the Law because love is what the Law demands. The prohibitions of the Law are not unreasonable restraints on Christian liberty, but the just and wise requirements of love. We may add that the above is another passage which serves to explain Romans 3:31, for it supplies a practical exemplification of the way in which the Gospel establishes the Law as the expression of the Divine will, which love alone can fulfill.

"For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the Law; as under the Law, that I might gain them that are under the Law; to them that are without Law, as without Law, (being not without Law to God, but under the Law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without Law" (1 Cor. 9:19–22). The central thought of this passage is how the apostle forewent his Christian liberty for the sake of the Gospel. Though "free" from all, he nevertheless, made himself "the servant" of all. To the unconverted Jews he "became a Jew;" Acts 16:3 supplies an illustration. To those who deemed themselves to be yet under the ceremonial law, he acted accordingly: Acts 21:26 supplies an example of this. To them without Law: that is, Gentiles without the ceremonial law, he abstained from the use of all ceremonies as they did: cf. Galatians 2:3. Yet, he did not act as "without Law to God," but instead, as "under the Law to Christ;" that is, as still under the moral Law of God. He never counted himself free from that, nor would he do anything contrary to the eternal Law of

righteousness. To be "under Law to God," is, without question, to be under the God. Therefore, to be under the Law of Christ, is to be under the Law of God, for the Law was not abrogated but reinforced by Christ. This text, then, gives a plain and decisive answer to the question, How the believer is under the Law of God, namely, as he is "under the Law to Christ," belonging to Christ, as he does, by redemption.

"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the Law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Gal. 5:13, 14). Here the apostle first reminds the Galatian saints (and us) that they had been called unto "liberty," i.e., from the curse of the moral Law (3:13). Second, he defines the bounds of that liberty, and shows that it must not deteriorate to fleshly license, but that it is bounded by the requirements of the unchanging moral Law of God, which requires that we love our neighbor as ourselves. Third, he repeats here, what he had said in Romans 13:8–10, namely, that love is the fulfilling of the Law. The new commandment of love to our brethren is comprehended in the old commandment of love to our neighbor, hence the former is enforced by an appeal to the latter.

"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another" (Gal. 5:13). We quote here part of the late Dr. George Bishop's comments on this verse: The apostle here emphasizes a danger. The believer before believing, relied upon his works to save him. After believing, seeing he is in no way saved by his works, he is in danger of despising good works and minifying their value. At first he was an Arminian living by law; now he is in danger of becoming an Antinomian and flinging away the law altogether.

"But the law is holy and the commandment holy, and just, and good. It is God's standard—the eternal Norm. Fulfilled by Christ for us, it still remains the swerveless and unerring rule of righteousness. We

are without the law for salvation, but not without the law for obedience. Angels are under the law 'doing God's commandments, hearkening to the voice of His word' (Psa. 103:20). The law then is immutable—its reign universal and without exception. The law! It is the transcript of the Divine perfection: the standard of eternal justice: the joy and rapture of all holy beings. The law! We are above it for salvation, but under it, or rather in it and it in us, as a principle of holiness" (Grace in Galatians).

"Children obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth" (Eph. 6:1–3). Once more we have a direct quotation from the tables of stone as the regulator of the Christian conscience. First, the apostle bids children obey their parents in the Lord. Second, he enforces this by an appeal to the fifth commandment in the Decalogue. What a proof this is that the Christian is under the Law (for the apostle is writing to Christians), under it "to Christ." Third, not only does the apostle here quote the fifth commandment, but he reminds us that there is a promise annexed to it, a promise concerning the prolongation of earthly life. How this refutes those who declare that our blessings are all spiritual and heavenly (Eph. 1:3). Let the ones who are constantly criticizing those who press on the children of God the scriptures which have to do with our earthly walk, and who term this a "coming down from our position in the heavenlies" weigh carefully Ephesians 6:2, 3 and also 1 Timothy 4:8 —"For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come;" and let them also study 1 Peter 3:10. In the administration of His government, God acts upon immutable principles.\*

"But we know that the Law is good, if a man use it lawfully" (1 Tim. 1:8). The Law is used unlawfully, when sinners rest on their imperfect obedience to it as the ground of their acceptance by God. So, too, believers use it unlawfully, when they obey its precepts out of servile fear. But used lawfully, the Law is good. This could never have



been said if the Law is an enemy to be shunned. Nor could it have been said if it has been repealed for the Christian. In that case, the apostle would have said, "The Law is not binding upon us." But he did not so say. Instead, he declared "The Law is good." He said more than that, he affirmed, "We know that the Law is good." It is not a debateable point, rather is it one that has been Divinely settled for us. But the Law is only "good" if a man (Greek, any one) use it lawfully. To use the Law lawfully is to regard it as the unchanging expression of the Will of God, and therefore to "delight" in it. To use the Law lawfully is to receive it as the corrector of our conduct. To use the Law lawfully is to "fulfill" it in love.

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah ... this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people" (Heb. 8:8, 10). Let it be carefully noted that this passage unmistakably demonstrates two things: first, it proves conclusively that the Law has not been "abolished!" Second, it proves that the Law does have a use and value for those that are saved, for it is saved Israel that is here in view! Nor is there any possible room for doubt as to whether or not this applies to Gentile Christians now.

The passage just quoted refers to "the new covenant." Is the new covenant restricted to Israel? Emphatically no. Did not our Saviour say at the Holy Supper, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:28, R.V.)? Was Christ's blood of the new covenant limited to Israel? Certainly not. Note how the apostle quotes our Lord's words when writing to the Corinthians, see 1 Corinthians 11:25. So, too, in 2 Corinthians 3:6 the apostle Paul declares that God has made us (not is going to make us) "ministers of the new covenant." This is proof positive that Christians are under the new covenant. The new covenant is made with all that Christ died for, and therefore Hebrews 8:8–10 assures

us that God puts His laws into the minds and writes them upon the hearts of every one of His redeemed.

But so anxious are some to grasp at everything which they imagine favors their contention that in no sense are believers under the Law, this passage is sometimes appealed to in support. It is argued that since God has now (by regeneration) written the Law on the believer's heart, He no longer needs any outward commandments to rule and direct him. Inward principle, it is said, will now move him spontaneously, so that all need for external law is removed. This error was so ably exposed fifty years ago by Dr. Martin, we transcribe a part of his refutation:

"How was it with our first parents? If ever outward law, categorical and imperative, might have been dispensed with, it might in Adam's case. In all the compass of his nature, there was nothing adverse to the law of God. He was a law unto himself. He was the moral law unto himself; loving God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself, in all things content, in nothing coveting. Was imperative, authoritative, sovereign commandment therefore utterly unnecessary? Did God see it to be needless to say to him, Thou shalt, or, Thou shalt not? It was the very thing that infinite wisdom saw he needed. And therefore did He give commandment—"Thou shalt not eat of it.' "

"How was it with the last Adam? All God's law was in His heart operating there, an inward principle of grace; He surely, if any, might have dispensed with strict, imperative, authoritative law and commandment. 'I delight to do Thy will, O God; Thy law also is within My heart.' Was no commandment, therefore, laid upon—no obedience—statute ordained—unto Him? Or did He complain if there was? Nay; I hear Him specially rejoicing in it. Every word He uttered, every work He did, was by commandment: 'My Father which sent me, He gave Me commandment what I should say and what I should do; as He gave me commandment therefore, so I speak.'

"And shall His members, though the regenerating Spirit dwells in them, claim an exemption from what the Son was not exempt? Shall believers, because the Spirit puts the law into their hearts, claim a right to act merely at the dictate of inward gracious principle, untrammelled, uncontrolled by outward peremptory statute? I appeal to Paul in the seventh chapter of the Romans, where he says: 'The law is holy,' and adds, as if to show that it was no inward actuating law of the heart, but God's outward commanding law to the will: 'the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, and just, and good.' And I appeal to the sweet singer of Israel, as I find him in the 119th Psalm, which is throughout the breathing of a heart in which the law of God is written, owning himself with joy as under peremptory external law: 'Thou hast commanded us to keep Thy precepts diligently.' "

"If ye fulfill the royal Law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well" (James 2:8). The immediate purpose of the apostle was to correct an evil—common in all climes and ages—of which his brethren were guilty. They had paid deference to the wealthy, and shown them greater respect than the poor who attended their assembly (see preceding verses). They had, in fact, "despised the poor" (v. 6). The result was that the worthy name of Christ had been "blasphemed" (v. 7). Now it is striking to observe the method followed and the ground of appeal made by the apostle James in correcting this evil.

First, he says, "If ye fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: but if ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin, and are convicted of the Law as transgressors" (vv. 8, 9). He shows that in despising the poor they had transgressed the Law, for the Law says, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Here then, if proof positive that the Law was binding upon those to whom James wrote, for it is impossible for one who is in every sense "dead to the Law" to be a "transgressor" of it. And here, it is probable that some will raise the quibble that the Epistle of James is Jewish. True, the Epistle is addressed to the twelve tribes scattered abroad. Yet it cannot be gainsaid that the

apostle was writing to men of faith (1:3); men who had been regenerated—"begotten" (1:18); men who were called by the worthy name of Christ (2:7), and therefore Christians. And it is to them the apostle here appeals to the Law!—another conclusive proof that the Law has not been abolished.

The apostle here terms the Law, "the royal Law." This was to empathize its authority, and to remind his regenerated brethren that the slightest deflection from it was rebellion. The royal Law also calls attention to the supreme dignity of its Author.

This royal Law, we learn, is transcribed in the Scriptures—the reference here was, of course, to the Old Testament Scriptures.

Next, the apostle says, "For whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou are become a transgressor of the Law" (vv. 10, 11). His purpose is evident. He presses on those to whom he writes that, he who fails to love his neighbour is just as much and just as truly a transgressor of the Law as the man who is guilty of adultery or murder, for he has rebelled against the authority of the One who gave the whole Law. In this quotation of the 6th and 7th commandments all doubt is removed as to what "Law" is in view in this passage.

Finally, the apostle says, "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the Law of liberty. For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment" (vv. 12, 13). This is solemn and urgently needs pressing upon the Lord's people today: Christians are going to be "judged by the Law!" The Law is God's unchanging standard of conduct for all; and all alike, saints and sinners, are going to be weighed in its balances; not of course, in order to determine their eternal destiny, but to settle the apportionment of reward and punishment. It should be obvious to all that the very word "reward" implies obedience to

the Law! Let it be repeated, though, that this judgment for Christians has nothing whatever to do with their salvation. Instead, it is to determine the measure of reward which they shall enjoy in Heaven. Should any object against the idea of any future judgment (not punishment but judgment) for Christians, we would ask them to carefully ponder 1 Corinthians 11:31, 32; 2 Timothy 4:1; Hebrews 10:30—in each case the Greek word is the same as here in James 2:12.

It should be noted that the apostle here terms the Law by which we shall be judged "the Law of liberty." It is, of course, the same as "the royal Law" in verse 8. But why term it the Law of liberty? Because such it is to the Christian. He obeys it (or should do) not from fear, but out of love. The only true "liberty" lies in complete subjection to God. There was, too, a peculiar propriety in the apostle James here styling the Law of God "the Law of liberty." His brethren had been guilty of "respecting persons," showing undue deference to the rich; and this was indeed servility of the worst kind. But to "love our neighbour" will free us from this.

Other passages in the New Testament which show more directly the bearing of the Law on believers might be quoted, but we close, by calling attention to 1 John 2:6: "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked" (1 John 2:6). This is very simple, and yet deeply important. The believer is here exhorted to regulate his walk by that of the walk of Christ. How did He walk? We answer, in perfect obedience to the Law of God. Galatians 4:4 tells us, "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law." Psalm 40:8 declares that God's Law was in His heart. Everything recorded about the Saviour in the four Gospels evidences His complete subjection to the Law. If, then, the Christian desires to honor and please God, if he would walk as Christ walked, then must he regulate his conduct by and render obedience to the Ten Commandments. Not that we would for a moment insist that the Christian has nothing more than the Ten Commandments by which to regulate his conduct. No; Christ came to "fulfill" the Law, and as

we have intimated, one thing this means is that, He has brought out the fulness of its contents, He has brought to light its exceeding spirituality, He has shown us (both directly and through His apostles) its manifold application. But whatever amplification the Law has received in the New Testament, nothing has been given by God which in any wise conflicts with what he first imprinted on man's moral nature, and afterwards wrote with His own finger at Sinai, nothing that in the slightest modifies its authority or our obligation to render obedience to it.

May the Holy Spirit so enlighten our sin-darkened understandings and so draw out our hearts unto God, that we shall truthfully say, "The Law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver ... O how love I Thy law! it is my meditation all the day" (Psa. 119:72–97).

## **The Longsuffering of God**

"HOW wondrous is God's patience with the world today. On every side people are sinning with a high hand. The Divine law is trampled under foot and God Himself openly despised. It is truly amazing that he does not instantly strike dead those who so brazenly defy Him. Why does He not suddenly cut off the haughty infidel and blatant blasphemer, as He did Ananias and Sapphira? Why does He not cause the earth to open its mouth and devour the persecutors of His people, so that, like Dothan and Abiram, they shall go down alive into the Pit? And what of apostate Christendom, where every possible form of sin is now tolerated and practiced under cover of the holy name of Christ? Why does not the righteous wrath of Heaven make an end of such abominations? Only one answer is possible:

because God bears with "much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction."

And what of the writer and the reader? Let us review our own lives. It is not long since we followed a multitude to do evil, had no concern for God's glory, and lived only to gratify self. How patiently He bore with our vile conduct! And now that grace has snatched us as brands from the burning, giving us a place in God's family, and has begotten us unto an eternal inheritance in glory, how miserably we requite Him. How shallow our gratitude, how tardy our obedience, how frequent our backsliding! One reason why God suffers the flesh to remain in the believer is that He may exhibit His "longsuffering to us ward" (2 Peter 3:9). Since this Divine attribute is manifested only in this world, God takes advantage to display it toward "His own."

May our meditation upon this Divine excellence soften our hearts, make our consciences tender, and may we learn in the school of holy experience the "patience of saints," namely, submission to the Divine will and continuance in well doing. Let us earnestly seek grace to emulate this Divine excellency. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). In the immediate context of this verse Christ exhorts us to love our enemies, bless them that curse us, do good to them that hate us. God bears long with the wicked notwithstanding the multitude of their sins, and shall we desire to be revenged because of a single injury?

## **Love of the Truth or for the Truth?**

IT IS not simply a knowledge of the Truth that saves, but a love of it that is the essential prerequisite. This is clear from 2 Thessalonians

2:10, "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved ..."

Since then there is love for the Truth in contradistinction from a love of the Truth, and a natural love for Christ in contrast with a spiritual love of Him, how am I to be sure which mine is? We may distinguish between these "loves" thus.

First, the one is partial, the other is impartial; the one esteems the doctrines of scripture but not the duties it enjoins, the promises of Scripture but not the precepts, the blessings of Christ but not His claims, His priestly office but not His kingly rule; but not so with the spiritual lover.

Second, the one is occasional, the other is regular; the former balks when personal interests are crossed, not so the latter.

Third, the one is evanescent and weak, the other lasting and powerful; the former quickly wanes when other delights compete, and prevails not to control the other affections; the latter rules the heart, and is strong as death.

Fourth, the former betters not its possessor; the latter transforms the life.

## **The Meaning of "KOSMOS" in John 3:16**



IT MAY appear to some of our readers that the exposition we have given of John 3:16 in the chapter on "Difficulties and Objections" is a forced and unnatural one, inasmuch as our definition of the term "world" seems to be out of harmony with the meaning and scope of this word in other passages, where, to supply the world of believers (God's elect) as a definition of "world" would make no sense. Many have said to us, "Surely, 'world' means world, that is, you, me, and everybody." In reply we would say: We know from experience how difficult it is to set aside the "traditions of men" and come to a passage which we have heard explained in a certain way scores of times, and study it carefully for ourselves without bias. Nevertheless, this is essential if we would learn the mind of God. Many people suppose they already know the simple meaning of John 3:16, and therefore they conclude that no diligent study is required of them to discover the precise teaching of this verse. Needless to say, such an attitude shuts out any further light which they otherwise might obtain on the passage. Yet, if anyone will take a Concordance and read carefully the various passages in which the term "world" (as a translation of "cosmos") occurs, he will quickly perceive that to ascertain the precise meaning of, the word "world" in any given passage is not nearly so easy as is popularly supposed. The word "kosmos," and its English equivalent "world," is not used with a uniform significance in the New Testament. Very far from it. It is used in quite a number of different ways. Below we will refer to a few passages where this term occurs, suggesting a tentative definition in each case:

"Kosmos" is used of the Universe as a whole: Acts 17:24—"God that made the world and all things therein seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth." is used of the Universe as a whole: Acts 17:24—"God that made the world and all things therein seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth."

"Kosmos" is used of the earth: John 13:1; Eph. 1:4, etc., etc.—"When Jesus knew that his hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world

He loved them unto the end." "Depart out of this world" signifies, leave this earth. "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world." This expression signifies, before the earth was founded—compare Job 38:4 etc.

"Kosmos" is used of the world-system: John 12:31 etc. "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the Prince of this world be cast out"—compare Matt. 4:8 and 1 John 5:19, R. V.

"Kosmos" is used of the whole human race: Rom. 3:19, etc.—"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."

"Kosmos" is used of humanity minus believers: John 15:18; Rom. 3:6 "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you." Believers do not "hate" Christ, so that "the world" here must signify the world of unbelievers in contrast from believers who love Christ. "God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world." Here is another passage where "the world" cannot mean "you, me, and everybody," for believers will not be "judged" by God, see John 5:24. So that here, too, it must be the world of unbelievers which is in view. is used of humanity minus believers: John 15:18; Rom. 3:6 "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you." Believers do not "hate" Christ, so that "the world" here must signify the world of unbelievers in contrast from believers who love Christ. "God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world." Here is another passage where "the world" cannot mean "you, me, and everybody," for believers will not be "judged" by God, see John 5:24. So that here, too, it must be the world of unbelievers which is in view.

"Kosmos" is used of Gentiles in contrast from Jews: Rom. 11:12 etc. "Now if the fall of them (Israel) be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them (Israel) the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their (Israel's) fulness." Note how the first clause in italics is

defined by the latter clause placed in italics. Here, again, "the world" cannot signify all humanity for it excludes Israel!

"Kosmos" is used of believers only: John 1:29; 3:16, 17; 6:33; 12; 47; 1 Cor. 4:9; 2 Cor. 5:19. We leave our readers to turn to these passages, asking them to note, carefully, exactly what is said and predicated of "the world" in each place. is used of believers only: John 1:29; 3:16, 17; 6:33; 12; 47; 1 Cor. 4:9; 2 Cor. 5:19. We leave our readers to turn to these passages, asking them to note, carefully, exactly what is said and predicated of "the world" in each place.

Thus it will be seen that "kosmos" has at least seven clearly defined different meanings in the New Testament. It may be asked, Has then God used a word thus to confuse and confound those who read the Scriptures? We answer, No! nor has He written His Word for lazy people who are too dilatory, or too busy with the things of this world, or, like Martha, so much occupied with "serving," they have no time and no heart to "search" and "study" Holy Writ! Should it be asked further, But how is a searcher of the Scriptures to know which of the above meanings the term "world" has in any given passage? The answer is: This may be ascertained by a careful study of the context, by diligently noting what is predicated of "the world" in each passage, and by prayer fully consulting other parallel passages to the one being studied. The principal subject of John 3:16 is Christ as the Gift of God. The first clause tells us what moved God to "give" His only begotten Son, and that was His great "love;" the second clause informs us for whom God "gave" His Son, and that is for, "whosoever (or, better, 'every one') believeth;" while the last clause makes known why God "gave" His Son (His purpose), and that is, that everyone that believeth "should not perish but have everlasting life." That "the world" in John 3:16 refers to the world of believers (God's elect), in contradistinction from "the world of the ungodly" (2 Pet. 2:5), is established, unequivocally established, by a comparison of the other passages which speak of God's "love." "God commendeth His love toward US"—the saints, Rom. 5:8. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth"—every son, Heb. 12:6. "We love Him, because He first

loved US"—believers, 1 John 4:19. The wicked God "pities" (see Matt. 18:33). Unto the unthankful and evil God is "kind" (see Luke 6:35). The vessels of wrath He endures "with much long-suffering" (see Rom. 9:22). But "His own" God "loves!"

## **The Narrow Way**

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (Matthew 7:13–14)

THE second half of Matthew 7 forms the applicatory part of that most important discourse of our Lord's, known as "the Sermon on the Mount." One leading design of the Sermon was to show the spiritual nature and wide extent of that obedience which characterizes the true subjects of Christ's kingdom, and which obedience is absolutely necessary for the enjoyment of that ultimate state of blessedness which Divine grace has provided for them. As the Prophet of God, Christ made known that the righteousness which obtains in His kingdom greatly exceeds the "righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees."

Now the Jews imagined that they were all of them the subjects of the Messiah's kingdom; that by virtue of their descent from Abraham, they were the rightful heirs of it; that the "righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees" (that system of religious and moral duty taught by them) met all the requirements of God's law. But this delusion the Lord Jesus here exposed fleshly descent from Abraham

could not give title unto a spiritual kingdom: That which was merely natural was no qualification for the supernatural realm: Only they were accounted the true children of Abraham who had his faith (Rom. 4:16), who did his works (John 8:39), and who were united to Christ (Gal. 3:29).

In the Sermon on the Mount the Lord delineated the inward state of those who belonged to His spiritual kingdom (5:4–11); described the outward conduct by which they might be identified (5:13–16); expounded the personal righteousness which God's justice demanded (5:17–28); and defined that utter repudiation of sin which he required from His people (5:29–30). So high are the demands of the thrice holy One, so uncompromising are the requirements of His ineffable character, that none can dwell with him eternally who do not in time, loathe, resist, and turn from all that is repulsive to His pure eye. Nothing short of the complete denying of self, the abandoning of the dearest idol, the forsaking of the most cherished sinful course—figuratively represented under the cutting off of a right hand and the plucking out of a right eye—is what He claims from every one who would have communion with Himself.

Such plain and pointed declarations of Christ must have seemed "hard sayings" to the multitudes who listened to Him; such piercing and flesh-withering demands would probably cause many of his Jewish hearers to think within themselves, "Who then can be saved? This is indeed a strait gate and a narrow way." Anticipating their secret objections, the Lord plainly declared that the Gate unto salvation is "Strait" and the Way which leadeth unto life is "Narrow;" yet, He went on to point out, it is your wisdom, your interest, your duty to enter that "Gate" and walk that "Way." He acknowledged and faithfully warned them that there was a "Wide gate" soliciting their entrance, and a "Broad road" inviting them to walk therein; but that gate leads to perdition, that road ends in Hell. The "Strait Gate" is the only gate to "life," the "Narrow Way" is the only one which conducts to Heaven. Few indeed find it, few have the least inclination for it; but that very fact ought only to provide an additional incentive

to my giving all diligence to enter therein. In the verses which are now to be before us, Christ defined and described the Way of salvation, though we (sorrowfully) admit that modern evangelists (?) rarely expound it. What we shall now endeavor to set forth is very different from what most have been taught, but you reject it at your peril. We repeat, that in that passage we are about to consider, He who was Truth incarnate made known the only way of escaping Perdition and securing Heaven, namely, by entering the "Strait Gate" and treading the "Narrow Way."

## **The Strait Gate**

The Greek word for "Strait" signifies restrained or "Narrow" and is so rendered in the R.V. Now a "Gate" serves two purposes: it lets in and it shuts out. All who enter this Narrow Gate gain admittance to that "Way" which "leadeth unto life;" but all who enter not by this Narrow Gate, are eternally barred from God's presence. The second use of this Gate is solemnly illustrated at the close of the parable of the virgins. There, our Lord pictures the foolish ones as being without the necessary "oil" (the work of the Spirit in the heart), and while they went to buy it, the Bridegroom came, and "the door was shut" (Matthew 25:10); and though they then besought him to open it to them, He answered "I know you not."

### **1. What is denoted by this figure of the "Narrow Gate?"**

We believe the reference is to the searching and solemn teaching of Him who is Truth incarnate. It is only as the heart bows to the righteousness of God's claims and demands upon us as set forth by His Son, that any soul can enter that path which alone leads to Him. While the heart is rebellious against Him there can be no approach to Him, for—"Can two walk together except they be agreed?" It is true, blessedly and gloriously true, that Christ Himself is "the Door" (John 10:9), and He is so in a threefold way, according to the three principal functions of His mediatorial office. He is "the Door" into God's presence as the Prophet, the Priest, and the King.

Now it is only as Christ is truly received as God's authoritative Prophet, only as His holy teachings are really accepted by a contrite heart, that any one is prepared to savingly welcome Him as Priest. Christ is the "Way" and "the Truth" before he is the "Life" (John 14:6), as he is "first King of righteousness, and after that, also King of peace" (Heb. 7:2). In other words, His cleansing blood is only available for those who are willing to throw down the weapons of their warfare against God, and surrender themselves to his holy rule. The wicked must forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, if he is to be pardoned by God (Isa. 55:7); and this is only another way of saying that Christ must be received as Prophet, before he is embraced as Priest.

## **2. Why is This Gate a "Narrow" One?—for at Least Three Reasons:**

First, because of sin. "The wicked shall be turned into Hell, all the nations that forget God" Ps. 9:17. The gate of heaven is far too narrow to admit such characters. The New Testament plainly affirms the same fact: "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man who is an idolator, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them" (Eph. 5:5–7).

Second, because of the Law. There are two principal errors about the Law, and I know not which is the more dangerous and disastrous: that one can earn heaven by obeying it; that one may enter heaven without that personal and practical godliness which the Law requires. "Follow peace with all, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14): where there is not this personal conformity to the will of God, the strong hand of the Law will close the door of heaven.

Third, because none can take the world along with him: this Gate is far too "Narrow" to admit those who love the world.

### **3. What is Meant by "Entering" This Narrow Gate?**

First, the acceptance of those teachings of truth, of duty, of happiness, which were unfolded by Christ; the honest and actual receiving into the heart of His holy, searching, flesh-withering instructions. Such acceptance as a person, with great difficulty, forcing his way through a circumscribed entrance. I say "with great difficulty," for Christ's precepts and commandments are, to the last degree, unpalatable to an unrenewed heart, and cannot be willingly and gladly received without a rigid denial of self and relinquishment of sinful pleasures, pursuits, and interests. Christ has plainly warned us that it is impossible for a man to serve two masters. Self, must be repudiated, and Christ received as "the Lord" (Col. 2:6), or He will not save us.

Second, a deliberate abandoning of the Broad Road, or the flesh-pleasing mode of life. Until this has been done, there is no salvation possible for any sinner. Christ Himself taught this plainly in Luke 15: the "prodigal" must leave the "far country" before he could journey to the Father's House! The same pointed truth is taught again in James 4:8–10, "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up."

Ah, my friend, to really and actually enter this "Narrow Gate" is no easy matter. For that reason the Lord bade the people "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you" (John 6:27). Those words do not picture salvation as a thing of simple and easy attainment. Ponder also Christ's emphatic exhortation in Luke 13:24 "Strive to enter in at the Strait Gate." That He should utter



such a word, clearly implies the great idleness and sloth which characterizes nominal professors, as it also intimates there are formidable difficulties and obstacles to be overcome. Let it be carefully noted that the Greek word for "strive" (viz. "ἀγωνίζεσθε") in Luke 13:24 is the same one that is used in 1 Corinthians 9:25—"And every one that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things;" and is also rendered "labouring fervently" in Colossians 4:12, and "fight" in 1 Timothy 6:12!

And how are we to "strive" so as to "enter" the Narrow Gate? The general answer is, "lawfully" (2 Tim. 2:5); but to particularize: We are to strive by prayer and supplication, diligently seeking deliverance from those things which would bar our entrance. We are to earnestly cry to Christ for help from those foes which are seeking to overcome us. We are to come constantly to the Throne of Grace, that we may there find grace to help us repudiate and turn away with loathing from everything which is abhorred by God, even though it involves our cutting off of a right hand and plucking out of a right eye; and grace to help us do those things which He has commanded. We must be "temperate in all things," especially those things which the flesh craves and the world loves.

### **But Why is Such "Striving" Necessary?**

First, because Satan is striving to destroy thy soul. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8); therefore must he be resisted "steadfast in the faith."

Second, because natural appetites are striving to destroy thee: "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (1 Pet. 2:11).

Third, because the whole world is arrayed against thee, and if it cannot burn, it will seek to turn thee by alluring promises, Delilah-

like guiles, fatal enticements. Unless you overcome the world, the world will overcome you to the eternal destruction of thy soul.

From what has been before us, we may plainly discover why it is that the vast majority of our fellow-men and women, yea, and of professing Christians also, will fail to reach Heaven: it is because they prefer sin to holiness, indulging the lusts of the flesh to walking according to the scriptures, self to Christ, the world to God. It is as the Lord Jesus declared—"Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19): men refuse to deny self, abandon their idols, and submit to Christ as Lord; and without this, none can take the first step toward Heaven!

### **The Narrow Way**

Just as entering the "Narrow Gate" signifies the heart's acceptance of Christ's holy teaching, so to walk along the "Narrow Way" means for the heart and life to be constantly regulated thereby. Walking along the Narrow Way denotes a steady perseverance in faith and obedience to the Lord Jesus; overcoming all opposition, rejecting every temptation to forsake the path of fidelity to Him. It is called the "Narrow Way" because all self-pleasing and self-seeking is shut out. In Genesis 18:19 it is called "the Way of the Lord;" in Exodus 13:21, 32:8 "the Way;" in 1 Samuel 12:23 "the good and right Way;" in Psalm 25:9 "His Way;" in Proverbs 4:11 "the Way of wisdom;" in Proverbs 8:20 "the Way of righteousness;" in Proverbs 10:17 "the Way of life;" in Isaiah 35:8 "the Way of holiness;" in Jeremiah 6:16 "the good Way;" in 2 Peter 2:2 "the Way of truth;" in 2 Peter 2:15 "the right Way,"

The Narrow Way must be followed, no matter how much it may militate against my worldly interests. It is right here that the testing point is reached: it is much easier (unto the natural man) and far pleasanter to indulge the flesh and follow our worldly propensities. The Broad Road, where the flesh is allowed "liberty"—under the pretense of the Christian's not "being under the law"—is easy,

smooth, and attractive; but it ends in "destruction!" Though the "Narrow Way" leads to life, only few tread it. Multitudes make a profession and claim to be saved, but their lives give no evidence that they are "strangers and pilgrims" here, with their "treasure" elsewhere. They are afraid of being thought narrow and peculiar, strict and puritanical. Satan has deceived them: they imagine that they can get to heaven by an easier route than by denying self, taking up their cross daily, and following Christ!

There are multitudes of religionists who are attempting to combine the two "ways," making the best of both worlds and serving two masters. They wish to gratify self in time and enjoy the happiness of Heaven in eternity. Crowds of nominal Christians are deluding themselves into believing that they can do so; but they are terribly deceived. A profession which is not verified by mortifying the deeds of the body in the power of the Spirit (Rom. 8:13), is vain. A faith which is not evidenced by complete submission to Christ, is only the faith of demons. A love which does not keep Christ's commandments, is an imposition (John 14:23). A claim to being a Christian, where there is no real yieldedness to the will of God, is daring presumption. The reason why so few will enter Life is because the multitudes are not seeking it in the way of God's appointing: none seek it aright save those who pass through the Narrow Gate, and who, despite many discouragements and falls, continue to press forward along the Narrow Way.

Now notice, carefully, the very next thing which immediately followed our Lord's reference to the two ways in Matthew 7: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravaging wolves" (Matthew 7:15). Why does this come in next? Who are the "false prophets" against which a serious soul needs to be on his guard? They are those who teach that Heaven may be reached without treading the Narrow Way! They are those who loudly insist that eternal life may be obtained on much easier terms. They come in "sheep's clothing:" they appear (to undiscerning souls) to exalt Christ, to emphasize His precious blood, to magnify

God's grace. But they do not insist upon repentance; they fail to tell their hearers that nothing but a broken heart which hates sin can truly believe in Christ; they declare not that a saving faith is a living one which purifies the heart (Acts 15:9) and overcomes the world (1 John 5:4).

These "false prophets" are known by their "fruits," the primary reference being to their "converts"—the fruits of their fleshly labours. Their "converts" are on the Broad Road, which is not the path of open wickedness and vice, but of a religion which pleases the flesh: it is that "way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12). Those who are on this Broad Road (this way which "seemeth right" to so many), have a head-knowledge of the Truth, but they walk not in it. The "Narrow Way" is bounded by the commandments and precepts of Scripture; the Broad Road is that path which has broken out beyond the bounds of Scripture. Titus 2:11–12 supplies the test as to which "way" we are in: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world."

Ere closing, let us anticipate and seek to remove an objection. Probably many of you are saying, "I thought Christ was the Way to the Father" (John 14:6). So He is, but how?

First, in that He has removed every legal obstacle, and thereby opened a way to heaven for His people.

Second, in that He has "left us an example that we should follow HIS steps." The mere opening of a door does not give me entrance into a house: I must tread the path leading to it, and mount the steps. Christ has, by His life of unreserved obedience to God, shown us the Way which leads to Heaven: "When He putteth forth His own sheep, HE goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him" (John 10:4).

Third, in that He is willing and ready to bestow grace and strength to walk therein. Christ did not come here and die in order to make it unnecessary for me to please and obey God. No indeed: "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them" (2 Cor. 5:15). "Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world" (Gal. 1:4). "Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). Christ came here to "save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21); and if you are not now delivered from the power of sin, from the deceptions of Satan, from the love of the world, and from the pleasing of self, then you are NOT saved. May it please the God of all grace to add His blessing.

## **The Nature of Christ's Salvation Misrepresented by the Present-Day "Evangelist"**

THE nature of Christ's salvation is woefully misrepresented by the present-day "evangelist." He announces a Savior from hell rather than a Savior from sin. And that is why so many are fatally deceived, for there are multitudes who wish to escape the Lake of fire who have no desire to be delivered from their carnality and worldliness. The very first thing said of Him in the New Testament is, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people (not "from the wrath to come," but) from their sins." (Matt. 1:21) Christ is a Savior for those realizing something of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, who feel the awful burden of it on their conscience, who loathe themselves for it, who long to be freed from its terrible dominion; and a Savior for no others. Were He to "save from hell" those still in love with sin, He

would be a Minister of sin, condoning their wickedness and siding with them against God. What an unspeakably horrible and blasphemous thing with which to charge the Holy One!

## **Objections to God's Sovereignty Answered**

ONE of the most popular beliefs of the day is that God loves everybody, and the very fact that it is so popular with all classes ought to be enough to arouse the suspicious of those who are subject to the Word of Truth. God's love toward all His creatures is the fundamental and favorite tenet of Universalists, Unitarians, Theosophists, Christian Scientists, Spiritualists, Russellites, etc. No matter how a man may live—in open defiance of Heaven, with no concern whatever for his soul's eternal interests, still less for God's glory, dying, perhaps with an oath on his lips—notwithstanding, God loves him, we are told. So widely has this dogma been proclaimed, and so comforting is it to the heart which is at enmity with God, we have little hope of convincing many of their error. That God loves everybody, is, we may say, quite a modern belief. The writings of the church fathers, the Reformers or the Puritans will (we believe) be searched in vain for any such concept. Perhaps the late D.L. Moody—captivated by Drummond's "The Greatest Thing in the World"—did more than anyone else in the last century to popularize this concept.

It has been customary to say God loves the sinner though He hates his sin. But that is a meaningless distinction. What is there in a sinner but sin? Is it not true that his "whole head is sick" and his "whole heart faint," and that "from the sole of the foot even unto the

head there is no soundness" in him? (Isa. 1:5, 6) Is it true that God loves the one who is despising and rejecting His blessed Son? God is Light as well as Love, and therefore His love must be a holy love. To tell the Christ-rejector that God loves him is to cauterize his conscience as well as to afford him a sense of security in his sins. The fact is, the love of God is a truth for the saints only, and to present it to the enemies of God is to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs. With the exception of John 3:16, not once in the four Gospels do we read of the Lord Jesus, the perfect Teacher, telling sinners that God loves them! In the book of Acts, which records the evangelistic labors and messages of the apostles, God's love is never referred to at all! But when we come to the Epistles, which are addressed to the saints, we have a full presentation of this precious truth—God's love for His own. Let us seek to rightly divide the Word of God and then we shall not be found taking truths which are addressed to believers and mis-applying them to unbelievers. That which sinners need to have brought before them is the ineffable holiness, the exacting wrath of God. Risking the danger of being misunderstood let us say—and we wish we could say it to every evangelist and preacher in the country—there is far too much presenting of Christ to sinners today (by those sound in the faith), and far too little showing sinners their need of Christ, i.e., their absolutely ruined and lost condition, their imminent and awful danger of suffering the wrath to come, the fearful guilt resting upon them in the sight of God: to present Christ to those who have never been shown their need of Him, seems to us to be guilty of casting pearls before swine.

If it be true that God loves every member of the human family, then why did our Lord tell His disciples "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father ... If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him." (John 14:21, 23)? Why say "he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father?" If the Father loves everybody? The same limitation is found in Prov. 8:17: "I love them that love Me." Again we read, "Thou hatest all workers of iniquity"—not merely the works of iniquity. Here then is a flat

repudiation of present teaching that, God hates sin but loves the sinner; Scripture says, "Thou hatest all workers of iniquity" (Ps. 5:5)! "God is angry with the wicked every day." (Ps. 7:11) "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God"—not "shall abide," but even now—"abideth on him." (John 3:36) Can God "love" the one on whom His "wrath" abides? Again, is it not evident that the words, "The love of God which is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:39) marks a limitation, both in the sphere and objects of His love? Again, is it not plain from the words "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Rom. 9:13) that God does not love everybody? Again, it is written, "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." (Heb. 12:6) Does not this verse teach that God's love is restricted to the members of His own family? If He loves all men without exception, then the distinction and limitation here mentioned is quite meaningless. Finally, we would ask, Is it conceivable that God will love the damned in the Lake of Fire? Yet, if He loves them now He will do so then, seeing that His love knows no change—He is "without variableness or shadow of turning!"

Turning now to John 3:16, it should be evident from the passages just quoted that this verse will not bear the construction usually put upon it, "God so loved the world." Many suppose that this means the entire human race. But "the entire human race" includes all mankind from Adam till the close of earth's history; it reaches backward as well as forward! Consider, then, the history of mankind before Christ was born. Unnumbered millions lived and died before the Savior came to the earth, lived here "having no hope and without God in the world," and therefore passed out into an eternity of woe. If God "loved" them, where is the slightest proof thereof? Scripture declares "Who (God) in times past (from the tower of Babel till after Pentecost) suffered all nations to walk in their own ways." (Acts 14:16) Scripture declares that "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient." (Rom. 1:28) To Israel God said, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." (Amos



3:2) In view of these plain passages who will be so foolish as to insist that God in the past loved all mankind! The same applies with equal force to the future. Read through the book of Revelation, noting especially chapters Rev. 8 to 19, where we have described the judgments which will be poured out from Heaven on this earth. Read of the fearful woes, the frightful plagues, the vials of God's wrath, which shall be emptied on the wicked. Finally, read the twentieth chapter of Revelation, the great white throne judgment, and see if you can discover there the slightest trace of love.

But the objector comes back to John 3:16 and says, "World means world." True, but we have shown that "the world" does not mean the whole human family. The fact is that "the world" is used in a general way. When the brethren of Christ said "Show thyself to the world" (John 7:4), did they mean "Shew Thyself to all mankind?" When the Pharisees said "Behold, the world is gone after Him" (John 12:19), did they mean that "all the human family" were flocking after Him? When the apostle wrote, "Your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world" (Rom. 1:8), did he mean that the faith of the saints at Rome was the subject of conversation by every man, woman, and child on earth? When Rev. 13:3 informs us that "all the world wondered after the beast," are we to understand that there will be no exceptions? These, and other passages which might be quoted, show that the term "the world" often has a relative rather than an absolute force.

Now the first thing to note in connection with John 3:16 is that our Lord was there speaking to Nicodemis, a man who believed that God's mercies were confined to his own nation. Christ there announced that God's love in giving His Son had a larger object in view, that it flowed beyond the boundary of Palestine, reaching out to "regions beyond." In other words, this was Christ's announcement that God had a purpose of grace toward Gentiles as well as Jews. "God so loved the world," then, signifies God's love is international in its scope. But does this mean that God loves every individual among the Gentiles? Not necessarily, for as we have seen, the term "world"

is general rather than specific, relative rather than absolute. The term "world" in itself is not conclusive. To ascertain who are the objects of God's love, other passages where His love is mentioned must be consulted.

In 2 Peter 2:5 we read of "the world of the ungodly." If then, there is a world of the ungodly, there must also be a world of the godly. It is the latter who are in view in the passages we shall now briefly consider. "For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." (John 6:33) Now mark it well, Christ did not say, "offereth life unto the world," but "giveth." What is the difference between the two terms? This: a thing which is "offered" may be refused, but a thing "given," necessarily implies its acceptance. If it is not accepted, it is not "given," it is simply proffered. Here, then, is a Scripture that positively states Christ giveth life (spiritual, eternal life) "unto the world." Now He does not give eternal life the "world of the ungodly" for they will not have it, they do not want it. Hence, we are obliged to understand the reference in John 6:33 as being to "the world of the godly," i.e., God's own people.

One more: In 2 Cor. 5:19 we read, "To wit that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." What is meant by this is clearly defined in the words immediately following, "not imputing their trespasses unto them." Here again "the world" cannot mean "the world of the ungodly," for their "trespasses" are "imputed" to them, as the judgment of the Great White Throne will yet show. But 2 Cor. 5:19 plainly teaches there is a "world" which is "reconciled," reconciled unto God because their trespasses are not reckoned to their account, having been borne by their Substitute. Who then are they? Only one answer is fairly possible—the world of God's people!

In like manner, the "world" in John 3:16 must, in the final analysis refer to the world of God's people. Must, we say, for there is no other alternative solution. It cannot mean the whole human race, for one-half of the race was already in hell when Christ came to earth. It is

unfair to insist that it means every human being now living, for every other passage in the New Testament where God's love is mentioned, limits it to His own people—search and see! The objects of God's love in John 3:16 are precisely the same as the objects of Christ's love in John 13:1: "Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His time was come, that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world. He loved them unto the end." We may admit that our interpretation of John 3:16 is no novel one invented by us, but one almost uniformly given by the Reformers and Puritans, and many others since then.

It is strange, yet it is true, that many who acknowledge the sovereign rule of God over material things will cavil and quibble when we insist that God is also sovereign in the spiritual realm. But their quarrel is with God and not with us. We have given Scripture in support of everything advanced in these pages, and if that will not satisfy our readers, it is idle for us to seek to convince them. What we write now is designed for those who do bow to the authority of Holy Writ, and for their benefit we propose to examine several other Scriptures which have purposely been held for this chapter.

Perhaps the one passage which has presented the greatest difficulty to those who have seen that passage after passage in Holy Writ plainly teaches the election of a limited number unto salvation, is 2 Peter 3:9: "Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

The first thing to be said upon the above passage is that, like all other Scripture, it must be understood and interpreted in the light of its context. What we have quoted in the preceding paragraph is only part of the verse, and the last part of it at that! Surely it must be allowed by all that the first half of the verse needs to be taken into consideration. In order to establish what these words are supposed by many to mean, viz., that the words "any" and "all" are to be received without any qualification, it must be shown that the context is referring to the whole human race! If this cannot be shown, if there

is no premise to justify this, then the conclusion also must be unwarranted. Let us then ponder the first part of the verse.

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise."

Note "promise" in the singular number, not "promises." What promise is in view? The promise of salvation? Where, in all Scripture, has God ever promised to save the whole human race! Where indeed? No, the "promise" here referred to, is not about salvation. What then is it? The context tells us.

"Knowing this, first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming?" (vv. 3, 4) The context then refers to God's promise to send back His beloved Son. But many long centuries have passed and this promise has not yet been fulfilled. True, but long as the delay may seem to us, the interval is short in the reckoning of God. As the proof of this we are reminded, "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (v. 8) In God's reckoning of time, less than two days have yet passed since He promised to send back Christ.

But more, the delay in the Father's sending back His beloved Son is not only due to no "slackness" on His part, but it is also occasioned by His "longsuffering." His longsuffering to whom? The verse we are now considering tells us: "but is longsuffering to usward." And who are the "usward?"—the human race, or God's own people? In the light of the context this is not an open question upon which each of us is free to form an opinion. The Holy Spirit has defined it. The opening verse of the chapter says, "This second Epistle, beloved, I now write unto you." And again, the verse immediately preceding declares, "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing," etc. (v. 8) The "usward" then are the "beloved" of God. They to whom his Epistle is addressed are "them that have obtained (not "exercised," but "obtained" as God's sovereign gift) like precious faith with us

through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 1:11) Therefore we say there is no room for a doubt, a quibble or an argument—the "usward" are the elect of God.

Let us now quote the verse as a whole: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Could anything be clearer? The "any" that God is not willing should perish are the "usward" to who God is "longsuffering," the "beloved" of the previous verses. 2 Peter 3:9 means, then, that God will not send back His Son until "the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." (Rom. 11:25) God will not send back Christ till that "people" whom He is now "taking out of the Gentiles" (Acts 15:14) are gathered in. God will not send back His Son till the Body of Christ is complete, and that will not be till the ones whom He has elected to be saved in this dispensation shall have been brought to Him. Thank God for His "longsuffering to usward." Had Christ come back twenty years ago the writer had been left behind to perish in his sins. But that could not be, so God graciously delayed the Second Coming. For the same reason He is still delaying His advent. His decreed purpose is that all His elect will come to repentance, and repent they shall. The present interval of grace will not end until the last of the "other sheep" of John 10:16 are safely folded—then will Christ return.

In expounding the sovereignty of God the Spirit in Salvation we have shown that His power is irresistible, that, by His gracious operations upon; and within them He "compels" God's elect to come to Christ. The sovereignty of the Holy Spirit is set forth not only in John 3:8 where we are told "The wind bloweth where it pleaseth ... so is every one that is born of the Spirit," but is affirmed in other passages as well. In 1 Cor. 12:11 we read, "But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will." And again, we read in Acts 16:6, 7: "Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Spirit to preach the Word in Asia. After they were come to Mysia,

they assayed to go to Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not." Thus we see how the Holy Spirit interposes His imperial will in opposition to the determination of the apostles.

But, it is objected against the assertion that the will and power of the Holy Spirit are irresistible, that there are two passages, one in the Old Testament and the other in the New, which appear to militate against such a conclusion. God said of old "My Spirit shall not always strive with man" (Gen. 6:3), and to the Jews Stephen declared, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?" (Acts 7:51, 52) If then the Jews "resisted" the Holy Spirit, how can we say His power is irresistible? The answer is found in Neh. 9:30, "Many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by Thy Spirit, in Thy prophets: yet would they not give ear." It was the external operations of the Spirit which Israel "resisted." It was the Spirit speaking by and through the prophets to which they "would not give ear." It was not anything which the Holy Spirit wrought in them that they "resisted" but the motives presented to them by the inspired messages of the prophets. Perhaps it will help the reader to catch our thought better if we compare Matt. 11:20–24: "Then began He to upbraid the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, because they repented not. Woe unto thee Chorazin," etc. Our Lord here pronounces woe upon these cities for their failure to repent because of the "mighty works" (miracles) which He had done in their sight, and not because of any internal operations of His grace! The same is true of Gen. 6:3. By comparing 1 Peter 3:18–20 it will be seen that it was by and through Noah that God's Spirit "strove" with the antediluvians. the distinction noted above was ably summarized by Andrew Fuller (another writer long deceased from whom our moderns might learn much) thus: "There are two kinds of influences by which God works on the minds of men. First, that which is common, and which is effected by the ordinary use of motives presented to the mind for consideration: Secondly, that which is special and supernatural. The one contains nothing mysterious, anymore than the influence of our

words and actions on each other; the other is such a mystery that we know nothing of it but by its effects. The former ought to be effectual; the latter is so." The work of the Holy Spirit upon or towards men is always "resisted" by them; His work within is always successful. What saith the Scriptures? This: "He which hath begun a good work IN you, will finish it." (Phil. 1:6)

The next question to be considered is: Why preach the Gospel to every creature? If God the Father has predestined only a limited number to be saved, if God the Son died to effect the salvation of only those given to Him by the Father, and if God the Spirit is seeking to quicken none save God's elect, then what is the use of giving the Gospel to the world at large, and where is the propriety of telling sinners that "Whosoever believeth in Christ shall not perish but have everlasting life?"

First, it is of great importance that we should be clear upon the nature of the Gospel itself. The Gospel is God's good news concerning Christ and not concerning sinners: "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God ... concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 1:1, 3) God would have proclaimed far and wide the amazing fact that His own blessed Son "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." A universal testimony must be borne to the matchless worth of the person and work of Christ. Note the word "witness" in Matt. 24:14. The Gospel is God's "witness" unto the perfections of His Son. Mark the words of the apostle: "For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, them that are saved, and in them that perish!" (2 Cor. 2:15)

Concerning the character and contents of the Gospel, the utmost confusion prevails today. The Gospel is not an "offer" to be bandied around by evangelical peddlers. The Gospel is no mere invitation, but a proclamation concerning Christ; true whether men believe it or not. No man is asked to believe that Christ died for him in particular. The Gospel, in brief, is this: Christ died for sinners, you are a sinner, believe in Christ, and you shall be saved. In the Gospel, God simply

announced the terms which men may be saved (namely, repentance and faith) and, indiscriminately, all are commanded to fulfill them.

Second, repentance and remission of sins are to be preached in the name of the Lord Jesus "unto all the nations" (Luke 24:47), because God's elect are "scattered abroad" (John 11:52) among all nations, and it is by the preaching and hearing of the Gospel that they are called out of the world. The Gospel is the means which God uses in the saving of His own chosen ones. By nature God's elect are children of wrath "even as others;" they are lost sinners needing a Savior, and apart from Christ there is no solution for them. Hence, the Gospel must be believed by them before they can rejoice in the knowledge of sins forgiven. The Gospel is God's winnowing: it separates the chaff from the wheat, and gathers the latter into His garner.

Third, it is to be noted that God has other purposes in the preaching of the Gospel than the salvation of His own elect. The world exists for the elect's sake yet others have the benefit of it. So the Word is preached for the elect's sake yet others have the benefit of an external call. The sun shines though blind men see it not. The rain falls upon rocky mountains and waste deserts as well as on the fruitful valleys; so also, God suffers the Gospel to fall on the ears of the non-elect. The power of the Gospel is one of God's agencies for holding in check the wickedness of the world. Many who are never saved by it are reformed, their lusts are bridled, and they are restrained from becoming worse. Moreover, the preaching of the Gospel to the non-elect is made an admirable test of their characters. It exhibits the inveteracy of their sin; it demonstrates that their hearts are enmity against God; it justified the declaration of Christ that "men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." (John 3:19)

Finally, it is sufficient for us to know that we are bidden to preach the Gospel to every creature. It is not for us to reason about the consistency between this and the fact that "few are chosen." It is for us to obey. It is a simple matter to ask questions relating to the ways



of God which no finite mind can fully fathom. We, too, might turn and remind the objector that our Lord declared, "Verily, I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme. But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness" (Mark 3:28, 29), and there can be no doubt whatever but that certain of the Jews were guilty of this very sin (see Matt. 12:24, etc.) and hence their destruction was inevitable. Yet, notwithstanding, scarcely two months later, He commanded His disciples to preach the Gospel to every creature. When the objector can show us the consistency of these two things—the fact that certain of the Jews had committed the sin for which there is never forgiveness, and the fact that to them the Gospel was to be preached—we will undertake to furnish a more satisfactory solution than the one given above to the harmony between a universal proclamation of the Gospel and a limitation of its saving power to those only that God has predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son.

Once more, we say, it is not for us to reason about the Gospel; it is our business to preach it. When God ordered Abraham to offer up his son as a burnt offering, he might have objected that this command was inconsistent with His promise, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." But instead of arguing he obeyed, and left God to harmonize His promise and His precept. Jeremiah might have argued that God had bade him to do that which was altogether unreasonable when He said, "Therefore thou shalt speak all these words unto them; but they will not hearken to thee; thou shalt also call unto them; but they will not answer thee" (Jer. 7:27), but instead, the prophet obeyed. Ezekiel too, might have complained that the Lord was asking of him a hard thing when He said, "Son of man, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them. For thou art not sent to a people of a strange speech and of an hard language, but to the house of Israel; Not to many people of a strange speech and of a hard language, whose words thou canst not understand. Surely, had I sent thee to them, they would have hearkened unto thee. But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me;

for all the house of Israel are impudent and hard-hearted." (Ezek. 3:4-7)

"But, O my soul, if truth so bright  
Should dazzle and confound thy sight,  
Yet, still His written Word obey,  
And wait the great decision day."

—Watts

It has been well said, "The Gospel has lost none of its ancient power. It is, as much today as when it was first preached, 'the power of God unto salvation.' It needs no pity, no help, and no handmaid. It can overcome all obstacles, and break down all barriers. No human device need be tried to prepare the sinner to receive it, for if God has sent it no power can hinder it; and if He has not sent it, no power can make it effectual."—(Dr. Bullinger)

## **The Ordained Lamp**

"I have ordained a lamp for Mine Anointed." (Psalm 132:17)

THE first part of this Psalm records a series of prayer-petitions; from verse 11 to the close are a number of great and precious promises relating to David and his family in the type, but mainly and ultimately to Christ and His New Testament church in the antitype. Let the reader constantly bear in mind this important principle and

fact, namely, that everything in the Old Testament Scriptures typified or represented Gospel or Eternal realities. First, God here promises to fix His residence in the church (vv. 13–14). Then, to bless the provision He makes for her (v. 15). To give her faithful and successful ministers (v. 16). That, however low the interests of Christ on earth may be brought, even though (like Himself) it may appear a root in a dry place, yet, like a tree well planted in the ground, but sore lopt and hacked by man and Satan, it will sprout again (v. 16).

In our present verse three things are before us. First, the designation which is given unto the Saviour of sinners by the Father: He calls Him "Mine Anointed." Though despised and rejected of men, though an unbelieving world see no form nor comeliness in Him, God owns Him as the Prophet, Priest, and King of His church: compare Psalm 89:20–21. Second, the chief agency of God's ordering for the manifestation of Christ to a lost world: "I have ordained a lamp for Mine Anointed." This is the Gospel. The use of a lamp is to give light to people in the darkness of the night: so the proclamation of Christ's glorious person, offices, and work, is a light shining in a dark place, until the day of glory dawns. Third, the sovereign authority by which this Gospel "lamp" is lighted and carried through this dark world: it is "ordained" of God: it is by Divine command that His servants preach and spread the light of the Gospel: compare Mark 16:15, 20.

This Gospel "lamp" was first set up in the purpose of God from eternity, in the "counsel of peace" (Zech. 6:13 and cf. Prov. 8:22–23, 31), when the whole plan of salvation through Christ was laid. Second, this "lamp" was first lighted in this lower world immediately after the fall in paradise: when a dark and dismal night of woe had spread itself over our first parents, a gleam of hope then shone out through the promise of Genesis 3:15. Third, the lamp of the Gospel shone prophetically (Gal. 3:8) and typically (Heb. 4:2) during all the Old Testament period. It shone, as it were, through a veil. Fourth, after the coming of Christ in the flesh, and His resurrection and ascension into Heaven, the lamp of Gospel light was brightened and its blessed rays were more widely diffused, but even then (and now)

according to the sovereign pleasure of God. To show how much God is concerned about this "lamp" of the everlasting Gospel, we mention several things which He had ordained concerning it.

1. God has appointed those places and parts of the world where the Gospel lamp shall be set up and shine: "The wind bloweth where it listeth ... so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). It was so in Old Testament times: "He showeth His Word unto Jacob, His statutes and His judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for His judgments, they have not known them" (Ps. 147:19–20). It was so when Christ was upon Earth: to His apostles He said, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 10:5–6). It was so after His ascension: "Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the regions of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Spirit to preach the Word in Asia. After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not" (Acts 16:6–7).

That which regulates God in His providential dealings concerning the Gospel—opening doors or shutting them, sending one of His ministers to a place or withdrawing him—is whether or not there be some of those for whom Christ died in that particular locality: for the "sheep" shall hear His voice (John 10:16). Where there is no Gospel preaching for a protracted period, it is an indication that none of God's elect are there. "Also I have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvests: and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city: one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered" (Amos 4:7). So it is spiritually, and for the reason thus given.

2. God has appointed how long the Gospel lamp shall remain in each place, before it be sent to another part of the earth. He ordered how long it should shine among the Jews, namely, until Christ came. He ordained how long it should shine in each of the seven churches in

Asia before He came and removed His candlestick. So He has decreed where and when the Gospel shall continue in this country. There is probably more real Gospel preaching in China today, than there is in the U.S.A. Many a church which was once a bright testimony for Christ is so no longer, nor does it know that "Ichabod" ("the glory is departed") has been written over it. Many a town which formerly was blest with the ministry of a true servant of God is now left desolate.

3. God has appointed which persons should be converted and edified under the Gospel, when He sends it to any nation or congregation. The Most High has not left it to the caprice of His servants nor to the whims of their hearers, what measure of success the proclamation of His truth shall enjoy. No, the Lord holds in His own right hand the instruments which He employs (Rev. 1:16), and causes His Word to be either a "savor of death unto death" or "a savor of life unto life." Paul was bidden by the Lord to remain at Corinth, for, said He, "I have much people in this city" (Acts 18:10). On the other hand, God suffered him not to go into Bithynia (Acts 16:7).

When a servant of God settles in a new place he knows not who are the particular ones that he has been ordained a blessing unto. His business is to preach the Word to all who will hear him, leaving it with the Spirit to make whatever application He pleases. The election of grace shall obtain eternal life, the rest will be blinded (Rom. 11:7). Some will prove to be wayside hearers, others stony-ground hearers, and yet others thorny-ground hearers: only a few will give evidence that they are good-ground hearers; but that is all in the hands of "the Lord of the harvest." Nor should we desire it to be otherwise. God is working out His own eternal purpose, and absolute subjection to the Master's will is what is required of servants. A beam of the Gospel lamp will shine into one heart, when many others are left in nature's darkness.

"Why was I made to hear His voice

And enter while there's room?

While others make a wretched choice,

And rather starve than come.

'Twas the same love that spread the feast,

Which sweetly forced me in;

Else I had still refused to taste,

And perished in my sin."

4. God has ordained by what instrument or minister the Gospel lamp shall be brought unto a people or a particular person. Paul was ordained for the Gentiles, Peter for the Jews; but every one of Christ's servants is guided by the hand of the sovereign Lord to labour in this, or that, or the other part of His vineyard. The stars are held in His right hand (Rev. 1:16), and He causes them to shine in this or that orb of His church; and, when he pleases, He removes them from one place to another in His kingdom, where He has other work for them; and when He takes them to heaven, then they that "turn many to righteousness" shall shine "as the stars forever and ever" (Dan. 12:3).

It is not by chance of "good luck" (horrible expression for any child of God to use!) that any one is privileged to sit under the ministry of a man of God to whom the Spirit blesses such to his conversion. No, when God works, He works at both ends of the line, making "all things work together for good" unto His own. It was sovereign grace which selected the Lord of glory to be the one who should preach the Word of life to the Samaritan adulteress (John 4). It was sovereign grace which appointed Philip to be the Spirit's mouthpiece to the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8). It was sovereign grace which determined that Peter should give forth the word of salvation to Cornelius and his household (Acts 10): Cornelius was a Roman, and Paul (already

then saved) was the apostle to the Gentiles, yet Peter (the apostle to the circumcision) was the one sent to him!

5. God has ordained the measure of fruit which each servant of His shall reap from his labours, the degree of success which each Gospel lamp-bearer shall have. He has determined what number of souls should be edified, and which shall be hardened by his light. "So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase" (1 Cor. 3:7). It is not always the most gifted ministers, nor the most godly, who are the most successful. So far as we can ascertain from the Gospel records, fewer souls were saved under the preaching of Christ Himself than under Peter's on the day of Pentecost! Why? "Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight" (Matthew 11:26) must be the answer.

## **Personal Holiness**

"That opinion that personal holiness is unnecessary to final glorification is in direct opposition to even dictate of reason, to even declaration of Scripture." —Augustus Toplady

BY our fall in Adam we not only lost the favor of God but also the purity of our nature and therefore we need to be both reconciled to God and renewed in our inner man, for without personal holiness "no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14). "As He which hath called you is holy; so be ye holy in all manner of conversation (behavior); because it is written, Be ye holy for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:15, 16), God's nature is such that unless we be sanctified there can be no intercourse between Him and us. But can persons be sinful and holy at one and the same time? Genuine Christians discover so much carnality, filth, and vileness in themselves that they find it almost

impossible to be assured they are holy. Nor is this difficulty solved, as in justification, by recognizing that though completely unholy in ourselves we are holy in Christ, for Scripture teaches that those who are sanctified by God are holy in themselves, though the evil nature has not been removed from them.

None but "the pure in heart" will ever "see God" (Matthew 5:8). There must be that renovation of soul whereby our minds, affections and wills are brought into harmony with God. There must be that impartial compliance with the revealed will of God and abstinence from evil which issues from faith and love. There must be that directing of all our actions to the glory of God, by Jesus Christ, according to the Gospel. There must be a spirit of holiness working within the believer's heart so as to sanctify his outward actions if they are to be acceptable unto Him in whom "there is no darkness" True, there is perfect holiness in Christ for the believer, but there must also be a holy nature received from him. There are some who appear to delight in the imputed obedience of Christ who make little or no concern about personal holiness. They have much to say about being arrayed in "the garments of salvation and covered with the robe of righteousness" (Isa. 61:10), who give no evidence that they "are clothed with humility" (1 Pet. 5:5) or that they have "put on ... bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another" (Col. 3:12).

How many there are today who suppose that if they have trusted in Christ all is sure to be well with them at the last even though they are not personally holy. Under the pretense of honoring faith, Satan, as an angel of light, has deceived and is now deceiving multitudes of souls. When their "faith" is examined and tested, what is it worth? Nothing at all so far as insuring an entrance into Heaven is concerned: it is a powerless, lifeless, fruitless thing. The faith of God's elect is unto "the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness" (Titus 1:1). It is a faith which purifieth the heart (Acts 15:9), and it grieves over all impurity. It is a faith which produces an unquestioning obedience (Heb. 11:8). They therefore do but delude



themselves who suppose they are daily drawing nearer to Heaven while they are following those courses which lead only to Hell. He who thinks to come to the enjoyment of God without being personally holy, makes Him out to be an unholy God, and puts the highest indignity upon Him. The genuineness of saving faith is only proved as it bears the blossoms of experimental godliness and the fruits of true piety.

In Christ God has set before His people that standard of moral excellence which He requires them to aim and strive after. In His life we behold a glorious representation in our own nature of the walk of obedience which He demands of us. Christ conformed Himself to us by His abasing incarnation, how reasonable therefore it is that we should conform ourselves to Him in the way of obedience and sanctification. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5). He came as near to us as was possible for Him to do, how reasonable then is it that we should endeavor to come as near as it is possible for us to do. "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me" (Matthew 11:29). If "even Christ pleased not Himself" (Rom. 15:3). how reasonable is it that we should be required to deny ourselves and take up our cross and follow Him (Matthew 16:24), for without so doing we cannot be His disciples (Luke 14:27). If we are to be conformed to Christ in glory how necessary that we first be conformed to Him in holiness: "he that saith he abideth in Him ought himself so to walk even as He walked:" (1 John 2:6). "Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2:19): let him either put on the life of Christ or drop the name of Christ.

## **Practical Godliness**

"Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only; deceiving your own selves." (James 1:22)

IT IS much, very much to be thankful for when the Holy Spirit has illumined a man's understanding, dispersed the mists of error, and established him in the Truth. Yet that is only the beginning. The Holy Scriptures are "profitable" not only for "doctrine" but also for "reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16). Observe well the order there: before we are ready to be instructed "in righteousness" (right doing), there is much in our lives that God "reproves" and which we must "correct." Necessarily so, for before conversion everything in our lives was wrong! For all we did was for the gratifying of self, with no thought or concern for God's honour and glory. Therefore, the first great need, and the primary duty of every young convert is not to study the Old Testament types, or puzzle his brains over prophecy, but to diligently search the Scriptures in order to find out what is pleasing and displeasing to God, what He forbids and what He commands.

If you have been genuinely converted, then your first concern must be to form all the details of your life—in the home, in the church, in the world—so as to please God. And in the actual bringing of this to pass, the order will be "cease to do evil; learn to do well" (Isa. 1:16–17); "Depart from evil, and do good" (Ps. 34:14 and cf. 37:27). There has to be a breaking down before there can be a building up (Eccl. 3:3). There has to be an emptying of self before there is the filling of the Spirit. There has to be an unlearning before there is a true learning. And there has to be a hating of "evil" before there is a loving of the "good" (Amos 5:15 and cf. Rom. 12:9).

Now to the extent the young Christian does use the Holy Scriptures in a practical way, regulating his thoughts, desires and actions by their warnings and encouragements, their prohibitions and precepts, will very largely determine the measure in which he will enjoy God's blessing on his life. As the moral Governor of the world God takes note of our conduct, and sooner or later manifests His displeasure

against our sins, and His approval of a righteous walk, by granting that measure of prosperity which is most for our good and His glory. In the keeping of His commandments "there is great reward" (Ps. 19:11) in this life (1 Tim. 4:8). O how much temporal and spiritual blessing most Christians miss through careless and disobedient conduct: see Isaiah 48:18!

The tragic thing is that instead of the average young Christian studying diligently God's Word so as to discover all the details of the divine will for him, he does almost anything and everything else. Many a one engages in "personal work" or some form of Christian "service" while his own life remains full of things displeasing to God! The presence of those displeasing things in his life hinders God's blessings upon his soul, body, and temporal affairs; and to him it has to be said: "Your sins have withholden good things from you" (Jer. 5:25). God's Word to His people is: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12). But O how little of this "fear and trembling" is to be found anywhere today! Instead, there is self-esteem, self-confidence, boasting and carnal security.

There are others who give themselves unto the diligent study of doctrine, but, generally, they fail to realize that the doctrine of Scripture is not a series of intellectual propositions, but is the "doctrine which is according to godliness" (1 Tim. 6:3). The "doctrine" or "teaching" of God's Holy Word is given not for the instruction of our brains, but for the regulation of all the details of our daily lives; and this in order that we may "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things" (Titus 2:10). But that can only be realized by a constant reading of the Word with one dominant purpose-to discover what God forbids and what he commands; by our meditating frequently on what we have read, and by fervent prayer for supernatural grace to enable us to obey. If the young convert does not early form the habit of treading the path of practical obedience to God, then he will not have His ear when he prays! John states plainly one of the main conditions which we must constantly seek grace to heed, if our petitions are to meet with acceptance: "and

whatsoever we ask we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight" (1 John 3:22). But if instead of submitting unto God's holy requirements, we follow our own inclinations, then it will be said, "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear" (Isa. 59:2). This is unspeakably solemn. O what a difference it makes whether or not we have experimental access to God!

Not only does the young Christian, by following a course of self-pleasing, reduce his prayers to empty words, but he brings down upon himself the rod of God, and everything goes wrong in his life. That is one reason why many Christians are suffering just as sorely as the poor worldlings are: God is displeased with their ways, and does not show Himself strong on their behalf (2 Chron. 16:9). In this connection we have sought to point out in the past the remedy, which calls for real heart-humbling before the Lord, godly sorrow, true repentance, unsparing confession, the firm determination to reform our ways; and then (and not before) faith's counting on God's mercy and a patient expectation that He will work wonders for us if we now tread the path of full submission to Him.

## **Prayer**

"What things soever ye desire when ye pray believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." (Mark 11:24)

BY THE words "believe that ye receive them:" we understand, expect God to give them to you. But it is at this point that so many of God's

people fail oftenest in their prayer lives. There are three chief things to be attended to in prayer.

First, make sure that you are asking for something that is in accordance with God's Word: see 1 John 5:14. But right here, the devil will foil you unless you are upon your guard. He will come as an angel of light and preach a sermon to you on God's holy will. O yes, the devil is quite capable even of that! It is our privilege and duty to know what God's will is! "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:17). It is the revealed will of God which is in view in these passages, for with His "secret" will, we have nothing to do; that is none of our business.

God's revealed will is made known in His Word. Fix this in your mind; never allow Satan inject a thought (Eph. 4:27) to shake you thereon, that everything God has commanded you to do, every precept and exhortation addressed to you, is "God's will" for you, and is to be turned into prayer for enabling grace. It is God's will that you should be "sanctified" (1 Thess. 4:2), that you should "rejoice" (Phil. 4:4), that you should "make your calling and election sure" (2 Pet. 1:10), that you should "grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord" (2 Pet. 3:18).

Second, having made sure that what you are praying for is according to God's revealed will, then plead His promises, such as Matthew 7:7, Philippians 4:19, etc. Plead them in the name of Christ, asking God to give you the "desires of thine heart" (Ps. 37:4) for Christ's sake, that He may be honored in and by a Godly walk from you, and that His people may be helped and encouraged by your example. Those are pleas which God cannot deny.

Third, and this is what we would earnestly and lovingly press upon the Christian reader: Expect God to do what you have asked. Unless there is an expectancy, faith is not fully in exercise. It is this expecting from Him which honours and pleases God, and which always draws down from Him answers of peace. There may be some

difficulty, problem, trial, looming ahead of you, which assumes the proportions of a mountain. Never mind that: do not let it depress, discourage, or dismay you. Praise God it stands written in the eternal Word of Truth, "Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith and doubt not ... ye shall say unto this mountain be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; It shall be done" (Matthew 21:21). Notice carefully, it is not "If thou doubt not and have faith," but "if ye have faith" and then (while you are awaiting God's answer) "doubt not," but continue the fulfillment of His promise. When you first get down on your knees, beg God in the name of Christ and for His own glory's sake, to work in you by His Spirit that expectancy of faith which will not take "NO" from Him; which reverently, but confidently says, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me" (Gen. 32:26). That is what honours God, that is what pleases Him, that is what obtains answers from Him.

"A friend at court!" No doubt that expression is more or less familiar to the older readers, but it has almost dropped out of use in this generation. It denoted that one had a friend possessing influence with another in authority, and using it on my behalf. How unspeakably blessed to know that the Christian has a friend at court, the Court of Heaven; "A friend that sticketh closer than a brother." He has the ear of God, for on earth He declared "Thou hearest me always" (John 11:42). Then, make use of Him, and ask Him to present them to His Father and your Father, accompanied by His own all-prevailing merits; and, if they are for God's glory and thy (real) good, be fully assured that they shall be granted. Thus will Christ be honored and your faith strengthened.

## **Preaching False and True**

### **Licentious Preaching**

THE twofoldness of Divine Truth is broadly illustrated by the dividing of God's Word into its two Testaments, wherein, characteristically speaking, we have set forth the Divine Law and the Divine Gospel, and where distinctively (though not exclusively) God is revealed respectively as "Light" and "Love." The same twofoldness of Truth appears in each of those grand objects and subjects; though this is far from being as clearly apprehended as it should be. The Law which God gave unto Israel was a dual one, consisting of the Moral and the Ceremonial: the Moral Law specially exemplifying God's righteousness and the Ceremonial His grace—the merciful provision which He made and which was available for those who came under the condition of the former. In like manner, the Gospel contains a dual manifestation of the Divine character and perfections: while it is "the Gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24) proclaiming the free favor of God to the undeserving, it is also denominated "the ministration of righteousness" (2 Cor. 3:9) and "the Word of righteousness" (Heb. 5:13). Paul declared "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ ... for therein is the righteousness of God revealed" (Rom. 1:16, 17).

In view of this twofoldness of Truth and the opposition of the carnal mind thereto, it should no more surprise us that such diverse elements as legality and lawlessness are found in the same persons than we should be to read that Pilate and Herod who "were at enmity between themselves," on the day of our Saviour's mock trial before them "were made friends together" (Luke 23:12), and that they made common cause in opposing and condemning Him. Legality is the perverting of God's Law. Lawlessness or licentiousness is the corrupting of the Gospel: or if we speak of these evils as they apply to the distinctive features of each, legality is the wresting of the righteous element in both the Law and the Gospel, while licentiousness is the abuse of the grace element in them. For while it be true that grace is the outstanding and predominant characteristic of the Gospel, yet it must ever be insisted upon that it is not a grace which is exercised at the expense of righteousness, rather does it reign "through righteousness" (Rom. 5:21).

Now since it be true that the roots of both legality and licentiousness are found in every man by nature, it behooves the servant of God to be on his most prayerful and careful guard against giving place to either of these evils, for in proportion as he does so the Truth is falsified and the souls of his hearers are poisoned. If he be guilty of preaching in a legalistic way, the person and work of Christ is dishonored and the spirit of self-righteousness is fed to those who sit under him. Unless he makes it crystal clear that none but Christ can avail the sinner and that there is in Him a sufficiency to meet his every need, unless he expresses himself beyond a peradventure of being misunderstood that the merits of Christ's righteousness and blood are the sole means for delivering a believing sinner from the curse of the broken law and his alone title to everlasting bliss, he has failed at the most vital point of his mission and duty. The trumpet he is called upon to blow must give forth no uncertain sound at this point: nothing but faith in the finished work of Christ, and nothing added thereto, can supply the sinner with a standing-ground before the thrice holy God.

On the other hand, it is equally important and essential that the minister steer clear of the opposite extreme. If he be guilty of preaching in a licentious way then the person and work of Christ is equally dishonored and the spirit of religious bolshevism is fostered in his hearers. Unless he makes it as plain as an object bathed in the light of the noonday sun that God hates sin, all sin, and will not compromise with or condone it in any one; unless he declares and insists that Christ came to save His people from their sins—from the love of them, from the dominion of them—he has failed at the most essential part of his task. The great work of the pulpit is to press the authoritative claims of the Creator and Judge of all the earth, to show how sort we have come of meeting God's just requirements, to announce His imperative demand of repentance—the sinner must throw down the weapons of his rebellion and forsake his evil way before he can trust in Christ to the saving of his soul: that Christ is to be received as King to rule over him as well as Priest to atone for



him, to surrender to Him as his rightful Lord ere he can embrace him as his gracious Saviour.

Such a task as we have briefly outlined above is no easy one, and only those who are called and qualified by God are fitted to discharge it. To preserve the balance of Truth so that the requirements of righteousness and the riches of grace are equally poised: to avoid Arminianism on the one side and Antinomianism on the other is an undertaking far beyond the capacity of any "novice" (1 Tim. 3:6). It requires a "workman" and not a lazy man, a student and not a sloven, one who studies to "show himself approved unto God" (2 Tim. 2:15) and not one who seeks the applause and the shekels of men. Nor can any human education or self-development of the intellectual faculty impart this capacity. No indeed: only in the school of Christ can this accomplishment be acquired; only as the Holy Spirit is his Teacher can any man be furnished unto such an undertaking. The preacher must first be taught himself, taught experimentally and effectually, taught in his soul to love what God loves and hate what God hates, and then be given wisdom from above to express the same according to the Scriptural pattern before he is ready to show unto others the way of life.

It is because so many untaught men, unregenerate men, now occupy the pulpits that "another gospel" (Gal. 1:6) is being so widely and generally disseminated. Multitudes who have neither "tasted that the Lord is gracious" nor have "the fear of the Lord" in them have, from various motives and considerations, invaded the sacred calling of the ministry, and out of the abundance of their corrupt hearts they speak. Being blind themselves, they lead the blind into the ditch. Having no love for the Shepherd they have none for the sheep, being but "hirelings." They are themselves "of the world" and therefore "the world heareth them" (1 John 4:5), for they preach that which is acceptable unto fallen human nature, and as like attracts like, they gather around themselves a company of admirers who flatter and support them. They will bring in just enough of God's Truth to deceive the unwary and give the appearance of orthodoxy to their

message, but not sufficient of the Truth, especially the searching portions thereof, to render their hearers uncomfortable by destroying their false peace. They will name Christ but not preach Him, mention the Gospel but not expound it.

Some of these men will preach legality under the pretense of furthering morality and honoring the Divine Law. They will preach up good works, but lay no foundation on which they may be built. They confound justification and sanctification, making personal holiness to be the ground of the sinner's acceptance before God. They sow their vineyards with "divers seed" (Deut. 22:9) so that Law and Gospel, Divine grace and creature performances are so mingled together that their distinctive characters are obliterated. Others preach Licentiousness under the guise of magnifying the grace of God. They omit the Divine call to repentance, say nothing about the necessity of forsaking our sins if we are to obtain mercy (Prov. 28:13), lay no stress upon regeneration as a being made "a new creature In Christ" (2 Cor. 5:17), but declare that the sinner has simply to accept Christ as his personal Saviour—though his heart be still unhumbled, without contrition and thoroughly in love with the world—and eternal life is now his. The result of this preaching is well calculated to bolster up the deluded, for instead of insisting that saving faith is evidenced by its spiritual fruits, instead of teaching that the Christian life is a warfare against the world, the flesh and the devil and that none but the overcomer will reach Heaven, they are assured—no matter how carnal their walk—that "once saved, always saved," and thus they are soothed in their sins and comforted with a false peace unto they awake in Hell. Shun all such preaching, my reader, as you would a deadly plague. "Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth thee to err from the words of knowledge" (Prov. 19:27).

### **Evangelical Preaching**

Evangelical preaching is that preaching which accords with the spirit and substance of the Gospel of with neither legality nor

licentiousness: which gives full place to both the grace of God and the righteousness of God. It maintains the claims of Divine holiness, yet without bringing the soul into bondage. It proclaims a free salvation without making light of sin. It presents a Saviour who is suited to and sufficient for the very chief of sinners, yet affirms that only those who have been brought to loathe themselves and are sick of sin will welcome such a holy Physician. It announces the glorious liberty into which the sons of God have been brought and urges them to stand fast in the same, yet it also points out that such liberty is the very reverse of being a license granted us to indulge the lusts of the flesh without fear of consequences. While denying that good works enter at all into the ground of our acceptance with God, care is taken to show that a faith which does not produce good works is worthless and saves no one.

Our lot is cast in a day of such spiritual darkness, ignorance, and corrupting of the Truth that there is as much need for pointing out what true evangelical preaching consists of, as there is for showing what is not either legal or licentious preaching. Where real evangelism is to be found (and few are the places where it now exists) so great is the confusion in many minds that there are not a few who will charge that preacher with either legality or licentiousness. Both are items of opprobrium, the former especially being one which Satan is very fond of using or discrediting the servants of God, and once the rumor gains currency that such and such a preacher is "Legalistic" many people will shun his ministrations. Those who insist that the Moral Law is the believer's Rule of conduct and who press the perceptive parts of Scripture are often dubbed "Legalists" and charged with bringing God's people into bondage, but such an accusation is both baseless and slanderous, and must not be heeded by lovers of the Truth.

Our object before us in writing on our present subject is that the few servants of God now remaining may be freed from the unjust aspersions which religious libertines are so fond of heaping upon them, and that those Christians who read this chapter may be more

on their guard against giving ear to false accusations. Those who declare that sanctification or practical holiness is an essential part of salvation, who insist upon a godly walk as the necessary evidence of a credible profession, and who faithfully warn the Lord's people that looseness of conduct and lack of strictness in their deportment will certainly sever communion with their Beloved, will be most unfairly charged with "legality." Those who lay much emphasis upon the vital importance of maintaining a conscience void of offense toward God and men, who insist upon the needs-be of the Christian's daily confessing every known sin before his Father, and of making full restitution unto every fellow-creature he has wronged in any way, will be unjustly charged with bringing the saints into bondage.

Not only should the reader be much on his guard against forming or entertaining any unwarrantable criticisms of a true servant of God, but he needs to be watchful lest he gives ear unto any of Satan's lies against himself. So difficult is it to keep the scales equally poised, so easily do we fail to heed both sides of the Truth, that we are ever prone to lose the balance. Yet, knowing our danger here, yea even when preserved therefrom, the great Enemy of our souls will seek to persuade us we are guilty of erring. When such a scripture as "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb. 10:22) is before us and we perceive that a moral fitness is required in order to obtain an audience with the Majesty on high, the Devil will be ready to tell us that we are denying the sufficiency of Christ's blood to give us access—confounding out legal title to do so with our experimental meetness. When we give heed to such a word as "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Ps. 66:18) the Devil will come as an angel of light bidding us beware of entertaining the thought that God's answering of our prayers is dependent upon something good in ourselves.

Now evangelical preaching is designed to equip the Lord's people so that they can repel such assaults of the Enemy and preserve them from the two extremes to which they are prone. Evangelical

preaching will expound the Everlasting Covenant which God has made with His people in Christ and show that the whole of their corruption becomes their greatest burden and grief. At regeneration God puts His laws into their hearts and writes them in their minds (Heb. 10:16) and so places His holy fear within them that they shall never fully or finally depart from Him (Jer. 32:40). After their regeneration the Spirit renews them day by day (2 Cor. 4:16), causing them to walk in the paths of righteousness and recovering them when they stray therefrom.

Evangelical preaching places the crown of honor where it rightfully belongs: not upon the creature, but upon the head of the Lord Jesus. It makes nothing of man and everything of Christ. It ever reminds the believer that it is a sovereign God who makes him to differ from the reprobate and that he has nothing good whatever in himself save what has been communicated to him by the blessed Spirit (1 Cor. 4:7). It teaches him that "all his springs" are in the Lord (Ps. 87:7), that he must draw upon and draw from Him all that he needs, receiving out of His exhaustless "fullness, grace for grace" (John 1:16). It teaches him that Christ is his "life" (Col. 3:4), that he has no life apart from Christ, so that he must daily live in Christ, live on Christ, live unto Christ. Said the apostle, "Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20); and again, "for me to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21); and yet again, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (4:13).

At the same time evangelical preaching is careful to insist upon human responsibility and to call for the full discharge of Christian duty. It presents to view the exalted and changeless standard at which we must ever aim: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). It warns us against making any excuse for failure to attain unto that standard, bidding us judge ourselves unsparingly for all failure, and to renew our efforts in pressing forward to the same. It tells us we have no strength of our own but must seek it from above, yet points out that

the way to obtain more is to use what we already have (Luke 8:18). It calls the believer to a life of unreserved obedience to his Lord, but insists that the motive for the same must be love and gratitude for all He suffered on his account. It faithfully declares that backsliding will bring severe chastisement upon the Christian (Ps. 89:30–32), and that if he would have the rod removed he must forsake that which occasioned it.

Evangelical preaching avoids the snare of legality by bringing in Christ as the believer's Object: the One to whom he owes everything, the One to whom he must apply for the supply of every need, the One whom he is to glorify by a walk which is pleasing in His sight. Evangelical preaching lays the axe at the roots of self-righteousness by constantly reminding the believer of his continual indebtedness to Divine grace, that nothing he can do is to be least degree meritorious, and that should he fully perform his duty he is still "an unprofitable servant." On the other hand, evangelical preaching avoids the snare of licentiousness by steadily holding up the Divine standard of "Be ye holy in all manner of conversation" or "behavior" (1 Pet. 1:15), but constantly pressing both the exhortations and warnings of Scripture, and by reminding its hearers "without holiness no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14). Well may every true servant of God exclaim "Who Is sufficient for these things!" (2 Cor. 2:16); and well it is when he can—humbly, dependently, but truthfully—add, "our sufficiency Is of God" (2 Cor. 3:5).

## The Prodigal Son

"11 And he said, A certain man had two sons: 12 And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. 13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. 14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. 15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. 17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, 19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. 20 And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. 21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. 22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: 23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: 24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. 25 Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. 27 And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. 28 And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father

out, and intreated him. 29 And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: 30 But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. 31 And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. 32 It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found." (Luke 15:11–32)

## **I. General Observations**

BEFORE we attempt to expound this portion of Scripture in detail let us first make a few general observations. Who does the "prodigal son" represent? Is it an unregenerate sinner, or a backslidden believer that is in view? There is a division of sentiment upon this point. Personally, we have no doubt whatever that in this part of the parable of the Salvation of the Lost, the Lord Jesus pictures an unregenerate sinner. Our interpretation will proceed along this line, but before we give it, let us first present some proofs that it is not a backslidden believer that is before us.

First, the whole context shows plainly the class that is portrayed throughout the entire chapter. In the first two verses of Luke 15 we are told, "Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." Here, then, Christ is seen in connection with the lost. It was in answer to this criticism of the Pharisees and scribes that our Savior proceeded to utter the parable which has brought life and peace to countless souls since then. And in this parable the Lord is not warning His disciples against the danger of backsliding, but is vindicating Himself for "receiving sinners."



That part of the parable which treats of what has been termed "the prodigal son" begins at the eleventh verse, but what we have here and in the verses that follow is only a continuation of what the Lord said as recorded in the previous verses. In these previous verses He depicts a man going after a lost sheep until he finds it; and also a woman who loses one piece of silver, and who sweeps the house and seeks diligently until she finds it. Surely there can be no doubt whatever as to who is figured by the "lost sheep," and the "lost piece of silver." Surely it is obvious that these picture an unregenerate soul and not a backsliden believer.

In the third place, the words which the "father" spoke when the wandering son returned, furnish another proof that it is a sinner and not an erring son, who is before us. Said he, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him." (v. 22) The "best robe" here speaks of the Robe of Righteousness which each sinner receives when he first comes to Christ. Had it been a backslidden believer, his need would be to have his feet "washed." (John 13)

Finally, the "father's" statement concerning his son is proof positive that it is no erring Christian that is here in view. The father said, "For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." (v. 24) This is conclusive to all who believe that "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." (Rom. 11:29) Every believer is in present possession of eternal life, which he has received from God as his "gift" (Rom. 6:23); and this "gift" is never recalled. If then the believer is in present possession of eternal life he can never die. (See John 8:51.) That the father spoke of the returning prodigal as one who "was dead," and who "was lost" is proof positive that an unregenerate sinner is here in view.

There is only one argument that is of any force against what we have said above, and that we will briefly consider. We are asked to explain how Christ could speak of this wanderer as a "son" if he represented an unregenerate sinner. Insuperable as the difficulty appears at first sight it is, nevertheless, capable of simple solution. We answer in a

word that this wanderer who came to the "father" was a son by election. He was a son in the purpose of God. If we should be asked to point to a scripture which justifies such an assertion, where those of God's elect are termed "sons" before they are actually regenerated, we would at once refer to John 11:51, 52: "He prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." Here we are told that the ones who were to definitely benefit from the death of Christ, and who should be "gathered together in one" (that is, into one family), were, at that time "scattered abroad," nevertheless, they were denominated "the children of God!" Another scripture which enunciates the same principle is John 10:16 where we find the Savior declaring "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring:" even before they were brought to Himself the Good Shepherd terms them His sheep.

Before giving a detailed exposition of the closing verses of Luke 15, we would point out that this chapter does not contain three parables, as is commonly supposed, but instead, one parable, in three Parts. In verse 3 we are told, "He spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you having an hundred sheep," etc. Again in verse 8 we read how that the Savior continued to say, without any break, "Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lost one piece," etc. Then in verse 11 it is recorded, "And He said, A certain man had two sons," etc. This parable as a whole has to do with the Salvation of a lost sinner, and much of its beauty is missed by failing to discern its unbroken unity. It gives a beautiful and marvelous picture of the concern of each of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity in the salvation of the lost. In the third part of this parable we are shown a sinner coming into the presence of the Father. But in order to appreciate the preciousness of this we must pay careful attention to what precedes.

In the second part of this one parable, we have brought before us, in figurative form, the work of the Holy Spirit, and this, we know, is

what precedes the coming of any sinner into the presence of the Father. And on what is the work of the Holy Spirit based? The answer is, upon the work of Christ; and this is what we have portrayed in the first part of the parable, where the Shepherd is in view. We pause to notice very briefly a few details in connection with these two things.

In verses 4 to 7 we see the work of Christ as the Good Shepherd. First, He is the One "having an hundred sheep;" He is the One to whom the "sheep" belong—they belong to Him because they're given to Him by the Father. Second, He is the One that is said to "go after that which is lost:" this pictures Christ leaving His home on high and coming down to this earth where His lost sheep were. Third, next we are told that He goes after the lost "until He find it:" this brings us to the Cross—the place of death, for it was there the "sheep" were, and only there could they be found. Fourth, "And when He hath found it, He layeth it on His shoulders:" this tells of the tender care of the Savior for His own, and also assures us of the safe place which we now have in Him—it is blessed to note that in Isa. 9:6 where Christ's future kingship is in view, we are told "The government shall be upon His shoulder," the singular number being used; whereas it is the plural number when the place which the sheep has is mentioned—shoulder upholds the government of the world, shoulders give double guarantee to our preservation. Fifth, "He layeth it on His shoulders, rejoicing." How wondrous is this! We can understand that the sheep should find abundant cause to rejoice over the Shepherd, but that the Savior (the Self-Sufficient One) should have occasion to rejoice in the salvation of poor hell-deserving sinners "passeth knowledge." Sixth, "And when He cometh home:" this tells of the blessed issue of the Savior's work and the happy success of the Shepherd's quest. Notice that Heaven is here termed "Home"—a figure that will well repay prolonged meditation. Seventh, "And when He cometh home, He calleth together His friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with Me; for I have found My sheep which was lost:" how this reveals to us the heart of Christ! Not only does He

rejoice over the salvation of the lost, but He will call upon the angels to share His joy.

In verses 8 to 10 we see the work of the Holy Spirit. Notice three things. First, that the "woman" who here prefigures Him, lights a candle, ere she was lost. How accurate the figure! This is precisely what the Spirit of God does in His operations. He uses a light, and that light is the Lamp of Life the Word of God—the entrances of the very words of which "giveth light." In the second place, unlike the work of the Shepherd, which was on the outside, the sphere of the woman's operations was on the inside "the house." So, the external Work of Christ was done for us, but the Work of the Spirit is done in us. In the third place, the gracious patience and blessed perseverance of the Holy Spirit in His divine work within those who by nature are rebels, is here portrayed in the fact that we are told the woman will "seek diligently till she find." The result of the first part of this parable which portrays the Work of Christ, and of the second part of the parable which depicts the Work of the Holy Spirit, is brought before us in the third part of the parable which shows us the poor sinner actually coming into the presence of the Father.

This parable then tells us three things about the Godhead: the Shepherd's toil, the Spirit's search, and the hearty welcome which the Father gives to the sinner that comes back to Himself. But this is not all: the striking thing is that we have here a marvelous representation of the mystery of the Holy Trinity. As already pointed out, Luke 15 does not give us three parables, but instead one parable in three parts, and each one of these three parts brings before us separately, each of the three Persons in the Godhead: so that we have here one in three, and three in one.

We are also taught three outstanding things in connection with the sinner. In the first part of the parable he is seen under the figure of a sheep that is lost; this intimates the stupidity of the sinner who, like a lost sheep, is unable to find his way home, and who if he is to be restored must be sought. In the second part of the parable he is seen

under the figure of a coin and is lost: here we have an inanimate object, in other words, that which accurately portrays the solemn fact that the sinner is spiritually dead. In the third part of the parable he is seen under the figure of a dissolute son, away in the far-country: this gives us a representation of the natural man's moral condition: alienated from God and wayward at heart.

It is the third part of this parable which is now to engage our attention, that part of the parable which views the sinner coming into the presence of God. It is the human side that is now made prominent. Here we are shown the sinner's consciousness of his need: he "began to be in want." Here we are shown the sinner exercising his will: "I will arise." Here we are shown the sinner repenting: "I ... will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." But let it be borne in mind that before the sinner does any of these three things God has previously been at work upon him. Let us not forget that in this wonderful and blessed parable the Lord Jesus gives us the divine side first, before He makes mention of the human side. Therefore, let those who desire to "follow His steps" give careful heed to this principle. We shall now consider—

### **1. He had a "Substance" or "Portion."**

"A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living." (vv. 11, 12) In addition to our natural endowments or talents, and our time and strength, God has given to every one of His creatures a soul. This soul may be regarded as capital in hand with which to do our trading both for time and eternity. It is a most valuable portion, for it is worth more than "the whole world;" it is worth more than the whole world because it will endure after the world and all its works have been burnt up.

This parable begins by bringing into view the sinner before he goes out into the "far country," or to use the language of the parable,

before he "took his journey into a far country." It was while in the father's house that he received his "portion of goods," and that "he (the father) divided unto them (his) living," so that the portion received was a living portion. This can only refer to the creature, prior to his birth into this world, receiving from "the Father of spirits" (Heb. 12:9) a "living soul."

## **2. He "took his journey into a far country" (v. 13)**

The "far country" is the world which is away from God, so far away that "the whole world lieth in the wicked one." (Jas. 5:19) As the result of Adam's sin, man was separated from God, and all of Adam's descendants enter this world "alienated from the life of God." (Eph. 4:18) There is a great gulf between the thrice holy God and the sinful creature which none but Christ can bridge. The sinner is away from God in his heart, in his thoughts, in his ways. How much this explains!

It explains Atheism. Atheism, is simply man's attempt to hide from the discomfiture of God's acknowledged presence. Men will give you many reasons as to why they are infidels, agnostics, and atheists, but these reasons are, in reality, only so many "excuses" (Luke 14:18): the real reason is that men are determined to get away from the avowed acknowledgement of God.

This explains the general neglect among men of the Bible. They will give you many reasons as to why they do not read it—they cannot find the time, there is much in it they cannot understand, and there are so many conflicting interpretations of its contents, and so they leave it alone. Men esteem the holy Word of God less highly than they do the writings of their fellow sinners. And yet the Scriptures treat of many subjects of profound importance and vital moment: they furnish the only reliable information concerning the origin of man, the nature of man, the purpose of man's existence, and the life beyond the grave, etc. Impelled by an uneasy conscience many will read a chapter in the Bible now and again, but that is all, and the real

reason for this is because the Bible brings man into the presence of God, and that is the very last thing the natural man desires. What a proof is this, then, that he is in "the far country;" that at heart he is away from the Father!

This explains why it is that sinners, as such, have no delight in prayer. Real prayer is a direct speaking to God through the mediation of Christ. It is that which brings us into contact and communion with the Great Invisible. But the sinner has no heart for this. He finds no enjoyment in pouring out his soul to God. If he prays at all, prayer is an irksome task and a mere repetition of words. He had rather do almost anything than pray, and the reason for this is because he wants to keep away from God.

This explains why it is that the sinner has no real delight in the public worship of God. It is true that he may go to church: a vague sense of duty may take him there, or it may be from force of habit acquired through a Christian upbringing, or it may be an uneasy conscience which renders him a punctual attendant. Nor is he always an uninterested hearer. When the preacher delivers his message with oratorical fire and with rhetorical embellishments that are pleasing to the ear, he is not only interested but gratified. But let the preacher forget his rhetoric, let him leave his generalizations—let him address himself directly to the sinner's conscience, and say "Thou art the man;" let him be brought into the presence of God and the poor unsaved listener will at once be rendered uneasy, and it is more than doubtful whether he will return any more to hear that preacher.

### **3. He "wasted his substance with riotous living." (v. 13)**

As pointed out above, "the substance" is the living soul which every man receives from his Creator, and which is to be regarded as capital in hand with which to do his trading both for time and eternity. And here is how the sinner, every sinner, uses the "portion" that he has received from the Father of spirits. He squanders it. Let it be said emphatically that this 'prodigal son' is not merely a representation of

some particular class of sinners who are more wicked than their fellows, whose offences against God are more flagrant than the general run of sinners; but instead, the 'prodigal son' pictures the course that is followed by every descendant of Adam.

"And there wasted his substance with riotous living." From the hour of his birth the natural man has never cherished a single feeling, exercised a single thought, or performed a single deed that is acceptable to God. So far as eternity is concerned he is spiritually barren: his life is fruitless. But not only has he ignored the claims of God, not only has he neglected the things of God, not only has he failed to love the Lord his God with all his heart, but he has squandered his time, misused his talents, and lived entirely for himself.

#### **4. He encountered "a mighty famine." (v. 14)**

"And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land." (v. 14) "That land" is the "far country." It is the world, that world which is away from God, and which, in consequence, "lieth in the wicked one." And in that land there is "a mighty famine" all the while. It is to be noted, however, that we are told "there arose a mighty famine in that land." It was not so there, always. The famine "arose" when man became separated from God, i.e. at the Fall. The "famine" has reference to the fact that there is nothing whatever in this world that can minister to man's soul.

#### **5. He "began to be in want." (v. 14)**

Here, in the history of a sinner who is saved eventually, is where hope begins. There are many living in this "far country" today where there is "a mighty famine" but, the tragic thing is, that they are unconscious of it. They are satisfied with what they find here. They are sensible of no need which this world fails to meet. It is only after God begins His work upon the soul that the sinner discovers that everything here is only "vanity and vexation of spirit." Happy the one



who has reached this point. Happy the one who has begun "to be in want." Happy the one who is conscious of an aching void in his heart, of a yearning in his soul, of a need in his spirit, which the things of this world and the pleasures of sin have failed to satisfy. Such an one is "not far from the kingdom." Nevertheless, the beginning to be "in want" is but the initial experience. There are other experiences, painful ones, to be passed through before the sinner actually comes to God. Let us follow further the history of "the prodigal son" which so accurately traces the course pursued by each of us.

## **6. He "went and joined himself to a citizen of that country." (v. 15)**

How true to life! Notice he did not decide at once to return to his father—that did not come until later. Instead of returning to the father, he turned to man for relief, and went to work, for as we read, "he (the citizen of that country) sent ... him into his field to feed swine." Does the Christian reader need an interpreter here? Does not his own past experience supply the key to the meaning of verse 15? The beginning to be "in want" finds its counterpart in the first awakening of the soul, or to use other terms, it corresponds to conviction of sin. And when a soul has been awakened, when it has been convicted of sin, when it has been made conscious of a "want" not yet supplied, what does such an one, invariably, do? Did you, dear reader, turn at once to the Savior? Not if your experience was anything like that of the writer and the vast majority of other Christians he has talked with. If your experience corresponds in anywise with his and theirs, after you were first awakened you began to attempt to work out a righteousness of your own, you betook yourself to the work of reformation, and to aid you in this you turned to man for counsel and help. And unless the sovereign grace of God overruled it, instead of seeking help from a real Christian who (if he had intelligence in the things of God) would at once have urged you to "search the Scripture" to discover God's remedy, you turned to some professing Christian, who in reality was only a "citizen of that country"—the world. And if you turned to such an one, he did for you

precisely what we read here in the parable—he sent you "to feed swine." Allowing scripture to interpret scripture, the "swine" here represents professing Christians, who ultimately apostatize. (See 2 Pet. 2:20–22.) The one to whom you went for advice told you that what you needed to do was to "engage in Christian service." "work for the Lord," "get busy in helping others"—and this while you were still dead in trespasses and sins! Perhaps you were asked to teach a class of unsaved children in the Sunday School, or to be an officer of a young people's society (the majority of whom were, probably, like yourself—unsaved), and thus "feed the swine."

### **7. He "came to himself." (v. 17):**

"And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said," etc. (vv. 16, 17) And again we say, How true to life! What did this joining of himself to a citizen of that country, and this working in the field amount to? What relief did it bring to his hungry soul? Just nothing. All there was for him there were "the husks that the swine did eat." And what did all your labors as an awakened but unregenerate sinner amount to? What relief did they afford your poor heart? None whatever. All your zeal and sacrifices in your so-called "Christian service" provided you with nothing but "husks," the same husks that the swine "did eat." And how pathetic are the words that follow next—"And no man gave unto him!" Ah! the need of the awakened sinner lies deeper than any "man can reach unto. It is this lessen that the sinner must next be taught. He must learn to turn away from man and look unto Christ Himself. It is not until he does this that there will be any relief.

"And when he came to himself." This means that he had recovered his sanity, for previously he was "beside himself"—out of his mind. The Scriptures represent the sinner as suffering from spiritual insanity, and regeneration as the bestowment of a right mind. In Ephesians 4:17, 18 the saints of God are exhorted to "walk not as other Gentiles walk in the vanity of their mind, having the

understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." Again, in Mark 5 we have in the demoniac a type of the sinner in bondage to Satan, who, when delivered by our Lord, is seen "sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind." Finally, in 2 Timothy 1:7 the change which the new birth produces is described in the following terms: "For God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." Insanity is the lack of capacity to think correctly, and to form proper estimates of ourselves and others. It is a suffering from various forms of hallucination. An unmistakable evidence of insanity is, that the one whose mind is deranged is quite ignorant of the fact, and supposes himself to be all right. What is true in the natural realm has its counterpart in the spiritual. The sinner's understanding is darkened; his mind is full of strange delusions; he is unable to arrive at correct conclusions; and what is the saddest part of it all is, that he is totally unconscious of his spiritual disease. But when the Holy Spirit of God has worked upon a man, these hallucinations are removed, the darkness is taken away from his understanding and, like the "prodigal," he "comes to himself."

### **8. He said, "I will arise and go to my father." (v. 18):**

It is not until after the sinner has been made to feel "the mighty famine" that exists in the far country, it is not until he has discovered that "no man" can give unto him, and it is not until he has "come to himself," that he begins to reason aright and remind himself that in his father's house there is "bread enough and to spare." And it is only then that he declares "I will arise and go to my father," which means, it is only then that the will begins to move Godwards. And what is the next thing that we read? Why, that the prodigal not only determines to arise and go to his father, but he announces that he will "say unto him, Father I have sinned against heaven and before thee." In other words, he is now willing to take the place of a lost sinner before God. That is what repentance is.

## **9. He is Still Legalistic**

I will say, "I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." (Luke 15:18, 19) Applying the language of this to the history of the sinner coming to God, we here reach the point where, though the Holy Spirit has done much for the awakened one—discovering his need, and enlightening his mind, directing his will, and producing conviction—the work of grace is not yet complete. The sinner is now deeply conscious of his own utter unworthiness, but not yet has he learned of the marvelous grace of God which more than meets his deep need. This comes out in the fact that the highest conception that the mind of the returning "prodigal" rose to was that of being made one of the "hired servants." How legalistic the mind of man is! How tenaciously he clings to his own performances! How strenuously he will contend for the need of bringing in his own works! A "hired servant" is one who has to work for all he gets.

## **10. He "arose and came to his father." (v. 20)**

Blessed be His name, God does not cease His patient work within us until this point has been reached. Dull of comprehension though we are, our minds at enmity against Him, our wills essentially opposed to Him, He graciously perseveres with us until our understandings have been enlightened, our enmity has been removed, our wills so subdued that we arise and come to Him.

And what was the reception the prodigal met with? Do you know what portion was meted out to a "prodigal son" under the Law? Read with me the following passage: "If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a

glutton, and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die." (Deut. 21:18–21) How then did the father receive this "prodigal?" And this brings us to consider:

## **II. The Prodigal's Reception**

How many an exercised heart has wondered what sort of a reception he would meet with if he came to God. Blessed it is to ponder the closing portion of the third part of this matchless parable. In expounding the significance of what is recorded of this "prodigal son" as he departed from the "father," we have seen portrayed the representative experiences of the sinner. As we turn now to the happy sequel, we shall see that what happened to him as he returned to the "father," also pictures:

### **1. The Hearty Welcome He Received**

"And he arose, and came to his father, But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." (v. 20) How inexpressibly blessed this is! Five things (the number of grace) are here predicated of "his father."

First when he was yet a great way off his father "saw him." And what does this tell us? Why, that the father was looking out for him! The father was eagerly waiting for him. And how keen are love's eyes! Even while he was yet a "great way off" his father saw him. But how solemnly this brings out the distance in which by nature we were from God! Even after the sinner has "come to himself," and turned his back upon the "far country," and has set his face homewards, he is "yet a great way off!" Nevertheless, all praise to His sovereign grace, "But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." (Eph. 2:13)

Second, his father "had compassion." The prodigal must have presented a miserable appearance: he had devoured his living with harlots (v. 30)—the illicit love for the things of the world, instead of loving God with "all our hearts"—he had suffered the effects of the

"mighty famine" (v. 14), and he had gone out into the fields to—"feed swine." (v. 15) What a pitiable object he must have been! Yet did his father have "compassion" on him! And O dear Christian reader, how did you and I look just before the Father received us? Understandings darkened, hearts desperately wicked, wills rebellious, "His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." (Eph. 2:4, 5)

Third, his father "ran" to meet him: We do not read of the "prodigal" running as he set out to return to his "father." All that is said of him is that "he arose, and came to his father." But of the "father" it is said that he "ran!" Do you know dear reader, that this is the only verse in all the Bible which represents God has being in a hurry! In the restoration of the ruined earth He acted orderly, we might say leisurely. In everything else but this, God is viewed as acting with calmness and deliberation, as befits One who has all eternity at His disposal. But here is what we term the impatience of divine Love.

Fourth, his father "fell on his neck." He not only "saw him" while a great way off, he not only had "compassion" on this wee-begone prodigal, he not only "ran" to meet him, but he "fell on his neck:" he embraced him: he flung around him the welcoming arms of love.

Fifth, his father "kissed him." Once more we would point out that nothing is said here of the son kissing the father. It is the "father" who takes the lead at every stage! He "kissed" him, not rebuffed him. He "kissed" him, not bade him depart. He "kissed" him, not chided him for his wanderings. What marvelous grace! How all this reveals the Father's heart! The "kiss" speaks of love, of reconciliation, of intimate relationship.

## **2. The Prodigal's Response**

Notice now the "prodigal's" response. "And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no

more worthy to be called thy son" (v. 21) Notice three things. First, he is deeply conscious of his sinful condition, and he hesitates not to confess it. And the nearer we approach the thrice holy God the clearer shall we perceive our vileness. Second, he was profoundly convinced of his unworthiness, and delayed not to own it. It is a discovery of the marvelous grace of God which brings us to a deeper realization of how thoroughly undeserving we are, for grace and merit are as much opposed to each other as light and darkness. Third, observe that he says nothing new about being made a "hired servant!" No; the wondrous grace of the "father" had taught him better.

### **3. The Robe Which Was Put Upon Him**

"But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him." (v. 22) There are four things to be noted here. First, the position the "son" yet occupied. We cannot but admire the marvelous accuracy and beauty of every line in this divinely drawn picture. The previous verses have shown us the happy meeting between the father and the son, the father's hearty welcome, the son's broken-hearted confession. And this, be it remembered, is viewed as occurring some distance away from the father's house, for he "ran" out to meet him. Now, as the father and son draw near to the house, the father calls to his servants, and says, "Bring forth the best robe." Ah! the "father" could not have the prodigal at his table in his filthy rags. No; that would be setting aside the righteous requirements of His House: "Grace reigns through righteousness" (Rom. 5:21), and never at the expense of it. Beautiful it is, then, to behold grace which ran out to meet the "prodigal," and now the righteousness which makes provision for the covering of his filthy rags!

Second, We behold with thankful hearts the provision that is made for the poor wanderer. Note it carefully that the prodigal did not bring his "robe" with him out of the far country, nor did he procure it on his homeward journey. No indeed; it was provided for him, was furnished by the father. It was there ready for him, waiting for him!

Third, admire the quality of the clothing provided for him. Said the father, "Bring forth the best robe." What marvelous grace was this! The "best robe" in the father's house was reserved for the prodigal! And what can this signify, but that the sinner saved by grace shall be robed in a garment more glorious than that worn by the unfallen angels! But we exclaim, Can such a thing be? Is that possible? And dear reads, what is this "best robe?" Why it is the imputed righteousness of Christ Himself which shall cover the filthy rags of our righteousness—that "imputed righteousness" which was wrought out for us in the perfect obedience and vicarious death of our Savior. Read with me Isaiah 61:10: "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness."

How remarkable it is to notice that this "best robe" was the first thing which the "prodigal" received at the hands of his father! Right here is the answer to the objection made by those who reject the evangelical interpretation of this parable, for in the "best robe" we have that which speaks of the life and death of Christ.

Fourth, notice that the "best robe" was placed upon him—"Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him." (v. 22) Everything was done for him. Not only was the "best robe" provided for him, it was also placed upon him. How this reminds us of what we read in Genesis 3:21: "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them." The Lord God not only Himself supplied the "coats of skins," but He "clothed" our first parents! We find the same thing again in Zechariah 3:4—"Take away the filthy garment from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." "Oh to grace how great a debtor!"

#### **4. The Ring Placed Upon His Hand**

"And put a ring on his hand." (v. 22) Again we notice that the ring was not supplied by him, but provided for him, And, too, it was not



handed to him, but put on him! Not a thing did he do for himself. And of what does the "ring," put "on his hand," speak? The "ring" is the seal of love, of plighted troth. Later it becomes the symbol of wedded union. And, is it not true that the returning sinner receives not only the "best robe" of Christ's imputed righteousness, but also God's seal, which "seal" is the Holy Spirit Himself: "Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." (2 Cor. 1:22) Yes, the Holy Spirit is the Seal of God's love, the evidence of a plighted troth, for, "grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." (Eph. 4:30) And, again, it is the Holy Spirit who unites us to Christ: "But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." (1 Cor. 6:17) The "ring" also speaks of ownership: the woman who wears my ring does so as a sign that she is mine—my wife. So, too, the Holy Spirit in us tells that we belong to Christ:

"If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." (Rom. 8:9) And once more, in Scripture the "ring" is given as a mark of high honor and esteem: "And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck ... and they cried before him, Bow the knee." (Gen. 41:42, 43) This "ring" which the "father" gave to the "prodigal" was put on his hand. Now the hand speaks of labor. As then the "ring" is here the emblem of the Holy Spirit, does not this signify that henceforth, all our works should be performed in the power of that same Spirit?

## **5. The Shoes Provided for His Feet**

"And shoes on his feet." (v. 22) Once more we are constrained to say, How marvelously complete is this lovely parabolic picture. Here we see every need of the believer met. The "kiss" of reconciliation to assure him of a hearty welcome; the "best robe" to cover his filthy rags; the "ring" put on his hand, to show that he belongs to God, and to denote that his labors henceforth must be in the power of the Spirit. And now the "shoes" for his "feet" speak of God's provision for the daily walk.

In giving instructions to Moses concerning the observance of the Passover, the Lord said, "And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand." (Ex. 12:11) They were not prepared to go forth on their pilgrimage until "shoes" were on their feet. And how blessed is the sequel: forty years later Moses reminded them, that though the Lord had led them for forty years in the wilderness, "Your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot!" So, again, when the Lord sent forth the twelve, he said to them, "be shod with sandals." (Mark 6:9) And in Ephesians 6 where believers are exhorted to "put on the whole armor of God," one of the specifications is, "And your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace." Not until our feet are thus shod are we prepared to go forth with the Gospel of God's grace to a perishing world. It is exceedingly blessed to contrast these two passages: "Their feet (the wicked) run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood." (Isa. 59:7); "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good things of good, that publisheth salvation!" (Isa. 52:7)

## **6. The Fatted Calf Killed and Eaten**

"And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it: and let us eat, and be merry." (v. 23) First, note the contrast between the words of the "father" in connection with the "best robe," and here with the "fatted calf." In the former it was "bring forth," which indicated that the "prodigal" was on the outside. But now that he has been clothed, now that he has had put on him the "best robe," now that he has been suitably adorned for the father's presence—"Made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. 1:12)—he is now inside the "father's" house, hence the "bring hither." How marvelously and minutely accurate!

The "fatted calf" speaks of Christ Himself in all His excellency, provided, too, by the Father. The killing of the "calf" tells of the Savior's death for us, thus making it possible for sinners to be

reconciled to a holy God. But the "fatted calf" was not only killed, it was, like the Passover "lamb," to be eaten, and eating here speaks of communion. And observe the word of the "father" here: it was not, "and let him eat," but "let us eat." It is the Father with the now reconciled sinner, coming together, and they communing together over that which speaks of Christ. It is the sacrifice of Christ which is the ground of our fellowship with the Father.

## **7. The Resultant Joy**

"And let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost and is found. And they began to be merry." (vv. 23, 24) How inexpressably blessed is this! What a glorious climax! Here is the prodigal, now a son at the Father's table, a place—not among the "hired servants," but—in the Father's family is now His. Together they commune over that which tells of Christ the perfect One, slain for us. And what is the fruit of "communion?" Is it not joy, such merriment of heart of which this poor world knows nothing. And note again the plural number: it is not only that "he," the son, was "merry," but "they began to be merry." The Father finds His delight, together with His children, feeding upon Christ the Son.

It is indeed striking to contrast what is before us here in Luke 15 with another scene presented in the Old Testament Scriptures. In 1 Samuel 28 we have brought before us the apostate Saul and the Witch of Endor—a greater contrast could not be imagined! And here, too, we read of a fatted calf being killed, but how great the difference! "And the woman had a fat calf in the house; and she hasted, and killed it, and took flour, and kneaded it, and did bake unleavened bread thereof: And she brought it before Saul, and before his servants; and they did eat. Then they rose up, and went away that night." (1 Sam. 28:24, 25) Yes, they did "eat," but notice that nothing was said of them being "merry." No indeed. They represented that large company found among the professed people of God who take the name of Christ on their lips, and even go through the form of communing with Him. as they come to His "table." But after all, it is

only a pretense, a mechanical performance. Their hearts are not in it. Their souls do not feed upon Christ.

And note, too, another striking contrast. Of Saul and his servants it is said, "They did eat. Then they rose up, and went away that night." (1 Sam. 28:25) Ah! solemn thought, unspeakably solemn. The formal professor rises from the "table," and goes away—leaves that which speaks of Christ; goes away as joyless and empty as he came; goes away into that dark "night" which shall never end.

But how entirely different is what we read of concerning the reconciled "prodigal!" He, together with his father, sits down to eat of the fatted calf and "they began to be merry." And there the picture leaves them! Nothing is said about going "away," still less is there any reference to the "night." And "they began to be merry," and that merriment is only just begun. Blessed be God, it shall know no ending. Together with the Father, finding our joy in Christ we shall be "merry" forever and ever.

And now perhaps a closing word should be said upon the "elder son." It seems strange to us that so many have experienced difficulty here. Who is represented by the "elder son?" Almost endless are the answers given. Personally, we are satisfied that the elder son represents the same class as do the "ninety and nine sheep," and the nine pieces of silver. These picture the "Pharisees and scribes" who murmured against the Savior because He received and ate with sinners. (v. 2) The one parable in three parts was designed by Christ to show how that God did go after that which was lost and what was the blessed portion which they received from Him. Then He contrasts the lot of those who, because they deem themselves righteous, refuse to take the place of sinners before Him. He meets them on the ground of their own profession, and therefore does He speak of them as "sheep" and the "elder son." But oh, what a portion is theirs!

In the first part of the parable the self-righteous formalists who despise the grace of God are represented as being left in the wilderness (see v. 4), while in the last part of the parable he is seen outside the father's house. How accurate and yet how tragic is the picture Christ here draws of the Pharisee. "Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant." (vv. 25, 26) Ah! he is a stranger to the merriment of those in fellowship with God. He knows not why they should be so supremely happy, and therefore does he have to ask "what these things meant." And when explanation is made to him we are told, "he was angry, and would not go in." (v. 28) But more, "therefore came his father out, and intreated him. And he answering said to his father, In, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment; and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends." (vv. 28, 29) He speaks of "serving" his father for this is all he knows. He boasts of his obedience, and then he confesses his lack of that which speaks of communion. And how he betrayed himself when he said, "Yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends," not "with thee!" The closing verses of the chapter must be interpreted in the light of the whole context: "Thou art ever with me." Here Christ puts into the mouth of this elder son that which was the boast of the proud Pharisee, but it should be carefully noted that throughout he is carefully pictured as being on the outside, see especially verse 28. But let our final word be upon the "prodigal." By comparing carefully six clauses it will be found they are arranged in couplets, and each couplet points a striking contrast. First, we read "There arose a mighty famine in the land" (v. 14): next contrast what we read in verse 20, "And he arose, and came to his father." Second, "He came to himself" (v. 17): now contrast what is said in verse 20, he "Came to his father." Third, "He began to be in want" (v. 14): now contrast what we have in verses 24, 25 "And they began to be merry." And how striking is the order of these.

Now dear reader, is this intelligible to you, or have I been speaking in an unknown tongue? Have you felt the "famine" of this world? Have you been "in want"—your soul crying out for a satisfying portion? Have you "come to yourself," come to your senses, and discovered the "exceeding sinfulness of sin?" If so, have you come to God and taken the place of a lost sinner before Him? Have you cast yourself upon His sovereign grace and reckoned as your own this wondrous Provision He has made for hell-deserving sinners? If you have, then you know the blessedness of belonging to God's family. If you have not, and will come to God now just as you are, confessing your utter sinfulness and unworthiness, and casting yourself on His free grace, you too shall receive a hearty welcome, the kiss of reconciliation the robe of righteousness and a place in communion with God Himself. "Come, for all things are now ready."

## **Real Christianity**

ALAS, how very little real Christianity there is in the world today! Christianity consists in being conformed unto the image of God's Son "Looking unto Jesus" constantly, trustfully, submissively, lovingly, the heart occupied with the example which Christ has left me, just in proportion as I am living upon Him and drawing from His fullness, am I realizing the ideal He has set before me. In Him is the power, from Him must he received the strength for running "with patience" or steadfast perseverance, the race. Genuine Christianity is a life lived in communion with Christ: a life lived by faith, as His was. "for me to live is Christ" (Phil 1:21); "Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God" (Gal. 2:20)—Christ living in me and through me.

## **"Rejoice in the Lord alway"**

"Rejoice in the Lord alway" —Philippians 4:4

WHY should I, who am by nature no different from the careless and godless throngs all around, have been chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world and now blest with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Him? Why was I, that once was an alien and a rebel, signaled out for such wondrous favors? Ah, that is something I cannot fathom. Such grace, such love, "passeth knowledge." But if my mind is unable to discern a reason, my heart can express its gratitude in praise and adoration. But not only should I be grateful to God for His grace toward me in the past, His present dealings will fill me with thanksgivings. What is the force of that word "Rejoice in the Lord alway" (Phil. 4:4)? Mark it is not "Rejoice in the Saviour," but we are to "Rejoice in the Lord," as "Lord," As THE MASTER OF EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE. Need we remind the reader that when the apostle penned these words he was himself a prisoner in the hands of the Roman government. A long course of affliction and suffering lay behind him. Perils on land and perils on sea, hunger and thirst, scourging and stoning, had all been experienced. He had been persecuted by those within the church as well as by those without: the very ones who ought to have stood by him had forsaken him. And still he writes, "Rejoice in the Lord alway" What was the secret of his peace and happiness? Ah! had not this same apostle written, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28)? But how did he, and how do we, "know," that all things work together for good? The answer is, Because all things are under the control of and are being regulated by the Supreme Sovereign, and because He has naught but thoughts of love toward His own, then "all things" are so ordered by Him that they are MADE TO MINISTER TO OUR ULTIMATE GOOD. It is for this cause we are to give "thanks always

for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5:20). Yes, give thanks for "all things" for, as it has been well said "Our disappointments are but His appointments." To the one who delights in the sovereignty of God the clouds not only have a 'silver lining' but they are silver all through, the darkness only serving to offset the light!

## **Repent or Perish**

THESE were the words of the incarnate Son of God. They have never been cancelled; nor will they be as long as this world lasts. Repentance is absolute and necessary if the sinner is to make peace with God (Isa. 27:5), for repentance is the throwing down the weapons of rebellion against Him. Repentance does not save, yet no sinner ever was or ever will be saved without it. None but Christ saves, but an impenitent heart cannot receive Him.

A sinner cannot truly believe until he repents. This is clear from the words of Christ concerning His forerunner, "For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him" (Matthew 21:32). It is also evident from His clarion call in Mark 1:15, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." This is why the apostle Paul testified "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21). Make no mistake on this point dear reader, God "now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30).

In requiring repentance from us, God is pressing His righteous claims upon us. He is infinitely worthy of supreme love and honor,



and of universal obedience. This we have wickedly denied Him. Both an acknowledgement and amendment of this is required from us. Our disaffection for Him and our rebellion against Him are to be owned and made an end of. Thus repentance is a heartfelt realization of how dreadfully I have failed, all through my life, to give God His rightful place in my heart and daily walk.

The righteousness of God's demand for my repentance is evident if we consider the heinous nature of sin. Sin is a renouncing of Him who made me. It is refusing Him His right to govern me. It is the determination to please myself; thus, it is rebellion against the Almighty. Sin is spiritual lawlessness, and utter disregard for God's authority. It is saying in my heart: I care not what God requires, I am going to have my own way; I care not what be God's claim upon me, I am going to be lord over myself. Reader, do you realize that this is how you have lived?

Now true repentance issues from a realization in the heart, wrought therein by the Holy Spirit, of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, of the awfulness of ignoring the claims of Him who made me, of defying His authority. It is therefore a holy hatred and horror of sin, a deep sorrow for it, and acknowledgement of it before God, and a complete heart-forsaking of it. Not until this is done will God pardon us. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: But whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Prov. 28:13).

In true repentance the heart turns to God and acknowledges My heart has been set upon a vain world, which could not meet the needs of my soul; I forsook Thee, the fountain of living waters, and turned unto broken cisterns which held none: I now own and bewail my folly. But more, it says: I have been a disloyal and rebellious creature, but I will be so no longer. I now desire and determine with all my might to serve and obey Thee as my only Lord. I betake myself to Thee as my present and everlasting Portion.

Reader, be you a professing Christian or no, it is repent or perish. For every one of us, church members or otherwise, it is either turn Or burn; turn from your course of self-will and self-pleasing; turn in brokenness of heart to God, seeking His mercy in Christ; turn with full purpose of heart to please and serve him: or be tormented day and night, for ever and ever, in the Lake of Fire. Which shall it be? Oh, get down on your knees right now and beg God to give you the spirit of true repentance.

"Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31).

"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (2 Cor 7:10).

## **Resisting the Devil**

"Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7)

THIS brings before us an aspect of the Truth concerning which many Christians are largely ignorant. Oftentimes they are unaware that it is "the Devil" who is attacking them and needs to be resisted. Many suppose that Satan's assaults are confined unto tempting us to sin. Not so; in many cases his object is to oppose and hinder us in the doing of that which is good. Frequently he makes use of human beings to annoy and harass us. For example, he will send a caller to

the door, or someone to ring on the telephone, when we are engaged in prayer. He will move worldly relatives to visit us on the Sabbath-day and thus prevent our spending the time quietly with the Lord. Or, he will shape our "circumstances" to hinder our spiritual good, multiplying our duties and tasks so that we have not leisure or are too weary for study. Few of God's children appear to know that it is their privilege and right to be victorious over Satan's attacks. The Lord has not left His people here at the mercy of their great Enemy, helpless to overcome him. No, He has told us in His Word how we may defeat him.

To begin at the beginning: "Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you." This is a Divine command, it is a duty which the Lord has laid upon us. Our first responsibility concerning it is to give it our best attention, to fix it in our minds, to ponder its terms, to desire and determine to obey. Probably some will say, I wish that I could, but I know not how. Then our second responsibility concerning it is to acknowledge this, asking God to enlighten, begging Him to teach us how to obey it. Tell Him you want to do as He has bidden, and for Him to grant instruction and enablement thereunto.

Yet necessary and important as this is, it is not enough. Prayer was never designed by God to relieve us of our responsibilities and encourage laziness. It is not sufficient for me to pray that God will grant us a fruitful garden this summer—though I should pray about this, as about "everything:" Philippians 4:6. No, I must dig and plant, water and weed it. So it is here: the answer to my prayer for enlightenment for heeding the exhortation of James 4:7 must come to me through the Scriptures. Hence, my third responsibility is to search the Scriptures, asking the Holy Spirit to graciously guide me into the Truth. This means that I must come to the Bible with a definite object, aiming to discover just what it teaches about the Christian's "resisting the Devil" so that he "flees" from him.

Let us begin our "search" of God's Word on this important practical subject by looking closely at the immediate context of the command

found in our text. First, we note that it is found in the second half of the verse: "Submit yourselves therefore to God; resist the Devil." Ah, how can I expect to do the second until I have done the first? To "submit" myself unto God means that my own wisdom, will and wishes must be entirely set aside, and His Word and will rule me in all things. To submit to God means that I recognize His claims upon me, that I am His creature, His child, to be controlled by Him as One having absolute right to my complete subjection.

But let us look more closely at and ponder the first half of this verse: "Submit yourselves therefore to God." This at once tells me that I need to look back to the previous verse, for the word "therefore" always points to a conclusion based upon and drawn from something going before. Turning back, then, to verse 6, I read, "But He giveth more grace. Wherefore He saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." Ah, that is encouraging, that stimulates faith and hope. The One unto whom I am to "submit" myself is no harsh Tyrant, no merciless Despot, but the "God of all grace." He has already given me saving grace, and "He giveth more grace" to the humble, and "more grace" is exactly what I need, if I am to successfully "resist the Devil."

"Wherefore He saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." God resisteth the proud, because the proud resist Him. The essence of pride is self-sufficiency: it is that spirit which disdains help from another, confident that I am fully able to manage for myself. Spiritually, pride is that awful conceit that I can get along without God. It is a fearful delusion begotten and fostered by the Devil. Contrariwise, "humility" is a being emptied of self-sufficiency: it is the heart realization that I am completely dependent upon God for everything. Humility, grace, and victory over the Devil are inseparably connected! But nothing is more offensive to Satan than humility, for he is a proud spirit, and his desire is to puff us up and get us to walk and act independently of God.

"Submit yourselves therefore to God." The word "submit" signifies to place myself under another. There must be a subjection of the whole man to the whole law of God; a giving up of ourselves to be governed by Him; our thoughts, desires, actions regulated strictly by the rules laid down in His Word. Submission to God also denotes an unrepining acquiescence to the dispositions of His providence, an un murmuring disposal of ourselves to His sovereign pleasure. Thus, there must be a complete surrender of myself and my life to God, to be ordered and disposed of by Him.

Now there is a double relation or connection between the two halves of James 4:7. First and most obviously, I must "submit" to God if ever I am to successfully "resist" the Devil. How can it be otherwise? I cannot prevail over the great Enemy in my own strength, and God will not give me of His "grace" while I am resisting Him! Thus, I must cease resisting God before I can hope to resist the Devil—chiefly to make me proud, self-sufficient, independent. The prayerless soul is a proud one, for his refusal to receive strength from God is tantamount to saying that he can get along through the day without Him. It was by pride Satan fell, and he would feign have more company, and draw us into his snare. His bait is easily swallowed, for it is natural to us. Our first parents caught readily at the suggestion "Ye shall be as gods."

But what is meant by "resist the Devil?" First, that I am not to be terrified at him. Satan has no enforcing power: he cannot prevail over me without my consent. Second, that I am not to even listen to his suggestion: "resist" actively, saying "I will not:" take that attitude, and firmly stand your ground. Third, quote Scripture to him, a pertinent and suitable one which meets his particular suggestion. Count upon the power of God's Word, expect it to drive him away. Fourth, plead God's promise in the text: "resist the Devil and he will flee from you." Yes, he will "flee," for he is not only a conquered foe, but an arrant coward as well. "Flee from you," yet only, "for a season;" he will return and renew the fight; and so must you.

But let us now resume our searching of God's Word to find out what it has to teach us on this subject of resisting the Devil. We have already discovered enough to encourage us, so let us continue our quest for further light and help. This means that I must turn to a concordance and look up, slowly and carefully, every verse having in it the word "Devil" or "Satan." This calls for patience, but if it be prayerfully exercised, God will reward it. I come now to 1 Peter 5:8 and read, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist, steadfast in the faith." Surely this is very graphic and impressive. If you knew that a lion had escaped from a local circus, that it was a fierce and hungry one, that it was loose and roaming the streets, and your daily duties obliged you to go abroad, how cautiously and carefully would you proceed! Ah, dear friends, my supposition is neither imaginary nor overdrawn. There is one, more powerful and cruel than any animal lion, which is abroad, seeking to devour your soul and mine. How little we really believe this! How halfhearted is the heed we give to this Divine warning!

Let us glance for a moment at the context of this verse: "Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you" (1 Peter 5:7). Here the tried and troubled children of God are invited to roll upon the Lord the whole burden of their anxiety, being assured of His compassion for them. Yes, but that privilege and assurance of His tender care must not tempt us to be careless and reckless. Here, as every where in Scripture, the promise and the command are joined together. Note what immediately follows. First, "Be sober." In common speech "soberness" is the opposite of drunkenness. But let us bear in mind that there are many other things besides wine and whiskey which intoxicate. "Be sober" means, Be temperate in all things, put a curb on your every desire and appetite, particularly be "sober" in your use of and expectations from the world.

"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:2). If the eye of faith measures earthly things in the light of God's Word it will be seen that they are temporary,

unsatisfying, worthless. The pleasures of sin are only "for a season" (Hebrews 11:25), and a brief one at that! Remember too there must be "soberness" of mind, before there will be soberness of body. O the importance of forming right estimates of earthly and heavenly things. If I truly receive into my heart the declaration of God's Word that "all under the sun" is but "vanity and vexation of spirit," soberness will indeed be promoted.

Second, "be vigilant," not careless, nor rash and presumptuous. I must be watchful, alert, wideawake. Here again I must start with the inner man: I shall never be "vigilant" about external temptations till I have learned to "gird up the loins" of my mind (1 Peter 1:13), and to "rule my own spirit" (Proverbs 16:32). Let us then seek grace to be "vigilant" over our minds and bring "into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5). Let us seek to be "vigilant" over our moods, watchful lest Satan should gain an advantage. If depressed, he will seek and tempt me to despondency and despair. But I must "resist" that inclination. If light and giddy, he will tempt to fleshly mirth and hilarity, which ill-becomes a follower of Christ. But remember that I must first be "sober," if I am to be "vigilant!"

Third, "whom resist steadfast." Resist his efforts to prejudice your heart against God, and instill into your mind evil thoughts about Him. He will try to make you doubt His love, murmur against the severity of His providences and the strictness of His commandments. Resist his enticements to draw you unto the place of temptation, remembering that God has said "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" (Ephesians 5:11). Resist his efforts to lead you into active sinning: saying with Joseph, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God!" (Genesis 39:9).

Our resistance must be earnest and zealous. If a madman attacked and you were fighting for your very life, you would put forth every effort. So it must be here: it is your own soul he is seeking to destroy. Eve's resistance was faint and half-hearted: she dallied with his evil

solicitations. Be warned from her fall. By "earnest" I mean, Be indignant at his first suggestions—for example, to laze in bed on the Sabbath morning. Our resistance must be thorough. The approaches of Satan to the soul are gradual: he asks us to yield but a little at first. Many promise themselves they will stop after they have conceded a trifle, but when a stone at the top of the hill starts rolling down, it is hard to stop. We see this principle forcibly illustrated in the case of gamblers and drunkards. Take heed unto thyself. Our resistance must be constant and continuous: not only against his first attack, but his whole siege. The Devil is very persevering, and we must be so too.

Let these three considerations bestir unto this imperative duty of resistance. First, the Devil cannot overcome without your consent: but where there is not a powerful dissent, there is a virtual consent. Take a positive attitude against the great Enemy of souls. Second, think much of the blessedness of victory: this will more than compensate you for all the diligence and strenuous efforts you make. The pleasures of sin are only for a season, but the pleasures and gains of self-denial are eternal: read Mark 10:29, 30. Third, remember that God's grace is promised unto the one who resists. God delivers, but we "keep ourselves" (1 John 5:18). It is via our watchfulness and prayer that God makes such resistance effectual. There is no promise that God will keep a careless and lax soul.

"Whom resist steadfast in the faith." Probably there is a double reference here in the expression "the faith." First, the analogy of faith, or Word of God—compare Jude 3; second, the exercise of the grace of faith. Satan is "the power of darkness" (Luke 22:53), and only the light of God can expose and expel him. Satan uses error to deceive souls, and the truth of God is needed to deliver us. We are to resist him in the faith, by believing, receiving, and acting out the Holy Scriptures. We are also to resist the Devil by the exercise of the grace of faith. Our hearts must lay hold of the precepts and promises of God. A blessed example of this has been left us by Christ: "He



resisted the Devil steadfastly in the faith," using against him naught but the Sword of the Spirit.

"Whom resist steadfast in the faith." When we stagger through unbelief, we are powerless to stand before our great Enemy. It was through doubting God's threat that Eve fell. But we can only successfully resist the Devil "steadfast in the faith" as there is a personal appropriation of Christ's victory. It is written, "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb" (Revelation 12:11). Plead that blood before God for deliverance from Satan's temptations. Count upon its efficacy to deliver you. Shelter beneath it when you realize that Satan is shooting his fiery darts at you.

Finally, let it be pointed out that, either we must overcome the Devil, or be overcome by him. There is no third alternative! If we are completely overcome by him, the result will be fatal. He is not merely seeking to wound us, but to "devour" (1 Peter 5:8)! And how is this to be harmonized with the eternal security of God's people? Easily: if we be real Christians, we shall, by Divine grace, resist and overcome the Devil. But if we continue heeding his suggestions and yielding to his temptations and are thoroughly overcome by him, then no matter how much Scripture we know in our heads, or what our profession, we belong to the Devil, and are his lawful captives.

## **Satan and His Gospel**

### **1. Satan and His Gospel**

THIRTY-FIVE times he is denominated "The Devil," which means "The Accuser" or "Slanderer"—accusing the saints before God and

traducing the character of God before men. Fifty-two times he is called "Satan," which means "Enemy" or "Adversary." He is God's enemy and man's adversary. "Satan" refers to his character: the malignant Adversary of all good—in God or His creatures. "Devil" refers to his mode of carrying out his evil designs: by lying slanders, false accusations, evil traducings. He is termed "The Prince of this world" (John 14:30), which defines his position in relation to our earth. He is named "Beelzebub" (Matt 12:27), which regards him as the head of the demons. He is spoken of as the "Wicked One" (Matt 13:19) which refers to him as the primemover of all wickedness. He is styled "Apollyon," that is "Destroyer" (Rev 9:11), which links him with the Bottomless Pit. He is referred to as "The Prince of the power of the air" (Eph 2:2), which points to his present home and sphere of operations—cf. Eph. 6:12. He is termed "Lucifer" which means "Morning Star" (Isa 14:12), a title which seems to have belonged to him before his apostasy. He is called "The god of this world" (Cor 4:4) because he is the inspirer and director of all spurious religion. He is termed "Liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44) because he is the inveterate opposer of the truth. These and other titles of Satan are meaningless unless he is a personal being.

## **2. Personal Characteristics are Predicated of Him**

**Intelligence:** His temptations are spoken of as "the wiles of the Devil" (Eph 6:11); while in Rev. 2:24 we read of "The depths of Satan" (Greek, "deep things"). Further, in Rev. 12:9 he is termed "That old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world." To deceive implies design, and design is the product of intelligence, and intelligence is inseparable from personality.

**Memory:** In his conflict with our Lord he quoted from the Old Testament Scriptures (Matt 4:6). A mere abstraction could not do this.

**Knowledge:** In Rev. 12:12 we are told he has "great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." But that which is impersonal

cannot be said to "know."

Will: "... that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the Devil, who are taken captive by him at his will" (2 Tim 2:26). "How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation" (Isa 14:12, 13). That Satan possesses a will or the power of choice, is further proof that he is a personal being.

Moral character: Satan is spoken of as a "deceiver," "liar," "murderer," "tempter," all of which are terms implying moral character—i.e., that of which duty or obligation, and right and wrong may be predicted.

Speech: He is represented as talking with God (Job 1:9, 10), arguing with our Lord, and as "accusing" the brethren. This is a further indication that Satan possesses the same characteristics as ourselves.

Emotions: He desired Peter that he might sift him as wheat (Luke 22:31). Pride is spoken of as "the condemnation of the Devil" (1 Tim 3:6). While in Rev. 12:12 we read, "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the Devil is come down unto you, having great wrath." But pride and anger cannot be predicated of the law of gravitation—they are inseparable from personality.

Executive and organizing ability: "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels" (Rev 12:7). "Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle" (Rev 20:7, 8). Here we find Satan marshalling his legions to engage in warfare. Eph. 6:12 more than hints that he is the head of graduated and organized forces.

### **3. Personal Acts are Attributed to Him**

He tempts. The first time this mysterious being is introduced to us in the Word of God he appears in this capacity, inciting our first parents to disobey their Maker. In Matt. 4:3 he is expressly termed "The Tempter." And again, in 1 Cor. 7:5 and 1 Thess. 3:5, the saints are warned against his machinations. To tempt implies design and argues intelligence and moral qualities, and these are inseparable from personality.

He accuses. To "accuse" unquestionably argues a conscious and rational entity. "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the Accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night" (Rev. 12:10). This verse affords us a glimpse into the Unseen, and presents our Enemy maliciously impugning the saints before God. Two striking illustrations of this part of his work are furnished in Scripture. In Job 1:9–11 we find him charging the old patriarch, and in Zech. 3:1–5 he is seen standing before God to resist Joshua the high priest. Upon these interesting passages we cannot now comment. Blessed it is to know that Satan's efforts in this direction are all in vain—"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth" (Rom 8:33).

He makes war. We have already quoted Rev. 12:7, and 20:8, 9 in another connection. We do not comment further on them now except to say that they furnish another proof that Satan is an intelligent, and albeit, malignant being.

He performs miracles. This opens up a wide subject in itself, into which we cannot now enter at length. We content ourselves with two scripture references. When Moses and Aaron wrought their miracles before Pharaoh as credentials of their Divine commission, we read that "Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers; now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments" (Ex. 7:11, etc.). And again we read concerning the

"Man of Sin" (Antichrist) that his coming shall be "After the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders" (2 Thess. 2:9).

He causes bodily sufferings. The first two chapters of the book of Job clearly intimate that all the trials and afflictions which came upon Job were directly caused by the malignant assaults of the Devil. When vindicating Himself for healing a sufferer on the Sabbath day our Lord said, "Ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?" (Luke 13:16). Again; after the apostle Paul had been caught up to the third heaven, an affliction was sent him lest he should be exalted above measure at the abundance of the revelations which he had received, and this affliction is described as "a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan" (2 Cor 12:7).

He works in and through the wicked. Just as we read that "It is God which worketh in you [the believer] both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil 2:13), so, also, we read that Satan is "The spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph 2:2). Another evidence of his activities is furnished in Matt. 13. In imitation of our Lord who scattered the "good seed" in the field, Satan went and sowed tares.

#### **4. The Temptation of Our Lord by Satan Proves Him to Be a Personal Being**

No unbiased mind can read carefully the fourth chapter of Matthew without coming to the conclusion that we have recorded there a real conflict between two persons—our Lord Jesus Christ and Satan. If we deny that the latter is there definitely brought before us as a person, we must logically affirm the same of the former. To say, in reply, We admit that Christ there is a real person but that "the Devil" must be regarded as a personification of evil, is blasphemy, for it impugns the character of our blessed Lord.

Unlike every fallen son of Adam who is shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin, the Lord Jesus Christ was sinless. He is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb 7:26). "In Him is no sin" (1 John 3:5). He is "the Holy One of God" (Mark 1:24). He declared, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me" (John 14:30). As then there was no evil in our blessed Saviour, the one who tempted Him must have been external and personal.

To deny that Matthew 4 presents Satan as a personal entity is either to traduce our Lord's character, or, it is to reduce the entire narrative to meaningless jargon. Everything that is said of Satan in this chapter indicates and intimates that he is as real and actual a person as the Lord Jesus Himself. The tempter "came to Him." He spoke, yea, reasoned and argued. He took Christ up into the holy city. He quoted to Him from the Psalms. He showed Him all the kingdoms of the world. He sought worship from the Saviour. At His word "he departed from Him for a season." All of which is proof positive—to one that believes in the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures—that Satan is a living person.

5. Finally, the Fact that the Word of God Announces that Satan Shall Yet Be Cast into the Bottomless Pit, and Afterwards into the Lake of Fire, Argues that He is an Accountable Being

A mere abstraction cannot be punished. That which is nothing more than a negation could not be tormented. That which was incorporeal and intangible could not be "cast into the Lake of Fire." The fact that the Scriptures declare that Satan shall be punished is conclusive evidence that he is a person, and a person endowed with moral responsibility.

## **Signs of the Times**

## Studies in the Scriptures

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NO, LET us assure the spiritual reader at the outset that we are not going to waste his time nor our space by a consideration of the latest doings of Hitler, Mussolini, and Co. "Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth" (Isa. 45:9): the child of God has nothing to do with their activities. It is something far more solemn than anything occurring in the political realm that we are now going to write upon, namely, the soul-deceiving character of most of the "Evangelism" of this degenerate and apostate generation.

It is generally recognized that spirituality is at a low ebb in Christendom, and not a few perceive that sound doctrine is rapidly on the wane, yet many of the Lord's people take comfort from supposing that the Gospel is still being widely preached and that large numbers are being saved thereby. Alas, their optimistic supposition is ill-founded and grounded in sand. If the "message" now being delivered in Mission Halls be examined, if the "tracts" which are scattered among the unchurched masses be scrutinized, if the "open air" speakers be carefully listened to, if the "sermons" or "addresses" of a "Soul-winning campaign" be analyzed; in short, if modern "Evangelism" be weighed in the balances of Holy Writ, it will be found wanting—lacking that which is vital to a genuine conversion, lacking what is essential if sinners are to be shown their need of a Saviour, lacking that which will produce the transfigured lives of new creatures in Christ Jesus.

It is in no captious spirit that we write, seeking to make a man an offender for a word. It is not that we are looking for perfection, and complain because we cannot find it; nor that we criticize others because they are not doing things as we think they should be done. No; no, it is a matter far more serious than that. The "evangelism" of the day is not only superficial to the last degree, but it is radically defective. It is utterly lacking a foundation on which to base an

appeal for sinners to come to Christ. There is not only a lamentable lack of proportion (the mercy of God being made far more prominent than His holiness, His love than His wrath), but there is a fatal omission of that which God has given for the purpose of imparting a knowledge of sin. There is not only reprehensible introducing of "bright singing," humorous witticisms and entertaining anecdotes, but there is a studied omission of the dark background upon which alone the Gospel can effectually shine forth.

But serious indeed as is the above indictment, it is only half of it—the negative side, that which is lacking. Worse still is that which is being retailed by the cheap-jerk evangelists of the day. The positive content of their message is nothing but a throwing of dust in the eyes of the sinner. His soul is put to sleep by the Devil's opiate, ministered in a most unsuspecting form. Those who really receive the "message" which is now being given out from most of the "orthodox" pulpits and platforms today are being fatally deceived. It is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but unless God sovereignly intervenes by a miracle of grace, all who follow it will surely find that the ends thereof are the ways of death. Tens of thousands who confidently imagine they are bound for Heaven will get a terrible disillusionment when they awake in Hell.

What is the Gospel? Is it a message of glad tidings from Heaven to make God-defying rebels at ease in their wickedness? Is it given for the purpose of assuring the pleasure-crazy young people that, providing they only "believe" there is nothing for them to fear in the future? One would certainly think so from the way in which the Gospel is presented—or rather perverted—by most of the "evangelists," and the more so when we look at the lives of their "converts." Surely those with any degree of spiritual discernment must perceive that to assure such that God loves them and His Son died for them, and that a full pardon for all their sins (past, present, and future) can be obtained by simply "accepting Christ as their personal Saviour," is but a casting of pearls before swine.



The Gospel is not a thing apart. It is not something independent of the prior revelation of God's Law. It is not an announcement that God has relaxed His justice or lowered the standard of His holiness. So far from that, when Scripturally expounded the Gospel presents the clearest demonstration and the most positive proof of the inexorableness of God's justice and of His infinite abhorrence of sin. But for Scripturally expounding the Gospel, beardless youths and businessmen who devote their spare time to "evangelistic effort," are quite unqualified. Alas that the pride of the flesh suffers so many incompetent ones to rush in where those much wiser fear to tread. It is this multiplying of novices that is largely responsible for the woeful situation now confronting us, and because the "churches" and "assemblies" are so largely filled with their "converts," explains why they are so unspiritual and worldly.

No, my reader, the Gospel is very, very far from making light of sin. It reveals to us the terrible sword of His justice smiting His beloved Son in order that atonement might be made for the transgressions of His people. So far from the Gospel setting aside the Law, it exhibits the Saviour enduring the curse of it. Calvary supplied the most solemn and awe-inspiring display of God's hatred of sin that time or eternity will ever furnish. And do you imagine that the Gospel is magnified or God glorified by going to worldlings and telling them that they "may be saved at this moment by simply accepting Christ as their personal Saviour" while they are wedded to their idols and their hearts still in love with sin? If I do so, I tell them a lie, pervert the Gospel, insult Christ, and turn the grace of God into lasciviousness.

No doubt some readers are ready to object to our "harsh" and "sarcastic" statements above by asking, When the question was put "What must I do to be saved?" did not an inspired Apostle expressly say "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved?" Can we err, then, if we tell sinners the same thing today? Have we not Divine warrant for so doing? True, those words are found in Holy Writ, and because they are, many superficial and untrained people conclude they are justified in repeating them to all and sundry. But

let it be pointed out that Acts 16:31 was not addressed to a promiscuous multitude, but to a particular individual, which at once intimates that it is not a message to be indiscriminately sounded forth, but rather a special word, to those whose characters correspond to the one to whom it was first spoken.

Verses of Scripture must not be wrenched from their setting, but weighed, interpreted, and applied in accord with their context; and that calls for prayerful consideration, careful meditation, and prolonged study; and it is failure at this point which accounts for these shoddy and worthless "messages" of this rush-ahead age. Look at the context of Acts 16:31, and what do we find? What was the occasion, and to whom was it that the Apostle and his companion said "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ?" A sevenfold answer is there furnished, which supplies a striking and complete delineation of the character of those to whom we are warranted in giving this truly evangelistic word. As we briefly names these seven details, let the reader carefully ponder them.

First, the man to whom those words were spoken had just witnessed the miracle-working power of God. "And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed" (Acts 16:26). Second, in consequence thereof, the man was deeply stirred, even to the point of self-despair: "He drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled" (v. 27). Third, he felt the need of illumination: "Then he called for a light" (v. 29). Fourth, his self-complacency was utterly shattered, for he "came trembling" (v. 29). Fifth, he took his proper place (before God)—in the dust, for he "fell down before Paul and Silas" (v. 29). Sixth, he showed respect and consideration for God's servants, for he "brought them out" (v. 30). Seventh, then, with a deep concern for his soul, he asked "what must I do to be saved?"

Here, then, is something definite for our guidance—if we are willing to be guided. It was no giddy, careless, unconcerned person, who was

exhorted to "simply" believe; but instead, one who gave clear evidence that a mighty work of God had already been wrought within him. He was an awakened soul (v. 27). In his case there was no need to press upon him his lost condition, for obviously he felt it; nor were the apostles required to urge upon him the duty of repentance, for his entire demeanor betokened his contrition. But to apply the words spoken to him unto those who are totally blind to their depraved state and completely dead toward God, would be more foolish than placing a bottle of smelling-salts to the nose of one who had just been dragged unconscious out of the water. Let the critic of this article read carefully through the Acts and see if he can find a single instance of the Apostles addressing a promiscuous audience or a company of idolatrous heathen and "simply" telling them to believe in Christ.

Just as the world was not ready for the New Testament before it received the Old, just as the Jews were not prepared for the ministry of Christ until John the Baptist had gone before Him with his call to repentance, so the unsaved are in no condition today for the Gospel till the Law be applied to their hearts, for "by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20). It is a waste of time to sow seed on ground which has never been plowed or spaded! To present the vicarious sacrifice of Christ to those whose dominant passion is to take their fill of sin, is to give that which is holy unto the dogs. What the unconverted need to hear about is the character of Him with whom they have to do, His claim upon them, His righteous demands, and the infinite enormity of disregarding Him and going on their own way.

The nature of Christ's salvation is woefully misrepresented by the present-day "evangelist." He announces a Saviour from Hell, rather than a Saviour from sin. And that is why so many are fatally deceived, for there are multitudes who wish to escape the Lake of Fire who have no desire to be delivered from their carnality and worldliness. The very first thing said of Him in the New Testament is, "thou shalt call his name JESUS: for He shall save His people (not

"from the wrath to come," but) from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). Christ is a Saviour for those realizing something of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, who felt the awful burden of it on their conscience, so loathe themselves for it, who long to be freed from its terrible dominion; and a Saviour for no others. Were He to "save from Hell" those who were still in love with sin, He would be the Minister of sin, condoning their wickedness and siding with them against God. What an unspeakably horrible and blasphemous thing with which to charge the Holy One!

Should the reader exclaim, I was not conscious of the heinousness of sin nor bowed down with a sense of my guilt when Christ saved me, then we unhesitatingly reply, Either you have never been saved at all, or you were not saved as early as you supposed. True, as the Christian grows in grace he has a clearer realization now what sin is—rebellion against God—and a deeper hatred of and sorrow for it: but to think that one may be saved by Christ whose conscience has never been smitten by the Spirit and whose heart has not been made contrite before God, is to imagine something which has no existence whatever in the realm of fact. "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick" (Matt. 9:12): the only ones who really seek relief from the Great Physician are they that are sick of sin—who long to be delivered from its God-dishonouring works and its soul-defiling pollutions.

Inasmuch, then, as Christ's salvation is a salvation from sin—from the love of it, from its dominion, from its guile and penalty—then it necessarily follows that the first great task and the chief work of the evangelist is to preach upon SIN: to define what sin (as distinct from crime) really is, to show wherein its infinite enormity consists; to trace out its manifold workings in the heart; to indicate that nothing less than eternal punishment is its desert. Ah, and preaching upon sin—not merely uttering a few platitudes concerning it, but devoting sermon after sermon to explaining what sin is in the light of God—will not make him popular nor draw the crowds, will it? No, it will not, and knowing this, those who love the praise of men more than

the approbation of God, and who value their salary above immortal souls, trim their sails accordingly. "But such preaching will drive people away!" We answer, Far better drive the people away by faithful preaching than drive the Holy Spirit away by unfaithfully pandering to the flesh.

The terms of Christ's salvation are erroneously stated by the present-day evangelist. With very rare exceptions he tells his hearers that salvation is by grace and is received as a free gift: that Christ has done everything for the sinner, and nothing remains but for him to "believe"—to trust in the infinite merits of His blood. And so widely does this conception now prevail in "orthodox" circles, so frequently has it been dinned in their ears, so deeply has it taken root in their minds, that for one to now challenge it and denounce it as being so inadequate and one-sided as to be deceptive and erroneous, is for him to instantly court the stigma of being a heretic, and to be charged with dishonouring the finished work of Christ by inculcating salvation by works. Yet notwithstanding, the writer is quite prepared to run that risk.

Salvation is by grace, by grace alone, for a fallen creature cannot possibly do anything to merit God's approval or earn His favour. Nevertheless, Divine grace is not exercised at the expense of holiness, for it never compromises with sin. It is also true that salvation is a free gift. but an empty hand must receive it, and not a hand which still tightly grasps the world! But it is not true that "Christ has done everything for the sinner." He did not fill the sinner's belly with the husks which the swine eat and find them unable to satisfy. He has not turned the sinner's back on the far country, arisen, gone to the Father, and acknowledged his sins—those are acts which the sinner himself must perform. True, he will not be saved for the performance of them, yet it is equally true that he cannot be saved without the performance of them—any more than the prodigal could receive the Father's kiss and ring while he still remained at a guilty distance from Him!

Something more than "believing" is necessary to salvation. A heart that is steeled in rebellion against God cannot savingly believe: it must first be broken. It is written "except ye repent, ye shall likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). Repentance is just as essential as faith, yea, the latter cannot be without the former: "Repented not afterward, that ye might believe" (Matt. 21:32). The order is clearly enough laid down by Christ: "Repent ye, and believe the Gospel" (Mark 1:15). Repentance is sorrowing for sin. Repentance is a heart-repudiation of sin. Repentance is a heart determination to forsake sin. And where there is true repentance grace is free to act, for the requirements of holiness are conserved when sin is renounced. Thus, it is the duty of the evangelist to cry "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD (from whom he departed in Adam), and He will have mercy upon him" (Isa 55:7). His task is to call on his hearers to lay down the weapons of their warfare against God, and then to sue for mercy through Christ.

The way of salvation is falsely defined. In most instances the modern "evangelist" assures his congregation that all any sinner has to do in order to escape Hell and make sure of Heaven is to "receive Christ as his personal Saviour." But such teaching is utterly misleading. No one can receive Christ as Saviour while he rejects Him as Lord. It is true the preacher adds that the one who accepts Christ should also surrender to Him as Lord, but he at once spoils it by asserting that though the convert fails to do so, nevertheless Heaven is sure to him. That is one of the Devil's lies. Only those who are spiritually blind would declare that Christ will save any who despise His authority and refuse His yoke: why, my reader, that would not be grace but a disgrace—charging Christ with placing a premium on lawlessness.

It is in His office of Lord that Christ maintains God's honour, sub-serves His government, enforces His Law; and if the reader will turn to those passages—Luke 1:46, 47; Acts 5:31; 2 Peter 1:11, 2:20, 3:2, 3:18—where the two titles occur, he will find that it is always "Lord and Saviour," and not "Saviour and Lord." Therefore, those who have

not bowed to Christ's sceptre and enthroned Him in their hearts and lives, and yet imagine that they are trusting in Him as their Saviour, are deceived, and unless God disillusion them they will go down to the everlasting burnings with a lie in their right hand (Isa. 44:20). Christ is "the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him" (Heb. 5:9), but the attitude of those who submit not to His Lordship is "we will not have this Man to reign over us" (Luke 19:14). Pause then, my reader, and honestly face the question: are you subject to His will, are you sincerely endeavouring to keep His commandments?

Alas, alas, God's "way of salvation" is almost entirely unknown today. The nature of Christ's salvation is almost universally misunderstood, and the terms of His salvation misrepresented on every hand. The "Gospel" which is now being proclaimed is, in nine cases out of every ten, but a perversion of the Truth, and tens of thousands, assured they are bound for Heaven, are now hastening to Hell, as fast as time can take them. Things are far, far worse in Christendom than even the "pessimist" and the "alarmist" suppose. We are not a prophet, nor shall we indulge in any speculation of what Biblical prophecy forecasts—wiser men than the writer have often made fools of themselves by so doing. We are frank to say that we know not what God is about to do. Religious conditions were much worse, even in England, one hundred and fifty years ago. But this we greatly fear; unless God is pleased to grant a real revival, it will not be long ere "the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people" (Isa. 60:2), for the light of the true Gospel is rapidly disappearing. Modern "Evangelism" constitutes, in our judgment, the most solemn of all the "signs of the times."

What must the people of God do in view of the existing situation? Ephesians 5:11 supplies the Divine answer: "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them," and everything opposed to the light of the Word is "darkness." It is the bounden duty of every Christian to have no dealings with the "evangelistic" monstrosity of the day; to withhold all moral and

financial support of the same, to attend none of their meetings, to circulate none of their tracts. Those preachers who tell sinners they may be saved without forsaking their idols, without repenting, without surrendering to the Lordship of Christ, are as erroneous and dangerous as others who insist that salvation is by works and that Heaven must be earned by our own efforts.

## **The Snare of Service**

THE main business and the principal concern of the Christian should be that of thanking, praising and adoring that blessed One who has saved him with an everlasting salvation, and who, to secure that salvation, left Heaven's glory and came down to this sin-cursed earth, here to suffer and die the awful death of the cross, that His people might be "delivered from this present evil world" (Gal. 1:4). "Praise is comely for the upright" (Psa. 33:1). But to see the upright praising God is something which Satan cannot endure, and he will employ every art and device to turn aside the happy Christian from such blissful occupation.

Our great enemy is very, very subtle in the methods and means he uses. He cares not what the object may be as long as it serves to engross the believer and hinder his giving to Christ that consideration (Heb. 3:1) and adoration (Rev. 5:12) which are His due. Satan's aim is gained if he can occupy the believer with perishing sinners rather than the Lord of glory. The tactics which the devil uses with the saints are the same he uses so successfully with the unsaved. What is the chief thing he employs to shut out Christ from the vision of the lost (2 Cor. 4:4)? Is it not getting them



occupied with their own deeds and doings? Assuredly it is. In like manner he deals with God's people: he seeks to get them engaged in "service" as a substitute for communing with Christ. It is the dragon posing as an angel of light, stirring up the feverish nature and restless energy of the flesh, to find some outlet that appears to be pleasing to God.

Above we have said that the great aim and chief exercise of the Christian should be that of worshiping and adoring his blessed and wondrous Savior, which is, really, heaven begun on earth. Yet, let it be pointed out, this ought not to terminate at the lips, our very lives ought to show forth His praise (1 Pet. 2:9), our daily walk ought to be pleasing and honoring unto Him (1 Cor. 10:31), our every act needs to be brought into conformity to His holy will (Prov. 3:6). To these statements many, perhaps all, Christians will assent. But do they perceive what is necessarily involved? We fear not. It involves a life's task. And what is that? This: a constant searching of the Scriptures with a prayerful and earnest desire to find out what is pleasing to Him, a holy determination to discover the details of His revealed mind. This is the service to which God has called each of His people: to serve Him, to take His yoke upon them, to submit to His rule over them, to be in all things in subjection to His holy will. But, we say again, the learning of what His will really is, in all its fullness, is a life's task which requires and calls for the utmost attention in the cultivation of our own soul's garden. "Exercise thyself unto godliness" (1 Tim. 4:7). "Take heed unto thyself" (1 Tim. 4:16). "Keep thyself pure" (1 Tim. 5:22). "Study to show thyself approved unto God" (2 Tim. 2:15). These are some of the exhortations of Holy Writ which much need to be taken to heart by God's dear people in these hustling, bustling days. But, alas, they are unheeded by many.

And what is one of the chief causes of hindrance? What is it that in these times so often prevents the child of God from "taking heed" unto himself? This: he is far too much engrossed in attempting to "take heed" for others. The woman who has spent much of the day in attending to domestic duties, the man who has been toiling for his

daily bread, instead of spending the evening quietly in spiritual devotions, prayerfully studying God's Word, giving "attendance to reading" (1 Tim. 4:13), and thus feeding his soul, removing the world's stains acquired through the day, and conversing with his family upon the things of God, has a round of religious meetings which he must attend, numerous church duties which he must perform. So it is with many on the holy Sabbath. Instead of that being, as God has designed, chiefly a day of rest, only too often it becomes the busiest of the whole week. No wonder that so many are little better than nervous wrecks! And all because of departing from God's arrangements.

It is greatly to be feared that when the saints shall stand before the judgment-seat of Christ that everyone may receive the things done in the body" (2 Cor. 5:10) that many of the redeemed will have to make the sad lament, "they made me keeper of the vineyards; mine own vineyard have I not kept" (Song of Sol. 1:6). Note carefully the first word, it is not, "He made me keeper of the vineyards." No, His yoke is "easy" and His burden is "light" (Matt. 11:30); but "they." Ah, it is the Egyptian taskmasters who spur on the people of God to engage in works in which the Lord has never called them to do. Martha is not alone in being "cumbered" (weighted down) with "much serving" (Luke 10:40).

The witness of our lives is far more weighty than that of our lips. If we spent more time in secret communion with Christ, people would take knowledge of us that we had "been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13). If we were more diligent and painstaking to find out and to put into practice the precepts and commands which God has recorded in His Word for the regulation of our lives; if, in consequence, we were really walking with Him, filled with that peace which passeth all understanding, rejoicing in the Lord; then instead of our going to the people and pressing upon all and sundry the precious things of Christ—thus disobeying Him who has bidden His disciples, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs" (Matthew 7:6)—some, at least,

would come to us and ask "a reason of the hope" that is "in us" (1 Pet. 3:15).

But, as we have said above, the restless energy of the flesh longs to find some outlet, and our hearts are only too eagerly inclined to substitute service toward others for personal dealing with God for ourselves. It calls for less exercise of soul to memorize a few texts for the purpose of quoting them to someone else than it does to measure myself by the Scriptures, confess my sad failures and beg God to write His Word upon my heart. Ah, it is a comforting sop for our conscience to persuade ourselves that, though our walk is so far from being what it should be, yet we can "do our duty" in warning the wicked, or engage in some form of "Christian service." Yes, and Satan will whisper in our ears, 'You have been faithful there,' and instead of being humbled and chastened before God for our miserable failures to live to Christ, our evil hearts are puffed up by the devil's flatteries that we have, at least, faithfully preached Christ.

Let not the reader conclude from what has been said that the writer is opposed to either public worship or the Christian's being engaged in any good works for the benefit of others. Not so, though we would earnestly warn against any attempt to worship with those who are not walking with God, or engaging in works which are not really glorifying to Him. Our main design has simply been to show the need of putting first things first.

Our first great need is not seeking to minister to others, but ourselves being ministered unto by the Lord. Our highest privilege is not that of being engaged in service for Christ, but of enjoying daily communion with Him. Our first obligation is not that of being concerned over the welfare of our neighbors, but making our own calling and election sure. Our first great task is not to serve our fellowmen, but to serve our God by studying His Word, learning His will, and then doing it. Our first circle of responsibility is not towards strangers and distant acquaintances, but our own home. Our chief

ambition should not be the proclamation of Christ with our lips, but the preaching of Him by our lives.

If we have not learned to worship God in the secret place, we cannot do so in public assembly. If we are not ourselves really following Christ, walking and communing with Him, it is but mockery to speak of Him to others. If we preach Him in words but deny Him in our works, then we are only a stumblingblock to those who hear us. If our "service" for Christ is robbing us of the time so urgently needed for the cultivation of our personal "vineyard," then it is a snare and a curse to us. Then "take heed unto thyself," "lay aside" every weight (Heb. 12:1) which hinders you from running the race which God "has set before" us. As a well known hymn says, "Take time to be holy," or, better still, as a Scripture says, "The kingdom of God is ... righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men" (Rom. 14:17, 18).

## **The Sovereignty of God in Creation**

"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power: for Thou hast created all things and for Thy pleasure they are and were created." (Rev. 4:11)

SOVEREIGNTY characterizes the whole Being of God: let us observe how it marks all His ways and dealings.

In the great expanse of eternity, which stretches behind Genesis 1:1, the universe was unborn and creation existed only in the mind of the great Creator. In His sovereign majesty, God dwelt all alone. We

refer to that far distant period before the heavens and the earth were created. There were then no angels to hymn God's praises, no creatures to occupy His notice, no rebels to be brought to subjection. The great God was all alone amid the awful silence of His own vast universe. But even at that time, if time it could be called, God was sovereign. He might create or not create according to His own good pleasure. He might create this way or that way; He might create one world or one million worlds, and who was there to resist His will? He might call into existence a million different creatures and place them on absolute equality, endowing them with the same faculties and placing them in the same environment; or, He might create a million creatures each differing from the others, and possessing nothing in common save their creaturehood, and who was there to challenge His right? If He so pleased, He might call into existence a world so immense that its dimensions were utterly beyond finite computation; and were He so disposed, He might create an organism so small that nothing but the most powerful microscope could reveal its existence to human eyes. It was His sovereign right to create, on the one hand, the exalted seraphim to burn around his throne, and on the other hand, the tiny insect which dies the same hour that it is born. If the mighty God chose to have one vast gradation in His universe, from loftiest seraph to creeping reptile, from revolving worlds to floating atoms, from macrocosm to microcosm, instead of making everything uniform, who was there to question His sovereign pleasure?

**BEHOLD THEN THE EXERCISE OF DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY LONG BEFORE MAN EVER SAW THE LIGHT.** With whom took God counsel in the creation and disposition of His creatures? See the birds as they fly through the air, the beasts as they roam the earth, the fishes as they swim in the sea, and then ask, Who was it that made them to differ? Was it not their Creator who sovereignly assigned their various locations and adaptations to them?!

**TURN YOUR EYE TO THE HEAVENS** and observe the mysteries of divine sovereignty which there confront the thoughtful beholder: "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and

another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory" (1 Cor. 15:41). But why should they? Why should the sun be more glorious than all the other planets? Why should there be stars of the first magnitude and others of the tenth? Why such amazing inequalities? Why should some of the heavenly bodies be more favorably placed than others in their relation to the sun? And why should there be "shooting stars," "falling stars," "wandering stars" (Jude 13), in a word, ruined stars? And the only possible answer is, "For Thy pleasure they are and were created" (Rev. 4:11)

COME NOW TO OUR OWN PLANET Why should two thirds of its surface be covered with water, and why should so much of its remaining third be unfit for human cultivation or habitation? Why should there be vast stretches of marshes, deserts and icefields? Why should one country be so inferior, topographically, from another? Why should one be fertile, and another almost barren? Why should one be rich in minerals and another own none? Why should the climate of one be congenial and healthy, and another uncongenial and unhealthy? Why should one abound in rivers and lakes, and another be almost devoid of them? Why should one be constantly troubled with earthquakes, and another be almost entirely free from them? WHY? Because thus it pleased the Creator and Upholder of all things.

LOOK AT THE ANIMAL KINGDOM and note the wondrous variety. What comparison is possible between the lion and the lamb, the bear and the kid, the elephant and the mouse? Some, like the horse and the dog, are gifted with great intelligence; while others, like sheep and swine, are almost devoid of it. Why? Some are designed to be beasts of burden, while others enjoy a life of freedom. But why should the mule and the donkey be shackled to a life of drudgery, while the lion and tiger are allowed to roam the jungle at their pleasure? Some are fit for food, others unfit; some are beautiful, others ugly; some are endowed with great strength, others are quite helpless; some are fleet of foot, others can scarcely crawl—contrast the hare and the tortoise; some are of use to man, others appear to be

quite valueless; some live for centuries, others a few months at most; some are tame, others fierce. But why all these variations and differences?

What is true of the animals is equally true of the birds and fishes. But **CONSIDER NOW THE VEGETABLE KINGDOM.** Why should roses have thorns, and lilies grow without them? Why should one flower emit a fragrant aroma and another have none? Why should one tree bear fruit which is wholesome and another that which is poisonous? Why should one vegetable be capable of enduring frost and another wither under it? Why should one apple tree be loaded with fruit, and another tree of the same age and in the same orchard be almost barren? Why should one plant flower a dozen times a year and another bear blossoms but once a century? Truly, "whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did He in heaven, and in the earth, in the seas, and all deep places" (Ps. 135:6).

**CONSIDER THE ANGELIC HOSTS.** Surely we shall find uniformity here. But no; there, as elsewhere, the same sovereign pleasure of the Creator is displayed. Some are higher in rank than others; some are more powerful than others; some are nearer to God than others. Scripture reveals a definite and well-defined gradation in the angelic orders. From the arch-angel, past seraphim and cherubim, we come to "principalities and powers" (Eph. 3:10), and from principalities and powers to "rulers" (Eph. 6:12), and then to the angels themselves, and even among them we read of "the elect angels" (1 Tim. 5:21) Again we ask, Why this inequality, this difference in rank and order? And all we can say is, "Our God is in the heavens, He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased" (Ps. 115:3).

If then we see the sovereignty of God displayed throughout all creation, why should it be thought a strange thing **IF WE BEHOLD IT OPERATING IN THE MIDST OF THE HUMAN FAMILY?** Why should it be thought strange if to one God is pleased to give five talents and another only one? Why should it be thought strange if one is born with a robust constitution and another of the same

parents is frail and sickly? Why should it be thought strange if Abel is cut off in his prime, while Cain is suffered to live on for many years? Why should it be thought strange that some should be born black and others white; that some be born idiots and others with high intellectual endowments; some be born constitutionally lethargic and others full of energy; some be born with a temperament that is selfish, fiery, egotistical, and others who are naturally self-sacrificing, submissive and meek? Why should it be thought strange if some are qualified by nature to lead and rule, while others are only fitted to follow and serve? Heredity and environment cannot account for all these variations and inequalities. No; it is GOD who maketh one to differ from another. Why should He? "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight" must be our reply.

Learn then this basic truth, that THE CREATOR IS ABSOLUTELY SOVEREIGN, EXECUTING HIS OWN WILL, PERFORMING HIS OWN PLEASURES, AND CONSIDERING NOUGHT BUT HIS OWN GLORY "The Lord hath made all things FOR HIMSELF" (Prov. 16:4). And had He not a perfect right to? Since God IS God, who dare challenge His prerogative? To murmur against Him is rank rebellion. To question His ways is to impugn His wisdom. To criticise Him is sin of the deepest dye. Have we forgotten WHO He is? Behold, All nations before Him are as nothing; and they are counted to Him less than nothing, and vanity. To whom then will ye liken God? (Isa. 40:17, 18)

## **The Sovereignty of God**

THE sovereignty of God is an expression that once was generally understood. It was a phrase commonly used in religious literature. It was a theme frequently expounded in the pulpit. It was a truth which



brought comfort to many hearts and gave virility and stability to Christian character. But today, to make mention of God's sovereignty is, in many quarters, to speak in an unknown tongue. Were we to announce from the average pulpit that the subject of our discourse would be the sovereignty of God, it would sound very much as though we had borrowed a phrase from one of the dead languages. Alas! that it should be so. Alas! that the doctrine which is the key to history, the interpreter of providence, the warp and woof of scripture, and the foundation of Christian theology should be so sadly neglected and so little understood.

The "Sovereignty of God." What do we mean by this expression? We mean the SUPREMACY of God, the KINGSHIP of God, the GODHOOD of God. To say that God is sovereign is to declare that GOD IS GOD! To say that God is sovereign is to declare that He is the Most High, "doing according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, so that none can stay His hand or say unto Him what doest Thou?" (Dan. 4:35), To say that God is sovereign is to declare that He is the Almighty, the possessor of all power in heaven and earth so that none can defeat His counsels, thwart His purpose, nor resist His will (Ps. 115:3). To say that God is sovereign is to declare that He is "the governor among the nations" (Ps. 22:28), setting, up kingdoms, overthrowing empires, and determining the course of dynasties as pleases Him best. To say that God is sovereign is to declare that He is the "only potentate, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords" (1 Tim. 6:15). Such is the God of the Bible.

# A Study of Dispensationalism

## Chapter 1

HAVING written so much upon both the inspiration and the interpretation of Holy Writ, it is necessary, in order to give completeness unto the same, to supply one or two articles upon the application thereof. First, because this is very closely related to exegesis itself: if a wrong application or use be made of a verse, then our explanation of it is certain to be erroneous. For example, Romanism insists that "Feed my sheep" (John 21:15–17) was Christ's bestowal upon Peter of a special privilege and peculiar honour, being one of the passages to which that evil system appeals in support of her contention for the primacy of that Apostle. Yet there is nothing whatever in Peter's own writings which indicates that he regarded those injunctions of his Master as constituting him "Universal Bishop." Instead, in his first Epistle there is plainly that to the contrary, for there we find him exhorting the elders or bishops, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock" (5:2, 3).

Thus it is quite clear from the above passage that Christ's precepts in John 21:15–17, apply or pertain unto all pastors. On the other hand, our Lord's words to Peter and Andrew, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19) do not apply to the rank and file of His disciples, but only unto those whom He calls into and qualifies for the ministry. That is evident from the fact that in none of the Epistles, where both the privileges and the duties of the saints are specifically defined, is there any such precept or promise. Thus, on the one hand, we must ever beware of unwarrantable restricting the scope of a verse; and, on the other hand, be constantly on our guard against making general what is manifestly particular. It is only by

carefully taking heed to the general Analogy of Faith that we shall be preserved from either mistake. Scripture ever interprets Scripture, but much familiarity with the contents, and a diligent and prayerful comparing of one part with another, is necessary before anyone is justified in dogmatically deciding the precise meaning or application of any passage.

But there is further reason, and a pressing one today, why we should write upon our present subject, and that is to expose the modern and pernicious error of Dispensationalism. This is a device of the Enemy, designed to rob the children of no small part of that bread which their heavenly Father has provided for their souls; a device wherein the wily serpent appears as an angel of light, feigning to "make the Bible a new book" by simplifying much in it which perplexes the spiritually unlearned. It is sad to see how widely successful the devil has been by means of this subtle innovation. It is likely that some of our own readers, when perusing the articles upon the interpretation of the Scriptures, felt more than once that we were taking an undue liberty with Holy Writ, that we made use of certain passages in a way altogether unjustifiable, that we appropriated to the saints of this Christian era what does not belong to them but is rather addressed unto those who lived in an entirely different dispensation of the past, or one which is yet future.

This modern method of mishandling the Scriptures—for modern it certainly is, being quite unknown to Christendom till little more than a century ago, and only within recent years being adopted by those who are outside the narrow circle where it originated—is based upon 2 Timothy 2:15, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Very little or nothing at all is said upon the first two clauses of that verse, but on the third one, which is explained as "correctly partitioning the Scriptures unto the different peoples to whom they belong." These mutilators of the Word tell us that all of the Old Testament from Genesis 12 onwards belongs entirely to Israel after the flesh, and that none of its precepts (as such) are binding upon

those who are members of the Church which is the Body of Christ, nor may any of the promises found therein be legitimately appropriated by them. And this, be it duly noted, without a single word to that effect by either the Lord or any of His Apostles, and despite the use which the Holy Spirit makes of the earliest Scriptures in every part of the New Testament. So far from the Holy Spirit teaching Christians practically to look upon the Old Testament much as they would upon an obsolete almanac, He declares, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the (Old Testament) Scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4).

Not satisfied with their determined efforts to deprive us of the Old Testament, these would-be super-expositors dogmatically assert that the four Gospels are Jewish, and that the Epistles of James and Peter, John and Jude are designed for a "godly Jewish remnant" in a future "tribulation period," that nothing but the Pauline Epistles contain "Church truth," and thousands of gullible souls have accepted their ipse dixit—those who decline so doing are regarded as untaught and superficial. Yet God Himself has not uttered a single word to that effect. Certainly there is nothing whatever in 2 Timothy 2:15, to justify such a revolutionizing method of interpreting the Word: that verse has no more to do with the sectioning of Scripture between different "dispensations" than it has with distinguishing between stars of varying magnitude. If that verse be carefully compared with Matthew 7:6, John 16:12 and 1 Corinthians 3:2, its meaning is clear. The occupant of the pulpit is to give diligence in becoming equipped to give the different classes of his hearer "their portion of meat in due season" (Luke 12:42). To rightly divide the Word of Truth is for him to minister it suitably unto the several cases and circumstances of his congregation: to sinners and saints, the indifferent and the inquiring, the babes and fathers, the tempted and afflicted, the backslidden and fallen.

While there be great variety in the teaching of the Word, there is an unmistakable unity underlying the whole. Though He employed

many mouthpieces, the Holy Scriptures have but one Author; and while He "at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets" and "hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son" (Heb. 1:1, 2), yet He who spoke by them was and is One "with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (Jam. 1:17), who throughout all ages declares: "I am the Lord, I change not" (Mal. 3:6). Throughout there is perfect agreement between every part of the Word: it sets forth one system of doctrine (we never read of "the doctrines of God," but always "the doctrine:" see Deut 32:2; Prov 4:2; Matt 7:28; John 7:17; Rom. 16:17, and contrast Mark 7:7; Col. 2:22; 1 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 13:9) because it is one single and organic whole. That Word presents uniformly one way of salvation, one rule of faith. From Genesis to Revelation there is one immutable Moral Law, one glorious Gospel for perishing sinners. The Old Testament believers were saved with the same salvation, were indebted to the same Redeemer, were renewed by the same Spirit, and were partakers of the same heavenly inheritance as are New Testament believers.

It is quite true that the Epistle to the Hebrews makes mention of a better hope (7:19), a better testament or covenant (7:22), better promises (8:6), better sacrifices (9:23), some better thing for us (11:40), and yet it is important to recognize that the contrast is between the shadows and the substance. Romans 12:6, speaks of "the proportion [or "analogy"] of faith." There is a due proportion, a perfect balance, between the different parts of God's revealed Truth which must needs be known and observed by all who would preach and write according to the mind of the Spirit. In arguing from this analogy, it is essential to recognize that what is made known in the Old Testament was typical of what is set forth in the New, and therefore the terms used in the former are strictly applicable unto the latter. Much needless wrangling has occurred over whether or not the nation of Israel were a regenerate people. That is quite beside the real point: outwardly they were regarded and addressed as the people of God, and, as the Spirit through Paul affirmed, "who are Israelites: to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the

covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises: whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came" (Rom. 9:4, 5).

Regeneration or non-regeneration affected the salvation of individuals among them, but it did not affect the covenant relationship of the people as a whole. Again and again God addressed Israel as "backsliders," but never once did He so designate any heathen nation. It was not to the Egyptians or Canaanites that Jehovah said, "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings," or "Turn, O backsliding children ... for I am married unto you" (Jer. 3:22, 14). Now it is this analogy or similarity between the two covenants and the peoples under them which is the basis for the transfer of Old Testament terms to the New. Thus the word "circumcision" is used in the latter not with identity of meaning, but according to analogy, for circumcision is now "of the heart, in the spirit" (Rom. 2:29), and not of the flesh. In like manner, when John closes his first Epistle with "Little children, keep yourselves from idols," he borrows an Old Testament term and uses it in a New Testament sense, for by "idols" he refers not to material statues made of wood and stone (as the prophets did when employing the same word), but to inward objects of carnal and sensual worship. So too are we to see the antitypical and spiritual "Israel" in Galatians 6:16, and the celestial and eternal "Mount Zion" in Hebrews 12:22.

The Bible consists of many parts, exquisitely correlated and vitally interdependent upon each other. God so controlled all the agents which He employed in the writing of it, and so coordinated their efforts, as to produce a single living Book. Within that organic unity there is indeed much variety, but no contrariety. Man's body is but one, though it be made up of many members, diverse in size, character, and operation. The rainbow is but one, nevertheless it reflects distinctly the seven prismatic rays, yet they are harmoniously blended together. So it is with the Bible: its unity appears in the perfect consistency throughout of its teachings. The oneness yet triunity of God, the deity and humanity of Christ united in one

Person, the everlasting covenant which secures the salvation of all the election of grace, the highway of holiness and the only path which leads to heaven, are plainly revealed in Old and New Testament alike. The teaching of the prophets concerning the glorious character of God, the changeless requirements of His righteousness, the total depravity of human nature, and the way appointed for restoration therefrom, are identical with the Apostles' teaching.

If the question be raised, Since the sacred Scriptures be a strict unit, then why has God Himself divided them into two Testaments? perhaps it will simplify the matter if we ask why God has appointed two principal bodies to illuminate the earth—the sun and the moon. Why, too, is the human frame duplex, having two legs and arms, two lungs and kidneys, etc.? Is not the answer the same in each case: to augment and supplement each other? But, more directly, at least four reasons may be suggested. First, to set forth more distinctly the two covenants which are the basis of God's dealings with all mankind: the covenant of works and the covenant of grace—shadowed forth by the "old" from Sinai and the "new" or Christian one. Second, to show more plainly the two separate companies which are united in that one Body which constitutes the Church of which Christ is the Head, namely redeemed Jews and redeemed Gentiles. Third, to demonstrate more clearly the wondrous providence of God: using the Jews for so many centuries to be the custodians of the Old Testament, which condemns them for their rejection of Christ; and in employing the papists throughout the dark ages to preserve the New Testament, which denounces their idolatrous practices. Fourth, that one might confirm the other: type by antitype, prophecy by fulfillment.

"The mutual relations of the two Testaments. These two main divisions resemble the dual structure of the human body, where the two eyes and ears, hands and feet, correspond and complement one another. Not only is there a general, but a special, mutual fitness. They need therefore to be studied together, side by side, to be compared even in lesser details, for in nothing are they independent

of each other; and the closer the inspection the minuter appears the adaptation, and the more intimate the association.... The two Testaments are like the two cherubim of the mercy seat, facing in opposite directions, yet facing each other and overshadowing with glory one mercy seat; or again, they are like the human body bound together by joints and bands and ligaments, with one brain and heart, one pair of lungs, one system of respiration, circulation, digestion, sensor and motor nerves, where division is destruction" (A. T. Pierson, from *Knowing the Scriptures*).

## **Chapter 2**

SOME Dispensationalists do not go quite so far as others in arbitrarily erecting notice-boards over large sections of Scripture, warning Christians not to tread on ground which belongs to others, yet there is general agreement among them that the Gospel of Matthew—though it stands at the beginning of the New Testament and not at the close of the Old!—pertains not to those who are members of the mystical body of Christ, but is "entirely Jewish," that the sermon on the mount is "legalistic" and not evangelistic, and that its searching and flesh-withering precepts are not binding upon Christians. Some go so far as to insist that the great commission with which it closes is not designed for us today, but is meant for "a godly Jewish remnant" after the present era is ended. In support of this wild and wicked theory, appeal is made to and great stress laid upon the fact that Christ is represented, most prominently, as "the son of David" or King of the Jews; but they ignore another conspicuous fact, namely that in its opening verse the Lord Jesus is set forth as "the son of Abraham," and he was a Gentile! What is still more against this untenable hypothesis—and as though the Holy Spirit designedly anticipated and refuted it—is the fact that Matthew's is the only one of the four Gospels where the Church is actually mentioned twice (16:18; 18:17)!—though in John's Gospel its members are portrayed as branches of the Vine, members of Christ's flock, which are designations of saints which have no dispensational limitations.



Equally remarkable is the fact that the very same Epistle which contains the verse (2 Tim. 2:15) on which this modern system is based emphatically declares: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (3:16, 17). So far from large sections of Scripture being designed for other companies, and excluded from our immediate use, ALL Scripture is meant for and is needed by us. First, all of it is "profitable for doctrine," which could not be the case if it were true (as Dispensationalists dogmatically insist) that God has entirely different methods of dealing with men in past and future ages from the present one. Second, all Scripture is given us "for instruction in righteousness" or right doing, but we are at a complete loss to know how to regulate our conduct if the precepts in one part of the Bible are now outdated (as the teachers of error assert) and injunctions of a contrary character have displaced them; and if certain statutes are meant for others who will occupy this scene after the Church has been removed from it. Third, all Scripture is given that a man of God might be "perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works"—every part of the Word is required in order to supply him with all needed instructions and to produce a full-orbed life of godliness.

When the Dispensationalist is hard pressed with those objections, he endeavors to wriggle out of his dilemma by declaring that though all Scripture be for us much of it is not addressed to us. But really, that is a distinction without a difference. In his exposition of Hebrews 3:7–11, Owen rightly pointed out that when making quotation from the Old Testament the Apostle prefaced it with "the Holy Spirit saith" (not "said"), and remarked, "Whatever was given by inspiration from the Holy Spirit and is recorded in the Scriptures for the use of the Church, He contrived to speak it to us unto this day. As He liveth for ever so He continues to speak for ever; that is, whilst His voice or word shall be of use for the Church—He speaks now unto us.... Many men have invented several ways to lessen the authority of the Scriptures, and few are willing to acknowledge an immediate

speaking of God unto them therein." To the same effect wrote that sound commentator Thomas Scott, "Because of the immense advantages of perseverance, and the tremendous consequences of apostasy, we should consider the words of the Holy Spirit as addressed to us."

Not only is the assertion that though all Scripture be for us all is not to us meaningless, but it is also impertinent and impudent, for there is nothing whatever in the Word of Truth to support and substantiate it. Nowhere has the Spirit given the slightest warning that such a passage is "not to the Christian," and still less that whole books belong to someone else. Moreover, such a principle is manifestly dishonest. What right have I to make any use of that which is the property of another? What would my neighbor think were I to take letters which were addressed to him and argue that they were meant for me? Furthermore, such a theory, when put to the test, is found to be unworkable. For example, to whom is the book of Proverbs addressed, or for that matter, the first Epistle of John? Personally, this writer, after having wasted much time in perusing scores of books which pretended to rightly divide the Word, still regards the whole of Scripture as God's gracious revelation to him and for him, as though there were not another person on earth, conscious that he cannot afford to dispense with any portion of it; and he is heartily sorry for those who lack such a faith. Pertinent in this connection is that warning, "But fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve ... so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Cor. 11:3).

But are there not many passages in the Old Testament which have no direct bearing upon the Church today? Certainly not. In view of 1 Corinthians 10:11—"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples [margin, "types"]: and they are written for our admonition"—Owen pithily remarked: "Old Testament examples are New Testament instructions." By their histories we are taught what to avoid and what to emulate. That is the principal reason why they are recorded: that which hindered or encouraged the Old Testament

saints was chronicled for our benefit. But, more specifically, are not Christians unwarranted in applying to themselves many promises given to Israel according to the flesh during the Mosaic economy, and expecting a fulfillment of the same unto themselves? No indeed, for if that were the case, then it would not be true that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4). What comfort can I derive from those sections of God's Word which these people say "do not belong to me?" What "hope" (i.e. a well-grounded assurance of some future good) could possibly be inspired today in Christians by what pertains to none but Jews? Christ came here, my reader, not to cancel, but "to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy" (Rom. 15:8, 9)!

It must also be borne in mind that, in keeping with the character of the covenant under which they were made, many of the precepts and the promises given unto the patriarchs and their descendants possessed a spiritual and typical significance and value, as well as a carnal and literal one. As an example of the former, take Deuteronomy 25:4, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn," and then mark the application made of those words in 1 Corinthians 9:9, 10: "Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith He it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope." The word "altogether" is probably a little too strong here, for *pantos* is rendered "no doubt" in Acts 28:4, and "surely" in Luke 4:23, and in the text signifies "assuredly" (Amer. RV) or "mainly for our sakes." Deuteronomy 25:4 was designed to enforce the principle that labour should have its reward, so that men might work cheerfully. The precept enjoined equity and kindness: if so to beasts, much more so to men, and especially the ministers of the Gospel. It is a striking illustration of the freedom with which the Spirit of grace applies the Old Testament Scriptures, as a constituent part of the Word of Christ, unto Christians and their concerns.

What is true of the Old Testament precepts (generally speaking, for there are, of course, exceptions to every rule) holds equally good to the Old Testament promises—believers today are fully warranted in mixing faith therewith and expecting to receive the substance of them. First, because those promises were made to saints as such, and what God gives to one He gives to all (2 Pet. 1:4)—Christ purchased the self-same blessings for every one of His redeemed. Second, because most of the Old Testament promises were typical in their nature: earthly blessings adumbrated heavenly ones. That is no arbitrary assertion of ours, for anyone who has been taught of God knows that almost everything during the old economies had a figurative meaning, shadowing forth the better things to come. Many proofs of this will be given by us a little later. Third, a literal fulfillment to us of those promises must not be excluded, for since we be still on earth and in the body our temporal needs are the same as theirs, and if we meet the conditions attached to those promises (either expressed or implied), then we may count upon the fulfillment of them: according unto our faith and obedience so will it be unto us.

But surely we must draw a definite and broad line between the Law and the Gospel. It is at this point that the Dispensationalist considers his position to be the strongest and most unassailable; yet nowhere else does he more display his ignorance, for he neither recognizes the grace of God abounding during the Mosaic era, nor can he see that Law has any rightful place in this Christian age. Law and grace are to him antagonistic elements, and (to quote one of his favorite slogans) "will no more mix than will oil and water." Not a few of those who are now regarded as the champions of orthodoxy tell their hearers that the principles of law and grace are such contrary elements that where the one be in exercise the other must necessarily be excluded. But this is a very serious error. How could the Law of God and the Gospel of the grace of God conflict? The one exhibits Him as "light," the other manifest Him as "love" (1 John 1:5; 4:8), and both are necessary in order fully to reveal His perfections: if either one be omitted only a one-sided concept of His character will be formed.

The one makes known His righteousness, the other displays His mercy, and His wisdom has shown the perfect consistency there is between them.

Instead of law and grace being contradictory, they are complementary. Both of them appeared in Eden before the Fall. What was it but grace which made a grant unto our first parents: "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat?" And it was law which said, "But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it." Both of them are seen at the time of the great deluge, for we are told that "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Gen. 6:8), as His subsequent dealings with him clearly demonstrated; while His righteousness brought in a flood upon the world of the ungodly. Both of them operated side by side at Sinai, for while the majesty and righteousness of Jehovah were expressed in the Decalogue, His mercy and grace were plainly evinced in the provisions He made in the whole Levitical system (with its priesthood and sacrifices) for the putting away of their sins. Both shone forth in their meridian glory at Calvary, for whereas on the one hand the abounding grace of God appeared in giving His own dear Son to be the Saviour of sinners, His justice called for the curse of the Law to be inflicted upon Him while bearing their guilt.

In all of God's works and ways we may discern a meeting together of seemingly conflicting elements—the centrifugal and the centripetal forces which are ever at work in the material realm illustrate this principle. So it is in connection with the operations of Divine providence: there is a constant interpenetrating of the natural and supernatural. So too in the giving of the sacred Scriptures: they are the product both of God's and man's agency: they are a Divine revelation, yet couched in human language, and communicated through human media; they are inerrantly true, yet written by fallible men. They are Divinely inspired in every jot and tittle, yet the superintending control of the Spirit over the penmen did not exclude nor interfere with the natural exercise of their faculties. Thus it is also in all of God's dealings with mankind: though He exercises His

high sovereignty, yet He treats with them as responsible creatures, putting forth His invincible power upon and within them, but in no wise destroying their moral agency. These may present deep and insoluble mysteries to the finite mind, nevertheless they are actual facts.

In what has just been pointed out—to which other examples might be added (the person of Christ, for instance, with His two distinct yet conjoined natures, so that though He was omniscient yet He "grew in wisdom;" was omnipotent, yet wearied and slept; was eternal, yet died)—why should so many stumble at the phenomenon of Divine law and Divine grace being in exercise side by side, operating at the same season? Do law and grace present any greater contrast than the fathomless love of God unto His children, and His everlasting wrath upon His enemies? No indeed, not so great. Grace must not be regarded as an attribute of God which eclipses all His other perfections. As Romans 5:21 so plainly tells us, "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness," and not at the expense of or to the exclusion of it. Divine grace and Divine righteousness, Divine love and Divine holiness, are as inseparable as light and heat from the sun. In bestowing grace, God never rescinds His claims upon us, but rather enables us to meet them. Was the prodigal son, after his penitential return and forgiveness, less obliged to conform to the laws of his Father's house than before he left it? No indeed, but more so.

That there is no conflict between the Law and the Gospel of the grace of God is plain enough in Romans 3:31: "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." Here the Apostle anticipates an objection which was likely to be brought against what he said in verses 26–30. Does not the teaching that justification is entirely by grace through faith evince that God has relaxed His claims, changed the standard of His requirements, set aside the demands of His government? Very far from it. The Divine plan of redemption is in no way an annulling of the Law, but rather the honoring and enforcing of it. No greater respect could have been

shown to the Law than in God's determining to save His people from its course by sending His co-equal Son to fulfill all its requirements and Himself endure its penalty. Oh, marvel of marvels; the great Legislator humbled Himself unto entire obedience to the precepts of the Decalogue. The very One who gave the Law became incarnate, bled and died, under its condemning sentence, rather than that a tittle thereof should fail. Magnified thus was the Law indeed, and for ever "made honorable."

God's method of salvation by grace has "established the law" in a threefold way. First, by Christ, the Surety of God's elect, being "made under the law" (Gal. 4:4), fulfilling its precepts (Matt. 5:17), suffering its penalty in the stead of His people, and thereby He has "brought everlasting righteousness" (Dan. 9:24). Second, by the Holy Spirit, for at regeneration He writes the Law on their hearts (Heb. 8:10), drawing out their affections unto it, so that they "delight in the law of God after the inward man" (Rom. 7:22). Third, as the fruit of his new nature, the Christian voluntarily and gladly takes the Law for his rule of life, so that he declares, "with the mind I myself serve the law" (Rom. 7:25). Thus is the Law "established" not only in the high court of heaven, but in the souls of the redeemed. So far from law and grace being enemies, they are mutual handmaids: the former reveals the sinner's need, the latter supplies it; the one makes known God's requirements, the other enables us to meet them. Faith is not opposed to good works, but performs them in obedience to God out of love and gratitude.

### **Chapter 3**

BEFORE turning to the positive side of our present subject, it was necessary for us to expose and denounce that teaching which insists that much in the Bible has no immediate application unto us today. Such teaching is a reckless and irreverent handling of the Word, which has produced the most evil consequences in the hearts and lives of many—not the least of which is the promotion of a pharisaical spirit of self-superiority. Consciously or unconsciously,

Dispensationalists are, in reality, repeating the sin of Jehoiakim, who mutilated God's Word with his penknife (Jer 36:23). Instead of "opening the Scriptures," they are bent in closing the major part of them from God's people today. They are just as much engaged in doing the devil's work as are the Higher Critics, who, with their dissecting knives, are wrongly "dividing the word of truth." They are seeking to force a stone down the throats of those who are asking for bread. These are indeed severe and solemn indictments, but not more so than the case calls for. We are well aware that they will be unacceptable unto some of our own readers; but medicine, though sometimes necessary, is rarely palatable.

Instead of being engaged in the unholy work of pitting one part of the Scriptures against another, these men would be far better employed in showing the perfect unity of the Bible and the blessed harmony which there is between all of its teachings. But instead of demonstrating the concord of the two Testaments, they are more concerned in their efforts to show the discord which they say there is between that which pertained unto "the Dispensation of Law" and that which obtains under "the Dispensation of Grace," and in order to accomplish their evil design all sound principles of exegesis are cast to the wind. As a sample of what we have reference to, they cite "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot" (Ex. 21:24) and then quote against it, "But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matt. 5:39), and then it is exultantly asserted that those two passages can only be "reconciled" by allocating them to different peoples in different ages; and with such superficial handling of Holy Writ thousands of gullible souls are deceived, and thousands more allow themselves to be bewildered.

If those who possess a Scofield Bible turn to Exodus 21:24, they will see that in the margin opposite to it the editor refers his readers to Leviticus 24:20; Deuteronomy 19:21, and cf. Matthew 5:28-44; 1 Peter 2:19-21; upon which this brief comment is made: "The provision in Exodus is law and righteous; the New Testament



passages, grace and merciful." How far Mr. Scofield was consistent with himself may be seen by a reference to what he states on page 989, at the beginning of the New Testament under the Four Gospels, where he expressly affirms "The sermon on the mount is law, not grace" [*italics ours*]: verily "the legs of the lame are not equal." In his marginal note to Exodus 21:24, Mr. Scofield cites Matthew 5:38–44, as "grace," whereas in his introduction to the Four Gospels he declares that Matthew 5–7 "is law, and not grace." Which of those assertions did he wish his readers to believe?

Still the question may be asked, How are you going to reconcile Exodus 21:24, with Matthew 5:38–44? Our answer is, There is nothing between them to "reconcile," for there is nothing in them which clashes. The former passage is one of the statutes appointed for public magistrates to enforce, whereas the latter one lays down rules for private individuals to live by! Why do not these self-styled "rightly dividers" properly allocate the Scriptures, distinguishing between the different classes to which they are addressed? That Exodus 21:24 does contain statutes for public magistrates to enforce is clearly established by comparing Scripture with Scripture. In Deuteronomy 19:21, the same injunction is again recorded, and if the reader turns back to verse 18 he will there read, "And the judges shall make diligent inquisition," etc. It would be real mercy unto the community if our judges today would set aside their sickly sentimentality and deal with conscienceless and brutal criminals in a manner which befits their deeds of violence—instead of making a mockery of justice.

Ere leaving what has been before us in the last three paragraphs, let it be pointed out that when our blessed Lord added to Matthew 5:38, "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you" (verse 44) He was not advancing a more benign precept than had ever been enunciated previously. No, the same gracious principle of conduct had been enforced in the Old Testament. In Exodus 23:4, 5, Jehovah gave commandment through Moses, "If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou

shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him." Again in Proverbs 25:21, we read, "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink."

The same God who bids us, "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath" (Rom. 12:17–19), also commanded His people in the Old Testament, "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord" (Lev. 19:18); and therefore was David grateful to Abigail for dissuading him from taking vengeance on Nabal: "Blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand" (1 Sam. 25:33). So far was the Old Testament from allowing any spirit of bitterness, malice or revenge that it expressly declared, "Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the Lord, and He shall save thee" (Prov. 20:22). And again, "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth" (Prov. 24:17). And again, "Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work" (Prov. 24:29).

One more sample of the excuseless ignorance betrayed by these Dispensationalists—we quote from E.W. Bullinger's *How to Enjoy the Bible*. On pages 108 and 110 he said under "Law and Grace:" "For those who lived under the Law it could rightly and truly be said, 'It shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as He hath commanded us' (Deut 6:25). But to those who live in this present Dispensation of Grace it is as truly declared, 'By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight' (Rom. 3:20). But this is the very opposite of Deuteronomy 6:25. What, then, are we to say, or to do? Which of these two statements is true and which is false? The answer

is that neither is false. But both are true if we would rightly divide the Word of Truth as to its dispensational truth and teaching.... Two words distinguish the two dispensations: 'Do' distinguished the former; 'Done' the latter. Then salvation depended upon what man was to do, now it depends upon what Christ has done." It is by such statements as these that "unstable souls" are beguiled.

Is it not amazing that one so renowned for his erudition and knowledge of the Scriptures should make such manifestly absurd statements as the above? In pitting Deuteronomy 6:25 against Romans 3:20, he might as well have argued that fire is "the very opposite" of water. They are indeed contrary elements, yet each has its own use in its proper place: the one to cook by, the other for refreshment. Think of one who set up himself as a teacher of preachers affirming that under the Mosaic economy "salvation depended on what man was to do." Why, in that case, for fifteen hundred years not a single Israelite had been saved. Had salvation then been obtainable by human efforts, there had been no need for God to send His Son here! Salvation has never been procurable by human merits, on the ground of human performance. Abel obtained witness that he was righteous, because he offered to God a slain lamb (Gen. 4:4; Heb. 11:4). Abraham was justified by faith, and not by works (Romans 4). Under the Mosaic economy it was expressly announced that "it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Lev. 17:11). David realized, "If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" (Ps. 130:3); and therefore did he confess, "I will make mention of Thy righteousness, even of Thine only" (Ps. 71:16).

By all means let the Word of Truth be "rightly divided;" not by parceling it off to different "dispensations," but by distinguishing between what is doctrinal and what is practical, between that which pertains to the unsaved and that which is predicated of the saved. Deuteronomy 6:25 is addressed not to alien sinners, but to those who are in covenant relationship with the Lord; whereas Romans 3:20 is a statement which applies to every member of the human race. The

one has to do with practical "righteousness" in the daily walk, which is acceptable to God; the other is a doctrinal declaration which asserts the impossibility of acceptance with God on the ground of creature doings. The former relates to our conduct in this life in connection with the Divine government; the latter concerns our eternal standing before the Divine throne. Both passages are equally applicable to Jews and Gentiles in all ages. "Our righteousness" in Deuteronomy 6:25 is a practical righteousness in the sight of God. It is the same aspect of righteousness as in "except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees" of Matthew 5:20, the "righteous man" of James 5:16, and the "doeth righteousness" of 1 John 2:29.

The Old Testament saints were the subjects of the same everlasting covenant, had the same blessed Gospel, were begotten unto the same celestial heritage as the New Testament saints. From Abel onwards, God has dealt with sinners in sovereign grace, and according to the merits of Christ's redemptive work—which was retroactive in its value and efficacy (Romans 3:25; 1 Peter 1:19, 20). "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Gen. 6:8). That they were partakers of the same covenant blessings as we are is clear from a comparison of 2 Samuel 23:5, and Hebrews 13:20. The same Gospel was preached unto Abraham (Gal. 3:8), yea, unto the nation of Israel after they had received the Law (Heb 4:2), and therefore Abraham rejoiced to see Christ's day and was glad (John 8:56). Dying Jacob declared, "I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord" (Gen. 49:18). As Hebrews 11:16 states, the patriarchs desired "a better country [than the land of Canaan, in which they dwelt], that is, an heavenly." Moses "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter ... esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt" (Heb. 11:24–26). Job exclaimed, "I know that my Redeemer liveth ... in my flesh shall I see God" (19:25, 26).

When Jehovah proclaimed His name unto Moses, He revealed Himself as "the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious" (Ex. 34:5–7). When Aaron pronounced the benediction on the

congregation, he was bidden to say, "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace" (Num. 6:24–26). No greater and grander blessings can be invoked today. Such a passage as that cannot possibly be harmonized with the constricted concept which is entertained and is being propagated by the Dispensationalists of the Mosaic economy. God dealt in grace with Israel all through their long and checkered history. Read through the book of Judges and observe how often He raised up deliverers for them. Pass on to Kings and Chronicles and note His longsuffering benignity in sending them prophet after prophet. Where in the New Testament is there a word which, for pure grace, exceeds "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" (Isa 1:18)? In the days of Jehoahaz "the Lord was gracious unto them" (2 Kings 13:22–23). They were invited to say unto the Lord, "Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously" (Hosea 14:2). Malachi bade Israel "beseech God that He will be gracious unto us" (1:9).

The conception which the pious remnant of Israel had of the Divine character during the Mosaic economy was radically different from the stern and forbidding presentation made thereof by Dispensationalists. Hear the Psalmist as he declared, "Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful" (116:5). Hear him again, as he bursts forth into adoring praise, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases ... He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities" (103:2, 3, 10). Can Christians say more than that? No wonder David exclaimed, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever" (73:25, 26). If the question be asked, What, then, is the great distinction between the Mosaic and Christian eras? the answer is, God's grace was then confirmed to one nation, but now it flows out to all nations.

What is true in the general holds in the particular. Not only were God's dealings with His people during Old Testament times substantially the same as those with His people now, but in detail too. There is no discord, but perfect accord and concord between them. Note carefully the following parallelisms. "His inheritance in the saints" (Eph. 1:18): "The Lord's portion is His people, Jacob is the lot of His inheritance" (Deut. 32:9). "Beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation" (2 Thess. 2:13): "I have loved thee with an everlasting love" (Jer. 31:3). "In whom we have redemption" (Eph. 1:7): "With Him is plenteous redemption" (Ps. 130:7). "That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21): "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength" (Isa. 45:24). "Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings ... in Christ" (Eph. 1:3): "Men shall be blessed in Him" (Ps. 72:17). "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7): "Thou art all fair, My love, there is no spot in thee" (Song 4:7).

"Strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man" (Eph. 3:16): "In the day when I cried Thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul" (Ps. 138:3). "The Spirit of truth ... will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13): "Thou gayest also Thy good Spirit to instruct them" (Neh. 9:20). "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:18): "All our righteousness are as filthy rags" (Isa. 64:6). "I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims" (1 Pet. 2:11): "Ye are strangers and sojourners" (Lev. 25:23). "We walk by faith" (2 Cor. 5:7): "The just shall live by his faith" (Hab. 2:4). "Strong in the Lord" (Eph. 6:10): "I will strengthen them in the Lord" (Zech. 10:12). "Neither shall any pluck them out of My hand" (John 10:28): "All His saints are in Thy hand" (Deut. 33:3). "He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit" (John 15:5): "From Me is thy fruit found" (Hosea 14:8). "He which hath begun a good work in you will finish it" (Phil. 1:6, margin): "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me" (Ps 138:8). Innumerable other such harmonies might be added.

## Chapter 4

AS IT is particularly the Old Testament promises of which Dispensationalists would deprive the Christian, a more definite and detailed refutation of this error is now required—coming, as it obviously does, within the compass of our present subject. We will here transcribe what we wrote thereon almost twenty years ago.

Since the Fall alienated the creature from the Creator, there could be no intercourse between God and men but by some promise on His part. None can challenge anything from the Majesty on high without a warrant from Himself, nor could the conscience be satisfied unless it had a Divine grant for any good that we hope for from Him.

God will in all ages have His people regulated by His promises, so that they may exercise faith, hope, prayer, dependence upon Himself: He gives them promises so as to test them, whether or not they really trust in and count upon Him.

The Medium of the promises is the God-man Mediator, Jesus Christ, for there can be no intercourse between God and us except through the appointed Daysman. In other words, Christ must receive all good for us, and we must have it at second hand from Him.

Let the Christian ever be on his guard against contemplating any promise of God apart from Christ. Whether the thing promised, the blessing desired, be temporal or spiritual, we cannot legitimately or truly enjoy it except in and by Christ. Therefore did the Apostle remind the Galatians, "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ" (3:16)—in quoting Genesis 12:3, Paul was not proving, but affirming, that God's promises to Abraham respected not all his natural posterity, but only those of his spiritual children—those united to Christ. All the promises of God to believers are made to Christ, the Surety of the everlasting covenant, and are conveyed from Him to us—both the promises themselves and the

things promised. "This is the [all-inclusive] promise that He hath promised us, even eternal life" (1 John 2:25), and, as 5:11 tells us, "this life is in His Son"—so grace, and all other benefits. "If I read any of the promises I found that all and every one contained Christ in their bosom, He Himself being the one great Promise of the Bible. To Him they were all first given; from Him they derive all their efficacy, sweetness, value, and importance; by Him they are brought home to the heart; and in Him they are all yea, and amen"

(R. Hawker, 1810).

Since all the promises of God are made in Christ, it clearly follows that none of them are available to any who are out of Christ, for to be out of Him is to be out of the favour of God. God cannot look on such a person but as an object of His wrath, as fuel for His vengeance: there is no hope for any man until he be in Christ. But it may be asked, Does not God bestow any good things on them who are out of Christ, sending His rain upon the unjust, and filling the bellies of the wicked with good things (Ps. 17:14)? Yes, He does indeed. Then are not those temporal mercies blessings? Certainly not: far from it. As He says in Malachi 2:2, "I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart" (cf. Deut. 28:15–20). Unto the wicked, the temporal mercies of God are like food given to bullocks—it does but "prepare them for the day of slaughter" (Jer. 12:3, and cf. Jam. 5:5).

Having presented above a brief outline on the subject of the Divine promises, let us now examine a striking yet little-noticed expression, namely "the children of the promise" (Rom. 9:8). In the context the Apostle discusses God's casting of the Jews and calling of the Gentiles, which was a particularly sore point with the former. After describing the unique privileges enjoyed by Israel as a nation (verses 4 and 5), he points out the difference there is between them and the antitypical "Israel of God" (verses 6–9), which he illustrates by the cases of Isaac and Jacob. Though the Jews had rejected the Gospel and had been cast off by God, it must not be supposed that His word



had failed of accomplishment (verse 6), for not only had the prophecies concerning the Messiah been fulfilled, but the promise respecting Abraham's seed was being made good. But it was most important to apprehend aright what or whom that "seed" comprised. "For they are not all Israel [spiritually speaking], who are of Israel [naturally]: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called" (verses 6 and 7).

The Jews erroneously imagined (as modern Dispensationalists do) that the promises made to Abraham concerning his seed respected all of his descendants. Their boast was "we be Abraham's seed" (John 8:33), to which Christ replied, "If ye were Abraham's children ye would do the works of Abraham" (verse 39 and see Romans 4:12). God's rejection of Ishmael and Esau was decisive proof that the promises were not made to the natural descendants as such. The selection of Isaac and Jacob showed that the promise was restricted to an elect line. "The children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted [regarded] as the seed. For this is the word of promise. At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son" (Rom. 9:8, 9). The "children of God" and the "children of promise" are one and the same, whether they be Jews or Gentiles. As Isaac was born supernaturally, so are all of God's elect (John 1:13). As Isaac, on that account, was heir of the promised blessing, so are Christians (Gal. 4:29; 3:29). "Children of the promise" are identical with "the heirs of promise" (Heb. 6:17, and cf. Rom. 8:17).

God's promises are made to the spiritual children of Abraham (Rom. 4:16; Gal 3:7), and none of them can possibly fail of accomplishment. "For all the promises of God in Him [namely Christ] are yea, and in Him amen" (2 Cor. 1:20). They are deposited in Christ, and in Him they find their affirmation and certification, for He is the sum and substance of them. Inexpressibly blessed is that declaration to the humble-minded child of God—yet a mystery hid from those who are wise in their own conceits. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely

give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32). The promises of God are numerous: relating to this life and also that which is to come. They concern our temporal wellbeing, as well as our spiritual, covering the needs of the body as well as those of the soul. Whatever be their character, not one of them can be made good unto us except in and through and by Him who lived and died for us. The promises which God has given to His people are absolutely sure and trustworthy, for they were made to them in Christ: they are infallibly certain for fulfillment, for they are accomplished through and by Him.

A blessed illustration, yea, exemplification, of what has just been pointed out above is found in Hebrews 8:8–13, and 10:15–17, where the Apostle quotes the promises given in Jeremiah 31:31–34. The Dispensationalists would object and say that those promises belong to the natural descendants of Abraham, and are not to us. But Hebrews 10:15 prefaces the citation of those promises by expressly affirming, "Whereof the Holy Spirit is [not "was"] a witness to us." Those promises extend to Gentile believers also, for they are the assurance of grace founded in Christ, and in Him believing Jews and Gentiles are one (Gal. 3:26). Before the middle wall of partition was broken down, Gentiles were indeed "strangers unto the covenants of promise" (Eph. 2:12), but when that wall was removed, Gentile believers became "fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel" (Eph. 3:6)! As Romans 11 expresses it, they partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree (verse 17)! Those promises in Jeremiah 31 are made not to the Jewish nation as such, but to "the Israel of God" (Gal 6:16), that is to the entire election of grace, and they are made infallibly good unto all of them at the moment of their regeneration by the Spirit.

In the clear light of other New Testament passages, it appears passing strange that anyone who is familiar with the same should deny that God has made this "new covenant" with those who are members of the mystical body of Christ. That Christians are partakers of its blessings is plain in 1 Corinthians 11:25, where quotation is made of the Savior's words at the institution of His

supper, saying, "This cup is the new testament [or "new covenant"] in My blood;" and again by 2 Corinthians 3:6, where the Apostle states that God "hath also made us able ministers of the new testament," or "covenant," for the same Greek word is used in those passages as in Hebrews 8:8, and 10:16, where it is translated "covenant." In the very first sermon preached after the new covenant was established, Peter said, "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off" i.e. the Gentiles: Ephesians 2:13 —qualified by "as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39). Furthermore, the terms of Jeremiah 31:33, 34 are most certainly made good unto all believers today: God is their covenant God (Heb. 13:20), His law is enshrined in their affections (Rom 7:22), they know Him as their God, their iniquities are forgiven.

The Holy Spirit's statement in 2 Corinthians 7:1, must, for all who bow to the authority of Holy Writ, settle the matter once and for all of the Christian's right to the Old Testament promises. "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." Which promises? Why, those mentioned at the close of the preceding chapter. There we read, "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (6:16). And where had God said this? Why, as far back as Leviticus 26:12, "And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be My people." That promise was made to the nation of Israel in the days of Moses! And again we read, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:17, 18), which words are a manifest reference to Jeremiah 31:9, and Hosea 1:9, 10.

Now observe very particularly what the Holy Spirit says through Paul concerning those Old Testament promises. First, he says to the New Testament saints, "Having these promises." He declared that those

ancient promises are theirs: that they have a personal interest in them and title to them. That they were theirs not merely in hope, but in hand. Theirs to make full use of, to feed upon and enjoy, to delight in and give God thanks for the same. Since Christ Himself be ours, all things are ours (1 Cor. 3:22, 23). Oh, Christian reader, suffer no man, under pretense of "rightly dividing the word," to cut you off from, to rob you of any of "the exceeding great and precious promises" of your Father (2 Pet. 1:4). If he is content to confine himself unto a few of the New Testament Epistles, let him do so—that is his loss. But allow him not to confine you to so narrow a compass. Second, we are hereby taught to use those promises as motives and incentives to the cultivation of personal piety, in the private work of mortification and the positive duty of practical sanctification.

A striking and conclusive proof that the Old Testament promises belong unto present-day saints is found in Hebrews 13:5, where practical use is again made of the same. There Christians are exhorted, "Let your conversation be without covetousness: be content with such things as ye have." That exhortation is enforced by this gracious consideration: "for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Since the living God be your portion your heart should rejoice in Him, and all anxiety about the supply of your every need be for ever removed. But what we are now more especially concerned with is the promise here cited: "For He hath said, I will never leave thee," etc. And to whom was that promise first given? Why, to the one who was about to lead Israel into the land of Canaan—as a reference to Joshua 1:5 shows. Thus it was made to a particular person on a special occasion, to a general who was to prosecute a great war under the immediate command of God. Facing that demanding ordeal, Joshua received assurance from God that His presence should ever be with him.

But if the believer gives way to unbelief, the devil is very apt to tell him, That promise belongs not unto you. You are not the captain of armies, commissioned by God to overthrow the forces of an enemy: the virtue of that promise ceased when Canaan was conquered and

died with him to whom it was made. Instead, as Owen pointed out in his comments on Hebrews 13:5, "To manifest the sameness of love that is in all the promises, with their establishment in the one Mediator, and the general concern of believers in every one of them, howsoever and on what occasion given to any, this promise to Joshua is here applied to the condition of the weakest, meanest, and poorest of the saints; to all and every one of them, be their case and condition what it will. And doubtless, believers are not a little wanting in themselves and their own consolation, that they do so more particularly close with those words of truth, grace, and faithfulness, which upon sundry occasions and at divers times have been given out unto the saints of old, even Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and the residue of them, who walked with God in their generation: these things in an especial manner are recorded for our consolation."

Let us now observe closely the use which the Apostle made of that ancient but ever-living promise. First, he here availed himself of it in order to enforce his exhortation unto Christians to the duties of mortification and sanctification. Second, he draws a logical and practical inference from the same, declaring, "So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13:6). Thus a double conclusion is reached: such a promise is to inspire all believers with confidence in God's succour and assistance, and with boldness and courage before men—showing us to what purpose we should put the Divine pledges. Those conclusions are based upon the character of the Promiser: because God is infinitely good, faithful, and powerful, and because He changes not, I may trustfully declare with Abraham, "God will provide" (Gen. 22:8); with Jonathan, "There is no restraint to the Lord" (1 Sam. 14:6); with Jehoshaphat, "None is able to withstand Him" (2 Chron. 20:6); with Paul, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom 8:31). The abiding presence of the all-sufficient Lord ensures help, and therefore any alarm at man's enmity should be removed from our hearts. My worst enemy can do nothing against me without my Savior's permission.

"So that we may boldly say [freely, without hesitating through unbelief], The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." Note attentively the change in number from the plural to the singular, and learn therefrom that general principles are to be appropriated by us in particular, as general precepts are to be taken by us personally—the Lord Jesus individualized the "ye shall not tempt the Lord your God" of Deuteronomy 6:16, when assailed by Satan, saying, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Matt. 4:7). It is only by taking the Divine promises and precepts unto ourselves personally that we can "mix faith" with the same, or make a proper and profitable use of them. It is also to be carefully noted that once more the Apostle confirmed his argument by a Divine testimony, for the words "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" are not his own, but a quotation of those use by David in Psalm 118:6. Thus again we are shown that the language of the Old Testament is exactly suited to the cases and circumstances of Christians today, and that it is their right and privilege freely to appropriate the same.

"We may boldly say" just what the Psalmist did when he was sorely pressed. It was during a season of acute distress that David expressed his confidence in the living God, at a time when it looked as though his enemies were on the point of swallowing him up; but viewing the omnipotence of Jehovah and contrasting His might with the feebleness of the creature, his heart was strengthened and emboldened. But let the reader clearly perceive what that implied. It means that David turned his mind away from the seen to the unseen. It means that he was regulated by faith, rather than by sight—feelings or reasonings. It means that his heart was occupied with the Almighty. But it means much more: he was occupied with the relationship of that omnipotent One unto himself. It means that he recognized and realized the spiritual bond there was between them, so that he could truly and rightly aver, "the Lord is my helper." If He be my God, my Redeemer, my Father, then He may be counted upon to undertake for me when I am sorely oppressed, when my foes threaten to devour me, when my barrel of meal is almost empty. That

"my" is the language of faith, and is the conclusion which faith's assurance draws from the infallible promise of Him that cannot lie.

## **Chapter 5**

IN these articles we are seeking to show the use which believers should make of God's Word: or more particularly, how that it is both their privilege and their duty to receive the whole of it as addressed immediately unto themselves, and to turn the same unto practical account, by appropriating its contents to their personal needs. The Bible is a book which calls not so much for the exertion of our intellect as it does for the exercise of our affections, conscience and will. God has given it to us not for our entertainment but for our education, to make known what He requires from us. It is to be the traveler's guide as he journeys through the maze of this world, the mariner's chart as he sails the sea of life. Therefore, whenever we open the Bible, the all-important consideration for each of us to keep before him is, What is there here for me today? What bearing does the passage now before me have upon my present case and circumstances—what warning, what encouragement, what information? What instruction is there to direct me in the management of my business, to guide me in the ordering of my domestic and social affairs, to promote a closer walking with God?

I should see myself addressed in every precept, included in every promise. But it is greatly to be feared that, through failure to appropriate God's Word unto their own case and circumstances, there is much Bible reading and study which is of little or no real benefit to the soul. Nothing else will secure us from the infections of this world, deliver from the temptations of Satan, and be so effectual a preservative from sin, as the Word of God received into our affections. "The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide" (Ps. 37:31) can only be said of the one who has made personal appropriation of that Law, and is able to aver with the Psalmist, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee" (119:11). Just so long as the Truth is actually working in us,

influencing us in a practical way, is loved and revered by us, stirs the conscience, are we kept from falling into open sin—as Joseph was preserved when evilly solicited by his master's wife (Gen. 39:9). And only as we personally go out and daily gather our portion of manna, and feed upon the same, will there be strength provided for the performing of duty and the bringing forth of fruit to the glory of God.

Let us take Genesis 17:1 as a simple illustration. "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect" or "sincere." How is the Christian to apply such a verse unto himself? First of all, let him note to whom this signal favour and honour was shown: namely to him who is the "father of all them that believe" (Rom. 4:11, 12, 16)—and he was the first person in the world to whom the Lord is said to have appeared! Second, observe when it was that Jehovah appeared unto him: namely in his old age, when nature's force was spent and death was written on the flesh. Third, mark attentively the particular character in which the Lord was now revealed to him: "the Almighty God," or more literally "El Shaddai"—"the all-sufficient God." Fourth, consider the exhortation which accompanied the same: "walk before Me, and be thou sincere." Fifth, ponder those details in the light of the immediate sequel; God's making promise that he should beget a son by Sarah, who was long past the age of child-bearing (verses 15–19). Everything that is for God must be effected by His mighty power: He can and must do everything—the flesh profits nothing, no movement of mere nature is of any avail.

Now as the believer ponders that memorable incident, hope should be inspired within him. El Shaddai is as truly his God as He was Abraham's! That is clear from 2 Corinthians 7:1, for one of those promises is, "I will be a Father unto you ... saith the Lord Almighty" (6:18), and from Revelation 1:8, where the Lord Jesus says unto the churches, "I am Alpha and Omega ... the Almighty." It is a declaration of His omnipotence, to whom all things are possible. "The all-sufficient God" tells of what He is in Himself—independent,



self-existent; and what He is unto His people—the Supplier of their every need. When Christ said to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee," it was all one with what Jehovah said unto Abraham. Doubtless the Lord appeared unto the patriarch in visible (and human) form: He does so to us before the eyes of faith. Often He is pleased to meet with us in the ordinances of His grace, and send us on our way rejoicing. Sometimes He "manifests" Himself (John 14:21) to us in the retirements of privacy. Frequently He appears for us in His providences, showing Himself strong on our behalf. Now, says He, "Walk before Me sincerely" in the believing realization that I am all-sufficient for thee, conscious of My almightiness, and all will be well with thee.

Let us now adduce some of the many proofs of the assertions made in our opening sentences, proofs supplied by the Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus in the application which They made of the Scriptures. It is very striking indeed to discover that the very first moral commandment which God gave to mankind, namely that which was to regulate the marriage relationship, was couched in such terms that it comprehended a Divine law which is universally and perpetually binding: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:24)—quoted by Christ in Matthew 19:5. "When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement" (Deut. 24:1). That statute was given in the days of Moses, nevertheless we find our Lord referring to the same and telling the Pharisees of His day, "For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept" (Mark 10:5).

The principle for which we are here contending is beautifully illustrated in Psalm 27:8, "When Thou saidst, Seek ye My face; my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek." Thus David made particular what was general, applying to himself personally what was said to the saints collectively. That is ever the use each of us should make of every part of God's Word—as we see the Saviour in Matthew

4:7, changing the "ye" of Deuteronomy 6:16, to "thou." So again in Acts 1:20, we find Peter, when alluding to the defection of Judas, altering the "let their habitation" of Psalm 69:25, to "let his habitation be desolate." That was not taking an undue liberty with Holy Writ, but, instead, making a specific application of what was indefinite.

"Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king, and stand not in the place of great men: for better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither; than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen" (Prov. 25:6, 7). Upon which Thomas Scott justly remarked, "There can be no reasonable doubt that our Lord referred to those words in His admonition to ambitious guests at the Pharisee's table (Luke 14:7–11), and was understood to do so. While, therefore, this gives His sanction to the book of Proverbs, it also shows that those maxims may be applied to similar cases, and that we need not confine their interpretation exclusively to the subject which gave rise to the maxims." Not even the presence of Christ, His holy example, His heavenly instruction, could restrain the strife among His disciples over which should be the greatest. Loving to have the pre-eminence (3 John 9, 10) is the bane of godliness in the churches.

"I the Lord have called Thee ... and give Thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles;" "I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth" (Isa. 42:6; 49:6). Those words were spoken by the Father unto the Messiah, yet in Acts 13:46, 47 we find Paul saying of himself and Barnabas, "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so bath the Lord commanded us; saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth!" So again in Romans 10:15 we find the Apostle was inspired to make application unto Christ's servant of that which was said immediately of Him: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace" (Isa. 52:7): "How shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are

the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace" (Rom. 10:15). "He is near that justifieth Me ... who is he that shall condemn Me?" (Isa. 50:8, 9): the context shows unmistakably that Christ is there the speaker, yet in Romans 8:33, 34 the Apostle hesitates not to apply those words unto the members of His body: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?"

The unspeakably solemn commission given to Isaiah concerning his apostate generation (6:9, 10) was applied by Christ to the people of His day, saying: "And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah" (Matt. 13:14, 15). Again, in 29:13, Isaiah announced that the Lord said, "This people draw near Me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour Me, but have removed their heart far from Me," while in Matthew 15:7 we find Christ saying to the scribes and Pharisees, "Hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth," etc. Even more striking is Christ's rebuke unto the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection of the body, "Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matt. 22:31, 32). What God spoke immediately to Moses at the burning bush was designed equally for the instruction and comfort of all men unto the end of the world. What the Lord has said unto a particular person, He says unto everyone who is favored to read His Word. Thus does it concern us to hear and heed the same, for by that Word we shall be judged in the last great day (John 12:48).

The fundamental principle for which we are here contending is plainly expressed again by Christ in Mark 13:37, "And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." That exhortation to the Apostles is addressed directly to the saints in all generations and places. As Owen well said, "The Scriptures speak to every age, every church, every person, not less than to those to whom they were first directed. This showeth us how we should be affected in reading the Word: we should read it as a letter written by the Lord of grace from heaven, to

us by name." If there be any books in the New Testament particularly restricted, it is the "pastoral Epistles," yet the exhortation found in 2 Timothy 2:19, is generalized: "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." Those who are so fond of restricting God's Word would say that, "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (verse 3) is addressed to the minister of the Gospel, and pertains not to the rank and file of believers. But Ephesians 6:10–17 shows (by necessary implication) that it applies to all the saints, for the militant figure is again used, and used there without limitation. The Bullinger school insist that James and Peter—who gave warning of those who in the last time should walk after their own ungodly lusts—wrote to Jewish believers; but Jude (addressed to all the sanctified) declares they "told you" (verse 18).

"Ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord" (Heb. 12:5). That exhortation is taken from Proverbs 3:11, so that here is further evidence that the precepts of the Old Testament (like its promises) are not restricted unto those who were under the Mosaic economy, but apply with equal directness and force to those under the new covenant. Observe well the tense of the verb "which speaketh:" though written a thousand years previously, Paul did not say "which hath spoken"—the Scriptures are a living Word through which their Author speaks today. Note too "which speaketh unto you"—New Testament saints: all that is contained in the book of Proverbs is as truly and as much the Father's instruction to Christians as the contents of the Pauline Epistles. Throughout that book God addresses us individually as "My son" (2:1; 3:1; 4:1; 5:1). That exhortation is as urgently needed by believers now as by any who lived in former ages. Though children of God, we are still children of Adam—willful, proud, independent, requiring to be disciplined, to be under the Father's rod, to bear it meekly, and to be exercised thereby in our hearts and consciences.

A word now upon transferred application, by which we mean giving a literal turn to language which is figurative, or vice versa. Thus,

whenever the writer steps on to icy roads, he hesitates not to literalize the prayer, "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe" (Ps. 119:117). "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for Thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety" (Ps. 4:8) is to be given its widest latitude, and regarded at both the rest of the body under the protection of Providence and the repose of the soul in the assurance of God's protecting grace. In 2 Corinthians 8:14 Paul urges that there should be an equality of giving, or a fair distribution of the burden, in the collection being made to relieve the afflicted saints in Jerusalem. That appeal was backed up with, "As it is written, he that hath gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack." That is a reference to the manna gathered by the Israelites (Ex. 16:18): those who gathered the largest quantity had more to give unto the aged and feeble; so rich Christians should use their surplus to provide for the poor of the flock. But great care needs to be taken lest we clash with the Analogy of the Faith: thus "the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker" (2 Sam. 3:1) certainly does not mean that "the flesh" becomes enervated as the believer grows in grace, for universal Christian experience testifies that indwelling sin rages as vigorously at the end as at the beginning.

A brief word upon double application. Whereas preachers should ever be on their guard against taking the children's bread and casting it to the dogs, by applying to the unsaved promises given to or statements made concerning the saints; on the other hand, they need to remind believers of the continuous force of the Scriptures and their present suitability to their cases. For instance, the gracious invitation of Christ, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28), and "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink" (John 7:37), must not be limited to our first approach to the Saviour as lost sinners, but as 1 Peter 2:4 says, "to whom coming"—in the present tense. Note too the "mourn" and not "have mourned" in Matthew 5:4, and "hunger" in verse 6. In like manner, the self-abasing word, "Who maketh thee to differ!" (1 Cor. 4:7) today: first from the unsaved; second from what we were before the new birth; and third from other Christians with less grace

and gifts. Why, a sovereign God, and therefore you have nothing to boast of and no cause for self-glorying.

A word now upon the Spirit's application of the Word unto the heart, and our task is completed. This is described in such a verse as, "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance" (1 Thess. 1:5). That is very much more than having the mind informed or the emotions stirred, and something radically different from being deeply impressed by the preacher's oratory, earnestness, etc. It is for the preaching of the Gospel to be accompanied by the supernatural operation of the Spirit, and the efficacious grace of God, so that souls are Divinely quickened, convicted, converted, delivered from the dominion of sin and Satan. When the Word is applied by the Spirit to a person, it acts like the entrance of a two-edged sword into his inner man, piercing, wounding, slaying his self-complacency and self-righteousness—as in the case of Saul of Tarsus (Rom. 7:9, 10). This is the "demonstration of the Spirit" (1 Cor. 2:4), whereby He gives proof of the Truth by the effects produced in the individual to which it is sayingly applied, so that he has "much assurance"—i.e. he knows it is God's Word because of the radical and permanent change wrought in him.

Now the child of God is in daily need of this gracious working of the Holy Spirit: to make the Word work "effectually" (1 Thess. 2:13) within his soul and truly regulate his life, so that he can thankfully acknowledge, "I will never forget Thy precepts: for with them Thou hast quickened me" (Ps. 119:93). For that quickening it is his duty and privilege to pray (verses 25, 37, 40, 88, 107, 149, etc.). It is a fervent request that he may be "renewed day by day" in the inner man (2 Cor. 4:16), that he may be "strengthened with might by His Spirit" (Eph. 3:16), that he may be revived and animated to go in the path of God's commandments (Ps. 119:35). It is an earnest petition that his heart may be awed by a continual sense of God's majesty, and melted by a realization of His goodness, so that he may see light in God's light, recognizing the evil in things forbidden and the blessedness of the things enjoined. "Quicken Thou me" is a prayer

for vitalizing grace, that he may be taught to profit (Isa. 48:17), for the increasing of his faith, the strengthening of his expectations, the firing of his zeal. It is equivalent to "draw me, we will run after Thee" (Song 1:4).

## **Subjection Under God's Chastisement**

BY nature we are not in subjection. We are born into this world filled with the spirit of insubordination. As the descendants of our rebellious first parents we inherit their evil nature. "Man is born like a wild ass's colt" (Job 11:12). This is very unpalatable and humbling, but nevertheless it is true. As Isaiah 53:6 tells us, "we have turned every one to his own way" and that way is opposition to the revealed will of God. Even at conversion this wild and rebellious nature is not eradicated. A new nature is given, but the old one lusts against it. It is because of this that discipline and chastisement are needed by us, and the great design of these is to bring us into subjection to the Father of Spirits. We shall now attempt two things: explain the meaning of this expression "be in subjection unto the Father," and enforce this with reasons presented in our text.

### **I. The Subjection Designed:**

To be "in subjection unto the Father" is a phrase of extensive import, and it is well that we should understand its various significations.

1. It denotes an acquiescence in God's sovereign right to do with us as he pleases

See Psalm 39:9. "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because Thou didst it." It is the duty of saints to be mute under the rod and silent beneath the sharpest afflictions. But this is only possible as we see

the hand of God in them. If God's hand be not seen in the trial, the heart will do nothing but fret and fume. Read 2 Samuel 16:10, 11. "And the king said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? so let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so? And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now may this Benjamite do it? Let him alone, and let him curse for the Lord hath bidden him." What an example of complete submission to the sovereign will of the Most High was this! David knew that Shimei could not curse him without God's permission.

"This will set my heart at rest,

What My God appoints is best."

But with rare exceptions many chastenings are needed to bring us to this place, and to keep us there.

## **2. It implies a renunciation of Self-Will**

To be in subjection unto the Father presupposes a surrendering and resigning of ourselves to Him. A blessed illustration of this is found in Leviticus 10:1–3, "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord. Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the Lord spake, saying I will be sanctified in them that come nigh Me and before all the people. And Aaron held his peace." They could grow forever by walking in constant communion with God and in obedience to His Word.

Consider the circumstances. Aaron's two sons, most probably intoxicated at the time, were suddenly cut off by Divine judgment. Their father had no warning to prepare him for this trial; yet he "held his peace!" O quarrel not against Jehovah. Be clay in the hands of the



Potter. Take Christ's yoke upon you and learn of Him who was "meek and lowly in heart."

### **3. It signifies an acknowledgement of God's righteousness and wisdom in all His dealings with us**

We must vindicate God. This is what the Psalmist did. "I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right, and that Thou in Faithfulness has afflicted me" (119:75). Let us see to it that Wisdom is ever justified by her children. Let our confession of her be "righteous art Thou, O Lord, and upright are Thy judgments" (Ps. 119:137). Whatever is sent, we must vindicate the Sender of all things. The Judge of all the earth cannot do wrong.

The Babylonian captivity was the severest affliction which God ever brought upon His earthly people during Old Testament times. Yet even then a renewed heart acknowledged God's righteousness in it: "Now therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who keepest covenant and mercy, let not all the trouble seem little before Thee, that hath come upon us, on our kings, on our princes, and on our priests, and on our prophets, and on our fathers, and on all Thy people, since the time of the kings of Assyria unto this day. Howbeit Thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for Thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly." (Neh. 9:32, 33). God's enemies may talk of His injustice; let His children proclaim His righteousness. Because God is good, He can do nothing but what is right and good.

### **4. It includes a recognition of His care and a sense of His love**

There is a sulking submission and there is a cheerful submission. There is a fatalistic submission which takes this attitude—this is inevitable, so I must bow to it; and there is a thankful submission, receiving with gratitude whatever God may be pleased to send us. "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy

statutes" (Ps. 119:71). The Psalmist viewed his chastisements with the eye of faith, and doing so he perceived the love behind them. Remember that when God brings His people into the wilderness it is that they may learn more of His sufficiency; when He casts them into the furnace it is that they may enjoy His presence.

## **5. It involves an active performance of His will**

Submission to the "Father of spirits" is something more than a passive thing. The other meanings to this expression which we have already considered are more or less of a negative character. But there is also a positive and an active side to it as well. To be "in subjection" also means to walk in His precepts and run in the way of His commandments. It means being submissive to His Word, our thoughts being formed and our ways being regulated by it. There is a doing as well as a suffering of God's will. God requires obedience from His children, a performance of duties. When we pray "Thy will be done" something more is meant than a pious acquiescence in the will of the Almighty; it also signifies, May Thy will be performed by me. Subjection unto the Father of spirits, then, is the practical owning of His Lordship.

## **II. Reasons for this Subjection:**

### **1. Because He is our Father**

It is but right and meet that children should be in subjection to their father. How much more so when we have such a Father! There is nothing tyrannical about Him; His commandments "are not grievous?" but are designed for our good. How profoundly thankful we should be that the great God now stands revealed as our "Father!" This is one of the distinctive revelations of the N. T. I very much doubt if Aaron or Eli, Job or David knew God in this relationship; yet they "submitted!" How much more ought we! May grace ever enable us to say with the Saviour, "the cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it!" (John 18:11).

## **2. Because this is the secret of true happiness**

I believe that the force of the last two words in our text are "and be happy." The word "live" or "life" is used in this sense in Deut. 5:23—note "prolong your days" is in addition. Such is its force in Psalm 119:116. It is the fretful, the murmuring and rebellious, who are miserable and wretched. Making the will of God our haven is the true resting place for our hearts. Our lives conformed to His will is the secret of contentment and joy. "Take My yoke upon you and ye shall find rest unto your souls," declared the Saviour. In keeping God's commandments there is great reward. "Great peace have they that love Thy law," said the Psalmist. May the Spirit of God work in all of us; the true spirit of subjection, even though it takes severe chastisement to effect it.

## **That Worthy Name**

"YOURS in the name of Jesus." How many who owe their all, both for time and eternity, to the peerless One, refer thus to Him who was "God manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3:16). It is "Jesus" this and "Jesus" that. But is it becoming for worms of the dust, for sinners, even for sinners saved by grace, to thus speak of Him? Jesus is the Lord of Glory, and surely it is due the dignity and majesty of His person that this be recognized and owned, even in our references to Him in common speech. Those who despise and reject the Saviour speak of Him as "The carpenter," "The Nazarene," as "Jesus." But should those who have been given an "understanding, that we may know Him that is true" (1 John 5:20) ignore His Lordship? In a

word, can we who have been redeemed by His precious blood do less than confess Him as the "Lord Jesus Christ?"

Our modern hymns are largely responsible for the dishonor that is now so generally cast upon "That Worthy Name." And we cannot but raise our voices in loud protest against much of the trash which masquerades under the name of hymns. "There's not a friend like the lowly Jesus" is utterly erroneous and highly akin to blasphemy. There is not a "lowly" Jesus today except the one created by the imagination and sentimentality of the moderns. Instead of being "lowly," the Lord Jesus Christ is seated "on the right hand of the Majesty on High" (Heb. 1:3), from whence He will shortly descend in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that know not God and obey not His gospel (2 Thess. 1:7–8).

Above we have said that the apostles never once addressed our Lord simply as "Jesus." Mark, now, how they did refer to the blessed One. "And Peter answered Him and said, LORD, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water" (Matthew 14:28). "Then came Peter to Him and said, LORD, how oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him?" (Matthew 18:21). "And they were exceeding sorrowful and began everyone of them to say unto Him LORD, is it I?" (Matthew 26:22). "And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, LORD, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them" (Luke 9:54). "And they rose up the same hour and returned to Jerusalem and found the eleven gathered together and them that were with them, saying, the LORD is risen indeed" (Luke 24:33–34). "Thomas said unto Him LORD, we know not whither Thou goest" (John 14:5). "Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, it is the LORD" (John 21:7).

# Tithing

## Part I

THERE are few subjects on which the Lord's own people are more astray than on the subject of giving. They profess to take the Bible as their own rule of faith and practice, and yet in the matter of Christian finance, the vast majority have utterly ignored its plain teachings and have tried every substitute the carnal mind could devise; therefore it is no wonder that the majority of Christian enterprises in the world today are handicapped and crippled through the lack of funds. Is our giving to be regulated by sentiment and impulse, or by principle and conscience? That is only another way of asking, Does God leave us to the spirit of gratitude and generosity, or has He definitely specified His own mind and particularized what portion of His gifts to us are due to Him in return? Surely God has not left this important matter without fully making known His will! The Bible is given to be a lamp unto our feet and therefore He cannot have left us in darkness regarding any obligation or privilege in our dealings with Him or His with us.

## Tithing in the Old Testament

At a very early date in the history of our race God made it known that a definite proportion of the saint's income should be devoted to Him who is the Giver of all. There was a period of twenty-five centuries from Adam until the time that God gave the law to Israel at Sinai, but it is a great mistake to suppose that the saints of God in those early centuries were left without a definite revelation, without a knowledge of God's will regarding their obligations to Him, and of the great blessings which resulted from a faithful performance of their duties. As we study carefully the book of Genesis we find clear traces of a primitive revelation, an indication of God's mind to His people long before the system of legislation that was given at Sinai (see Gen. 18:19); and that primal revelation seems to have centered about

three things: 1. The offering of sacrifices to God. 2. The observance of the Sabbath. 3. The giving of tithes.

While it is perfectly true that today we are unable to take the Bible and place our finger upon any positive enactment or commandment from God that His people, in those early days, should either offer sacrifices to Him or keep the Sabbath or give the tithe (there is no definite "Thus saith the Lord" recorded concerning any one of these three things), nevertheless, from what is recorded we are compelled to assume that there must have been such a commandment given: compare Genesis 26:5.

### **The Offering of Sacrifices to God**

Take first of all the presenting of sacrifices to God. Is it thinkable that man would ever have presented blood to Deity if he had never first received a command to so do? Do you imagine it would ever have occurred to the human mind itself to have brought a bleeding animal to the great Creator? And yet we find in the very earliest times that Abel, Noah, Abraham, presented bleeding offerings unto Jehovah—clearly presupposing that God had already made it known that such was His will for His creatures: that the Most High required just such an offering: see Hebrews 11:4 and compare Romans 10:17.

### **The Sabbath**

Take again the Sabbath. There is little in the early pages of Scripture to directly show us that God Himself appointed one day in seven, and that He made it a law that all of His creatures should so observe it; and yet there are clear indications that such must have been the case, or otherwise we cannot explain what follows. When God gave the ten commandments to Israel at Sinai, in the fourth commandment He did not tell Israel to keep the Sabbath; He commanded them to remember the Sabbath day, which clearly implies two things: that at an earlier date the mind of God concerning the Sabbath had been

revealed, but, that their forefathers had forgotten: see Ezekiel 20:5–8, and compare Exodus 16:27, 28.

## **The Tithe**

The same is true in connection with the tithe. At this day we are unable to go back to the earliest pages of Scripture and put our finger upon a "Thus saith the Lord," a definite commandment where Jehovah specified His will and demanded that His people should render a tenth of all their increase unto Him; and yet as we take up the book of Genesis we cannot account for what is there, unless we presuppose a previous revelation of God's mind and a manifestation of His will upon the point.

In Genesis 14:20 it is written, "And he gave him tithes of all." Abraham gave tithes unto Melchizedek. We are not informed why he did so. We are not told in previous chapters that God had commanded him to do so, but the fact that he did so clearly denotes that he was acting in accordance with God's will and that he was carrying out His revealed mind.

## **The Tithe in Genesis 28:19–22**

We will begin at verse 19 to get the context: "And he called the name of that place Bethel." You remember the circumstances. This was the night when Jacob was fleeing from Esau, a fugitive from home, starting out to Laban's; and that night while he was asleep he had the vision. "And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God: and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto Thee." Here again we have the tithe. Jacob vowed that in return for the Lord's temporal blessings upon him, he would render a tenth in return unto the Lord. We are not told why he selected that percentage; we are not told why he should give a tenth;

but the fact that he did determine so to do, intimates there had previously been a revelation of God's mind to His creatures, and particularly to His people, that one-tenth of their income should be devoted to the Giver of all.

### **The Tithe in the Mosaic Law**

When we come to the Mosaic law, we find that the tithe was definitely and clearly incorporated into it. "And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord. And if a man will at all redeem ought of his tithes, he shall add thereto a fifth part thereof. And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord" (Lev. 27:30–32). Notice the twice-repeated expression concerning the tithe, that it was "holy unto the Lord." That is to say, God reserves to Himself, as His exclusive right, as His own, one-tenth of that which He has given to us. It is "holy" unto the Lord.

This anticipates a point which may have been exercising some minds. When we say that one-tenth of our gross income belongs to the Lord doubtless some are inclined to say that all of our income belongs to Him; that everything we have has been given us by God; that nothing is our own in the full sense of the word, it is all His. This is perfectly true in one sense, but not so in another. In one sense it is true that all of our time belongs to God, that it is not ours, and we shall yet have to give an account of every idle moment; but in another real sense it is also true that God has set apart one-seventh of our time as being holy unto Him. That is to say, it has been set apart for a sacred use; it is not ours to do with as we please. The Sabbath is not a day for doing our own pleasure, it is a day that has been appointed and singled out by God as being peculiarly His—holy unto Him—one-seventh of our time spent in His service. And here in Leviticus 27:30–32 we are told that the tithe is holy unto the Lord. That is to say, one-tenth is not our own personal property at all: it does not belong to us in the



slightest; we have no say-so about it whatsoever it is set apart unto a holy use: it is the Lord's and His alone.

### **Support of the Priestly Family in the Old Testament**

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for the Lord, even a tenth part of the tithes" (Num. 18:25, 26). From this we learn that the support of the priestly family in the Old Testament was not left to the whims of the people, or as to how they "felt led" to give. God did not leave it for them to determine. The support of the priestly family was definitely specified. The priestly family was to derive their support out of one-tenth of all that the other tribes received from their annual increase, and the priests themselves were required to take one-tenth of all out of their portion and present it to the Lord. There were no exceptions to the rule.

Those who have read through the historical books of Scripture know full well how miserably Israel failed to obey this law after they had settled down in the land, how that almost every fundamental precept and statute of the legislation that Jehovah gave to Moses was disregarded by them. But what is very significant is this, that in each great revival of godliness that Jehovah sent unto Israel, tithing is one of the things that is mentioned as being renewed and restored among them.

First of all let us turn to 2 Chronicles 30. This chapter records a great revival that took place in the days of Hezekiah. There had been a time of fearful declension in the reigns of the preceding kings, but in the days of Hezekiah God graciously gave a blessed revival, and in verse 1 we read: "And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, to keep the Passover unto the Lord God of Israel." Things had gotten into such an awful state that

they had not even kept the Passover for several centuries! But when God works a revival one of its most prominent features is to cause His people to return to the written Word. Let us note this carefully. A heaven-sent revival consists not so much in happy feelings and spasmodic enthusiasm and fleshly displays, nor great crowds of people in attendance—those are not the marks of a heaven-sent revival—but when God renews His work of grace in His churches, one of the first things that He does is to cause His people to return to the written Word from which they have departed in their ways and in their practices. This was what happened in the days of Hezekiah. We read that he wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh that they should come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem to keep the Passover unto the Lord God of Israel. Think of them needing "letters!" Now read on to chapter 31, verses 4, 5 and 6, and you will find the tithes mentioned. "Moreover he commanded the people that dwelt in Jerusalem to give the portion of the priests and Levites, that they might be encouraged in the law of the Lord. And as soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel brought in abundance the first fruits of corn, wine, and oil, and honey, and of all the increase of the field; and the tithe of all things brought they in abundantly. And concerning the children of Israel and Judah, they also brought in the tithe of oxen and sheep, and the tithe of holy things which were consecrated unto the Lord their God, and laid them by heaps" (vv. 4–6). Following which, God markedly blest them.

The same thing is true again in the tenth chapter of Nehemiah. It will be remembered that Nehemiah brings us to a later period in the history of Israel. Nehemiah records the return of a small remnant of the people after the nation had been carried away into captivity, after the seventy years in Babylon was over. Then God raised up Cyrus to make a decree permitting those who desired to go back to their own land. In this chapter we find that in the revival of his day, the tithe is also mentioned: "And we cast the lots among the priests, the Levites, and the people, for the wood offering, to bring it into the house of our God, after the houses of our fathers, at times appointed year by

year, to burn upon the altar of the Lord our God, as it is written in the law: And to bring the firstfruits of our ground, and the firstfruits of all fruit of all trees, year by year, unto the house of the Lord: Also the firstborn of our sons, and of our cattle, as it is written in the law, and the firstlings of our herds and of our flocks, to bring to the house of our God, unto the priests that minister in the house of our God: And that we should bring the firstfruits of our dough, and our offerings, and the fruit of all manner of trees, of wine and of oil, unto the priests, to the chambers of the house of our God; and the tithes of our ground unto the Levites, that the same Levites might have the tithes in all the cities of our tillage" (Neh. 10:34–37).

Now turn to the last book of the Old Testament. Malachi brings us to a point still later, and shows us how the remnant that had returned in the days of Nehemiah had also degenerated and deteriorated and had departed from the word of the law of the Lord; and, among other things. note the charges that God brings against Israel in Malachi 3:7, 8. "Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from Mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto Me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return? Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings." How solemn to notice that in the last chapter but one of the Old Testament, we are there taught that those who withheld the "tithe" from Jehovah are charged with having robbed God! Solemn indeed!

### **The Tithe in the New Testament**

Only God has the right to say how much of our income shall be set aside and set apart unto Him. And He has so said clearly, repeatedly, in the Old Testament Scriptures, and there is nothing in the New Testament that introduces any change or that sets aside the teaching of the Old Testament on this important subject.

Christ Himself has placed His approval and set His imprimatur upon the tithe. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye

pay tithes of mint and anise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone" (Matt. 23:23). In that verse Christ is rebuking the scribes and Pharisees because of their hypocrisy. They had been very strict and punctilious in tithing the herbs, but on the other hand they had neglected the weightier matters such as judgment, or justice, and mercy. But while Christ acknowledged that the observance of justice and mercy is more important than tithing—it is a "weightier matter"—while, He says, these they ought to have done, nevertheless He says, these other ye ought not to have left undone. He does not set aside the tithe. He places justice and mercy as being more weighty, but He places His authority upon the practice of tithing by saying, "These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." It is well for us if we by the grace of God have not omitted justice and mercy and faith: it is well if by the grace of God those things have found a place in our midst: but the tithing ought not to have been left undone, and Christ Himself says so.

The second passage to be noted is 1 Corinthians 9:13, 14: "Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." The emphatic words there are, "Even so" in the beginning of the fourteenth verse. The word "tithe" is not found in these two verses but it is most clearly implied. In verse 13 the Holy Spirit reminds the New Testament saints that under the Mosaic economy God had made provision for the maintenance of those who ministered in the temple. Now then, He says, in this New Testament dispensation "Even so" (v. 14)—the same means and the same method are to be used in the support and maintaining of the preachers of the Gospel as were used in supporting the temple and its services of old. "Even so." It was the tithe that supported God's servants in the Old Testament dispensation: "even so" God has ordained, and appointed that His servants in the New Testament dispensation shall be so provided for.

Referring next to 1 Corinthians 16:1 and 2: here again we find the word "tithe" does not actually occur, and yet once more it is plainly implied: the principle of it is there surely enough. "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him." Now what does "laying by" imply? Certainly it signifies a definite predetermined act, rather than a spontaneous impulse, or just acting on the spur of the moment. Let us look at this again. "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store." (v. 2). Why are we told that? Why is it put that way? Why use such an expression as "lay by in store?" Clearly that language points us back to Malachi 3:10. "Bring ye all the tithes into the \_\_\_\_\_" Where? The "storehouse!" That is where the tithes were to be brought. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse." Now what does God say here in Corinthians? "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store." There is a clear reference here to the terms of Malachi 3, but that is not all. Look at it again. "Let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him." That signifies a definite proportion of the income. Not "let every one of you lay by him in store, as he feels led;" it does not say that, nor does it say "let every one of you lay by him in store as he feels moved by the Spirit;" no indeed, it says nothing of the kind. It says, "Let every one ... lay by him as God hath prospered him:" in a proportionate way, according to a percentage basis. Now consider! If my income today is double what it was a year ago and I am not giving any more to the Lord's cause than I gave then, then I am not giving "as the Lord hath prospered:" I am not giving proportionately. But now the question arises, What proportion? What is the proportion that is according to the will of God? "As He hath prospered him." Can one man bring one proportion and another man bring another proportion, and yet both of them obey this precept? Must not all bring the same proportion in order to meet the requirements of this passage? Turn for a moment to 2 Corinthians 8:14: "But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality." Please

note that this verse occurs in the middle of a chapter devoted to the subject of giving, and what is to be observed is, that at the beginning of verse 14 and at the end of it we have repeated the word "equality," which means that God's people are all to give the same proportion of their means and the only proportion that God has specified anywhere in His Word is that of the tenth, or "tithes."

There is one other passage to be looked at, namely Hebrews 7:5 and 6: "And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: But he, whose descent is not counted from them, received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises." (Notice the order: "received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises"). And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. In the seventh chapter of Hebrews the Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul is showing the superiority of Christ's priesthood over the order of the priesthood of the Levites, and one of the proofs of which He establishes the transcendence of the Melchizedek order of the priesthood of Christ was that Abraham, the father of the chosen people, acknowledged the greatness of Melchizedek by rendering tithes to him.

The reference in Hebrews 7 is to what is recorded in Genesis 14, where we have two typical characters brought before us—Melchizedek, a type of Christ in three ways: first, in his person, combining the kingly and the priestly offices; second, a type of Christ in his names, combining righteousness and peace, for "Melchizedek" itself means "peace;" and third, a type of Christ in that he pronounced blessing on Abraham and brought forth bread and wine, the memorials of his death.

But not only was Melchizedek there a type of Christ, but Abraham was also a typical character, a representative character, seen there as the father of the faithful; and we find he acknowledged the priesthood of Melchizedek by giving him a tenth of the spoils which

the Lord had enabled him to secure in vanquishing those kings, and as that is referred to in Hebrews, where the priesthood of Christ and our blessings from our relations to it and our obligation to it are set forth, the fact that Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek as mentioned there, indicates that as Abraham is the father of the faithful, so he left an example for us, his children, to follow—in rendering tithes unto Him of whom Melchizedek was the type. And the beautiful thing in connection with the Scripture is that the last time the tithe is mentioned in the Bible (here in Heb. 7) it links the tithe directly with Christ Himself. All intermediaries are removed. In the Old Testament the tithes were brought to the priests, then carried into the storehouse, but in the final reference in Scripture, the tithe is linked directly with Christ, showing us that our obligations in the matter are concerned directly with the great Head of the Church.

In the above we have only introduced the Scriptures that present God's mind on this matter. In the following section we will deal with the subject in an expository and in an argumentative way.

One evil ever leads to another. God's appointed method for the financing of the work which He has been pleased to place in our hands, is that of tithing—the strict setting aside one-tenth of all we receive, to be devoted to His cause. Where the Lord's people faithfully do this, there is never any shortage or going into debt. Where tithing is ignored there is almost always a deficit, and then the ungodly are asked to help or worldly methods are employed to raise money. If we sow the wind, we must not be surprised if we reap the whirlwind.

## **Part II**

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Mal. 3:10).

Down deep in the heart of every Christian there is undoubtedly the conviction that he ought to tithe. There is an uneasy feeling that this is a duty which has been neglected, or, if you prefer it, a privilege that has not been appropriated. Both are correct. Possibly there are some who soothe themselves by saying, Well, other Christians do not tithe. And maybe there are others who say, But if tithing be obligatory in this present dispensation why are the preachers silent upon the subject? My friends, they are silent on a good many subjects today: that does not prove anything.

In the previous section of this article the attempt was made to show three things: first, that tithing existed among the people of God long before the law was given at Sinai and that in the brief record we have of that early history we learn that Abraham, the father of the faithful, gave tithes unto Melchizedek, the priest of the Most High God, and that Jacob, when he had that revelation from the Lord on his way out to Padan-aram, promised to give a tenth unto God. Second, we saw that when the law was given the tithe was definitely and clearly incorporated in it, but, like almost everything else in that law, Israel neglected it, until, in the days of Malachi, we find Jehovah expressly telling His people that they had robbed Him. In the third place, we found that in the New Testament itself we have both hints and plain teaching that God requires His people to tithe even now, for tithing is not a part of the ceremonial law, it is a part of the moral law. It is not something that has a dispensational limitation, but is something that is binding on God's people in all ages.

Now let us go a step farther. Tithing is even more obligatory on the saints of the New Testament than it was upon God's people in Old Testament days—not equally binding, but more binding, and that for two reasons: first, on the principle of "unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required" (Luke 12:48). The obligations of God's saints today are much greater than the obligations of the saints in Old Testament times, because our privileges and our blessings are greater. As grace is more potent than law, as love is more constraining than fear, as the Holy Spirit is more powerful than



the flesh, so our obligations to tithe are greater, for we have a deeper incentive to do that which is pleasing to God. Listen! The Christian should tithe for the very same reason he keeps all the other commandments of God, and for the same reason he keeps the laws of his country—not because he must do so, but because he desires to do so. As a law abiding citizen in the kingdom of God, he desires to maintain the government of God and to do that which is pleasing in His sight.

Again, in proportion as the priesthood of Christ is superior to the priesthood of Aaron, so are our obligations to render tithes to Him. The Aaronic priesthood was recognized and owned by Israel through their payment of the tithe to them. In the seventh chapter of Hebrews the Holy Spirit has argued the superiority of the priesthood of Christ, which is after the order of Melchizedek, on the fact, or on the basis of the fact rather, that Melchizedek himself received tithes from Abraham. That is the very argument the Holy Spirit uses there to establish the superiority of the Melchizedec order of Christ's priesthood. He appeals to the fact as recorded in Genesis 14, that Melchizedek, who was the type of Christ, received tithes from Abraham, and argues from that that inasmuch as Levi was in the loins of Abraham, therefore the Melchizedek priesthood of Christ is greater than that of Aaron because Abraham himself paid tithes to Melchizedek, who is a type of Christ. Therefore, in proportion to the greater blessings and privileges that we enjoy, we are under deeper obligations to God; and in proportion as Christ's priesthood is superior to that of the Levites, so is our obligation the greater to render tithes unto the Lord today, than that under which His people lived in Old Testament times.

### **Why God Has Appointed Tithing**

In the next place we wish to suggest a few reasons why God has appointed tithing. In the first place, as a constant recognition of the Creator's rights. As our Maker He desires that we should honor Him with one-tenth of our income. In other words, the tenth is the

recognition of His temporal mercies and the owning that He is the Giver of them. It is the acknowledgment that temporal blessings come from Him and are held in trust for Him.

### **Tithing an Antidote Against Covetousness**

Again. We believe that God has appointed tithing as the solution of all financial covetousness, for by nature we are full of covetousness. That is why in the ten commandments God incorporates "Thou shalt not covet." That is why Christ said to His disciples, "Beware of covetousness." And tithing has been appointed by God to deliver us from the spirit of greed, to counteract our innate selfishness; therefore, it has been designed for our blessing for, like all of His commandments, none of them is grievous, but appointed for our own good.

### **Tithing the Solution of Every Financial Problem**

Again. I believe that God has appointed tithing as the solution of every financial problem that can arise in connection with His work. While the children of Israel practiced tithing there was no difficulty in maintaining the system of worship that God had appointed. And if God's people today practiced tithing, there would be an end of all financial straits that are crippling so many Christian enterprises. No church could possibly be embarrassed financially where its members tithed. And I believe that that is the solution of rural church work in thinly populated districts. Wherever you have ten male Christians you have sufficient to support a permanent worker in their midst, for no worker should desire any greater remuneration than the average income of those supporting him. Therefore, if you have ten male Christians giving one-tenth of their income, no matter what it may be, you have sufficient to maintain and sustain a regular worker in their midst. That is God's solution to the missionary problem. Wherever you have ten average male Chinese you have a situation where they ought to be independent and no longer leaning upon the help of God's people at home. It is a scandal and a shame to see

churches in India and in China today that have been in existence fifty years still looking to God's people in Australia and England and America for their financial support. And why is it? Because the teachings of the Word of God have been neglected. It is because they have never been taught the foundation of Christian finance. No wonder the missionary world is calling out today that they are crippled for lack of funds! They need to be taught scriptural finance. That is why God appointed tithing. It is the solution of all financial problems in connection with His work. Where tithing is practiced there will never be any going into debt.

### **Tithing as a Test of Our Faith**

Now then in the fourth place, God has appointed tithing as a test of our faith, and for the nourishing and developing of our faith—especially of the young Christians. Here is a young man who has just started housekeeping. He professes to trust God with the enormous matter of his eternal future. He professes to have confidently left his immortal interests in the hands of God. Well now, dare he trust God with one-tenth of his income for a year? My friends, tithing develops in young Christians the spirit of trusting the Lord in their temporal affairs.

### **Two Objections Anticipated**

Before coming to the next point let us just anticipate two objections. When the subject of tithing is brought before the Lord's people, there are usually a few who are ready to say, Well, I think it is a man's duty to provide for his own household, for his own family. Yes, so do I. Scripture says so. There is nothing wrong in that. I go further. I believe it is perfectly proper for a young Christian man to desire and to seek after an increasing income with which to properly support his growing family, but if he is not a tither he has no guarantee from God that his present income will even be maintained, let alone enlarged. But the tither has that guarantee from God, as we shall yet see, unless our eyes are shut.

And then perhaps there are some who say, I cannot afford to tithe, for I have made some investments which have turned out very badly. Yes, and you are likely to meet with some worse ones if you continue to rob God! My friends, you need Divine guidance in the matter of investing, and God won't give that guidance while you are walking contrary to His revealed will in the matter of church finance. I am fully persuaded that in the vast majority of cases, if not all (this may sound harsh: God's Word is piercing and condemning and rebuking and humbling) that where you have children of God in middle life or in old age, who are in financial straits, it is because they robbed God in their earlier years. Be not deceived: God is not mocked! If they did not handle to His glory and use according to His Word the money He did give them, then they must not be surprised if He withholds from them now: see Jeremiah 5:25! There is a cause for every effect. There is an explanation to all things right here in the Word of God, too.

## **"Proving God"**

Now let us come at closer grips with the text itself. There are three things I wish you to notice carefully. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts" (Mal. 3:10). My friends, that is a startling expression. It is a remarkable expression. God says, "Prove Me." Those words mean this: Place the Almighty on trial (and it would be sin, it would be positively wicked, for any creature to do so unless he was definitely commanded so to do). "Prove Me now herewith"—with the tithe. In other words, our text tells us to put God to the proof, to test Him out and see what He will do. We are bidden to give Him one-tenth of our income and then to see whether He will let us be the loser or not. "Prove Me now herewith." I tell you, my friends, my soul is overwhelmed by the amazing condescension of the Most High to place Himself in such a position. God allows Himself to be placed on trial by us, and tithing is a process of proof. Tithing is a means whereby we can demonstrate in the material realm the existence of God and the fact of His governor-ship over all temporal affairs. If you have any shadow of doubt in your mind and

heart as to whether or not God exists, or as to whether or not He controls all temporal affairs, you can have that doubt removed by an absolute demonstration of the actuality of God's existence and of His control over temporal affairs. How? By regularly, faithfully, systematically giving Him one-tenth of your gross income, and then seeing whether He will let you be the loser or not: proving whether He does honor those who honor Him: proving whether He will allow Himself to be any man's debtor. He says, "Prove Me, prove Me, put Me to the test." You trembling, fearful saints, never mind if your income is only \$1 a day, and you have to scheme and scratch and strain to make both ends meet. Take one-tenth away and devote it to the Lord, and then see if He will remain your debtor. "Prove Me now herewith," He says. Try Me out and see whether I am worthy of your confidence; put Me to the test and see whether I will disappoint your faith. As we said above, God has appointed tithing as a test of faith, for the development of faith; and if the young Christian would only start by proving God in the material realm, testing Him out in His own appointed way, what a confirmation it would be! How it would enable him to trust God in temporal things—which is one of the hardest things that the average Christian finds to do.

### **"The Windows of Heaven" Opened**

Now coming again to the text. Notice the expression, "Prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven." What does He mean by that? "And see if I will not open the windows of heaven." What does He mean? Now Scripture always interprets Scripture. If you will go back to the seventh chapter of Genesis, verses 11 and 12, you will find that identical expression used there, and it explains the force of it here in Malachi 3. Read Genesis 7:11: "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights." Now the same expression that is used in Genesis 7 in connection with the Deluge is used here in Malachi 3 in connection

with the return, the response, the blessings that God has promised to those that honor Him with their substance, by devoting a tithe to His service. In other words, that expression "open the windows of heaven" signifies an abundant outpouring. Now listen! That does not mean an abundant spiritual blessing. It does not mean that at all, for spiritual blessings cannot be purchased. You ask, Can temporal? In one sense, yes. Certainly they can in the sense that God has promised that we shall reap what we have sown; in the sense that He has promised to honor those who honor Him; in the sense that He promised a bountiful return to a bountiful giver. Certainly! Just in the same way that He has promised length of days to those who honor their parents when they are children. That is a blessing that is purchased! Now then, listen! When God has promised to open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing, it is not a spiritual one, it is a temporal one. He promises an increase in your income. Of course He does. Do you suppose Almighty God would be your debtor? Do you suppose the Most High would allow you to be the loser because you are faithful to His Word and obedient to His will and give Him a tenth of your income? Why, of course not. And we say again, the great reason why so many of God's people are poor is because they have been unfaithful with the money that God gave them. They robbed GOD! No wonder they have suffered adversities and misfortunes. No wonder! Some of us need to re-read our Bibles on the subject of the principles and conditions of temporal prosperity. Some need to learn that the God of the New Testament is the God of the Old Testament and that He changes not. God changes not. God does not vary the principles of His government. The God who gave bountiful crops to a people in the Old Testament times who honored Him and kept His Word, is the same God who is on the throne today, and the same God gives bountiful crops and prosperity in business to them who honor Him. But those who meet with financial adversities and financial misfortunes—there is a reason for it; of course there is. The world calls it "bad luck:" they know no better, but we ought to!

### **"Enough and More Than Enough"**

It is very obvious the translators did not know what to do with this text, if you will notice the words they have put in italics. Look at it as it reads (the last part of Mal. 3:10): "I will open the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, that (now leave out the words in italics) not enough." The words in italics are not in the original. They have been supplied by the translators and they had to supply more words in the last clause than were actually there, which shows they did not know what to do with it. The Hebrew as nearly as I can get it in the original means, "there shall be enough and more than enough." That does not vary very much from the rendering of the translators. In other words it means, "The liberal soul shall be made fat." Turn for a moment to 2 Chronicles 31 and notice now the tenth verse: "And Azariah the chief priest of the house of Zadok answered him, and said, Since the people began to bring the offerings into the house of the Lord, we have had enough to eat, and have left plenty: for the Lord hath blessed His people; and that which is left is this great store." Now if you read the preceding verses you will find it was when the tithe was restored in that revival in the days of Hezekiah; and here we are told that since the people brought their offerings (their tithes) into the Lord's house there was not only enough, but there was more than enough; there was a great store left over! It is ever thus when we faithfully honor God with our substance! John Bunyan wrote:

"There was a man,

Some called him mad;

The more he gave,

The more he had."

### **Practical Suggestions**

In closing I want to give you a few practical suggestions. They are very important and they are very simple. In the matter of tithing, Christian friends, be just as strict, and careful and systematic as you

are in business matters, in fact, even more so, for it is not the world's money and it is not your own, but it is the Lord's money which is involved. Now do not trust to memory. There are some Christians who say, Well, I have never bothered to keep any records, but I am quite sure that if I had done so, I should find that I had given at least a tenth to the Lord. Some of you might be surprised to find—if you did keep a record and looked it up—how much short of the tenth you had given!

In the first place I would suggest this. Form the habit of taking out one-tenth from all the money that you receive either as wages or gifts. Subtract one-tenth and put it into a separate bag, or box, or purse. That is what it means when it says in 1 Corinthians 16, "laying by in store." And that box or purse is the Lord's, not yours. It is holy unto Him. Form the habit of taking out a tenth from all you receive, putting it into a separate compartment belonging to the Lord.

In the second place, get a small book, a cheap notebook, and on one page put down all your receipts (it will not take some of you very long—one entry, I suppose, at the end of the week) and on the other page put down the disbursement of God's "tithe."

And then in the third place make it a matter of definite prayer to God to guide you in the disbursement as to where He would have you use the money that belongs to Him. It is not yours; it is His; for remember you have not even begun to give at all until you have first paid your tithe. Giving comes in afterwards. The tithe is the Lord's. That is His. That is not yours to give at all; that belongs to the Creator. You have not begun to give until you have done your tithing.

### **A Testimony**

Now in the last place I just want to quote an extract clipped from a religious magazine published in England. In that magazine there has been going on for some time a correspondence, a number of letters, and the subject has been the unemployment in England among the



Lord's people. Here is the testimony of one who has written to that paper:

"Twenty-five years ago, being influenced by reading the life of George Muller, I was led to give a tenth of my income to the Lord. I think I was earning \$1.50 a week at the time. The first few years I found it sometimes a sacrifice. One shilling out of ten seemed a lot. But it became such a habit with me to divide at once and put away the Lord's tenth that for years it has been no sacrifice. Now what is the result? This: I have proved the truth that Him that honoureth Me I will honor. All through the war, and since, I have experienced no poverty. Though a shop assistant and now over forty (it is a woman that is writing) I have been away ill only one week in twenty-five years. What makes it even more wonderful is that after twenty I became slightly deaf and this has increased (and they do not want deaf assistants to wait on people in a shop, do they?) and yet, praise the Lord, I am still holding my situation. When I read of so many other sad cases of unemployment I praise the Lord for His mercy to me."

One testimony like that is worth twenty arguments. And, my friends, I want to bear my own witness that after twenty years' experience and observation I have proven the truth of our text that God does open the windows of heaven and that He does give more than enough in response to simple obedience to Him.

"Prove Me now herewith." That is God's challenge to you. God dares you to test Him out in the financial realm. You profess to have faith in Him, to trust your soul into His keeping; now He challenges you to see whether you have faith enough to just trust Him with one-tenth of your income for a year, for mind you, in the case of the children of Israel it was a matter of waiting very nearly twelve months for any returns. They were farmers. You test the Lord out for twelve months. You wait a reasonable length of time, and then see whether He lets you be the loser or not. "Prove Me now herewith." That is God's challenge to your faith. O brethren and sisters, do so and see if He

will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out such a blessing that there shall be "enough and more than enough."

## **True Christian Love**

LOVE is the Queen of the Christian graces. It is a holy disposition given to us when we are born again by God. It is the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. True spiritual love is characterized by meekness and gentleness, yet it is vastly superior to the courtesies and kindnesses of the flesh.

We must be careful not to confuse human sentimentality, carnal pleasantries, human amiability and affability with true spiritual love. The love God commands, first to Himself and then to others, is not human love. It is not the indulgent, self-seeking love which is in us by nature. If we indulgently allow our children to grow up with little or, no Scriptural discipline, Proverbs plainly says we do not love them, regardless of the human sentimentality and affection we may feel for them. Love is not a sentimental pampering of one another with a loose indifference as to our walk and obedience before the Lord. Glossing over one another's faults to ingratiate ourselves in their esteem is not spiritual love.

The true nature of Christian love is a righteous principle which seeks the highest good of others. It is a powerful desire to promote their welfare. The exercise of love is to be in strict conformity to the revealed will of God. We must love in the truth. Love among the brethren is far more than an agreeable society where views are the same. It is loving them for what we see of Christ in them, loving them for Christ's sake.

The Lord Jesus Himself is our example. He was not only thoughtful, gentle, self-sacrificing and patient, but He also corrected His mother, used a whip in the Temple, Severely scolded His doubting disciples, and denounced hypocrites. True spiritual love is above all faithful to God and uncompromising towards all that is evil. We cannot declare, 'Peace and Safety' when in reality there is spiritual decay and ruin!

True spiritual love is very difficult to exercise because it is not our natural love. By nature we would rather love sentimentally and engender good feelings. Also many times true spiritual love is not received in love, but is hated as the Pharisees hated it. We must pray that God will fill us with His love and enable us to exercise it without dissimulation toward all.

## **Vile!**

WE are rather afraid that its title will deter some from reading this article: we hope it will not be so. True, it does not treat of a popular theme, nay one which is now very rarely heard in the pulpit; nevertheless, it is a scriptural one. Fallen man is "vile," so vile that it has been rightly said "he is half brute, half devil." Nor does such a description exceed the truth. Man is "born like a wild ass's colt" (Job 11:12), and he is "taken captive by the devil at his will" (2 Tim. 2:26). Perhaps the reader is ready to reply, Ah, that is man in his unregenerate state, but it is far otherwise with the regenerate. From one viewpoint that is true; from another, it is not so.

Did not the Psalmist acknowledge, "So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was a beast before Thee" (Ps. 73:22) unteachable, untractable, kicking against God's providential dealings, not behaving like a man,

much less like a saint! Again, did not Agur confess, "Surely I am more brutish than any man" (Prov. 30:2). True, we never hear such lamentations as these from those who claim to have received their "Pentecost" or "second blessing," nor from those who boast they are living "the victorious life." But to those who are painfully conscious of the "plague" of their own heart, such words may often describe their case. Only recently we received a letter from a dear brother in Christ, saying "the vanity and corruption that I find within, which refuses to be kept in subjection, is so strong at times that it makes me cry out 'my wounds do stink and are corrupt.' "

Does the reader object against our appropriation of the Psalms and Proverbs, and say, We in this New Testament age occupy much higher ground than those did. Probably you have often been told so by men, but are you sure of it from the Word of God? Listen, then, to the groan of an eminent Christian: "I am carnal, sold under sin" (Rom. 7:14). Do you never feel thus, my reader? Then we are sincerely sorry for you. As to the other part of the description of fallen man, "half devil:" did not Christ say to regenerate Peter, "Get thee behind Me, Satan: thou art an offense unto Me" (Matthew 16:23)? And are there not times when writer and reader fully merits the same reproof? Speaking for myself, I bow my head with shame, and say, Alas there is.

"Behold, I am vile" (Job 40:4). This was not said by Cain in a remorseful moment after his murder of Abel, nor by Judas after he had betrayed the Saviour into the hands of His enemies; instead, it was the utterance of one of whom God said, "There is none like him in the earth, a perfect (sincere) and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil" (Job 1:8). Was Job's language the effect of extreme melancholy, induced by his terrible afflictions? If not, was he justified in using such strong language of self-deprecation? If he was, are Christians today warranted in echoing the same?

In order to arrive at the correct answer to the above questions, let us ask another: when was it that Job said, "Behold, I am vile?" Was it

when he first received tidings of his heavy losses? No, for then he exclaimed, "the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (1:21). Was it when his friends reasoned with and reproved him? No, for then he vindicated himself and boasted of his goodness. Then when was it that Job declared "Behold, I am vile?" It was when the Lord appeared to him and gave him a startling revelation of His own wondrous perfections! It was when he stood in the all-penetrating light of God's immaculate holiness and was made to realize something of His mighty power.

Ah, when a soul is truly brought into the presence of the living God, boasting ceases, our comeliness is turned into corruption (Dan. 10:8), and we cry, "Woe is me! for I am undone" (Isa. 6:5). When God makes to the soul a personal revelation of His wondrous perfections, that individual is effectually convinced of his own wretchedness. The more we are given to discern the ineffable glory of the Lord, the more will our self-complacency wither. It is in God's light, and in that only, "we see light" (Ps. 36:9). When He shines into our understandings and hearts, and brings to light "the hidden things of darkness," we perceive the utter corruption of our nature, and are abominable in our own eyes. While we measure ourselves by our fellows, we shall, most likely, think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think (Rom. 12:3); but when we measure ourselves by the holy requirements of God's nature, we cry "I am dust and ashes" (Gen. 18:27). True repentance changes a man's opinion of himself.

Is, then, a Christian today warranted in saying "Behold, I am vile?" Not as faith views himself united to the One who is "altogether lovely;" but as faith discerns, in the light of the Word, what he is by nature, what he is in and of himself he may. Not that he is to hypocritically adopt such language in order to gain the reputation of great humility; nay, such an utterance is only to be found upon our lips as it is the feeling expression of our hearts: particularly is it to be owned before God, when we come to Him in contrition and in confession. Yet is it also to be acknowledged before the saints, even as the apostle Paul cried publicly, "O wretched man that I am!"

(Rom. 7:24). It is part of our testimony to own (before those who fear the Lord) what God has revealed to us.

"Behold; I am vile:" such is the candid and sorrowful confession of the writer.

1.) I am vile in my imaginations: O what scum rises to the surface when lusts boil within me. What filthy pictures are visioned in "the chambers of my imagery" (Ezek. 8:12). What unlawful desires run riot within. Yes, even when engaged in meditating upon the holy things of God, the mind wanders and the fancy becomes engaged with what is foul and fetid. How often does the writer have to acknowledge before God that "from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness" in him, "but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores" (Isa. 1:6). Nightly does he avail himself of that Fountain which has been opened "for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. 13:1).

2.) I am vile in my self-will: How fretful am I when God blows upon my plans and thwarts my desires. What surgings of rebellion within my wicked breast when God's providences displease. Instead of lying placidly as clay in the Potter's hand, how often do I act like the restive colt, which rears and kicks, refusing to be held in with bit and bridle, determined to have my own way. Alas, alas, how very little have I learned of Him who was "meek and lowly in heart." Instead of "the flesh" in me being purified, it has putrefied; instead of its resistance to the spirit weakening, it appears to be stronger each year. O that I had the wings of a dove, that I could fly away from myself.

3.) I am vile in my religious pretenses: How often I am anxious to make "a fair show in the flesh" and be thought highly of by others. What hypocrisies have I been guilty of in seeking to gain a reputation for spirituality. How frequently have I conveyed false impressions to others, making them suppose it was far otherwise within me than was actually the case. What pride and self-righteousness have

swayed me. And of what insincerity have I, at times, been guilty of in the pulpit: praying to the ears of the congregation instead of to God, pretending to have liberty when my own spirit was bound, speaking of those things which I had not first felt and handled for myself. Much, very much cause has the writer to take the leper's place, cover his lips, and cry "Unclean, unclean!"

4.) I am vile in my unbelief: How often am I still filled with doubts and misgivings. How often do I lean unto my own understanding instead of upon the Lord. How often do I fail to expect from God (Mark 11:24) the things for which I ask Him. When the hour of testing comes, only too frequently are past deliverances forgotten. When troubles assail, instead of looking off unto the things unseen, I am occupied with the difficulties before me. Instead of remembering that with God all things are possible, I am ready to say, "Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?" (Ps. 78:19). True it is not always thus, for the Holy Spirit graciously keeps alive the faith which He has placed within; but when He ceases to work, and a trial is faced, how often do I give my Master occasion to say, "How is it that ye have no faith?" (Mark 4:40).

Reader, how closely does your experience correspond with the above? Is it true that, "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man" (Prov. 27:19)? Have we been describing some of the symptoms of your diseased heart? Have you ever owned before God "Behold, I am vile?" Do you bear witness to the humbling fact before your brethren and sisters in Christ? It is comparatively easy to utter such words, but do you feel them? Does the realization of this truth make you "blush" (Ezra 9:6) and groan in secret? Have you such a person and painful sense of your vileness that often, you feel thoroughly unfit to draw nigh unto a holy God? If so:

1. You have abundant cause to be thankful to God that his Holy Spirit has shown you something of your wretched self, that He has not kept you in ignorance of your woeful state, that He has not left you in that gross spiritual darkness that enshrouds millions of professing

Christians. Ah my stricken brother, if you are groaning over the ocean of corruption within, and feel utterly unworthy to take the sacred name of Christ upon your polluted lips, then you should be unfeignedly thankful that you belong not to that great multitude of self-complacent and self-righteous religionists of whom it is written, "They were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore shall they fall among them that fall: in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down" (Jer. 8:12). Much cause have you to praise the God of all grace that He anointed your sin-blinded eyes, and that now, in His sight, you are able to see a little of your hideous deformities, and cry "I am black" (Song of Sol. 1:5).

2. You have abundant cause to walk softly before God. Must not the realization of our vileness truly humble us before Him, make us smite upon our breast, and cry "God be merciful to me, the sinner!" Yes, such a prayer is as suited to the mature saint as it was when first convicted of his lost estate, for he is to continue as he began: Colossians 2:6, Revelation 2:5. But alas, how quickly does the apprehension of our vileness leave us! How frequently does pride again dominate us. For this reason we are bidden to, "Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged" (Isa. 51:1). Beg God to daily show you your vileness that you may walk humbly before Him.

3. You have abundant cause to marvel at the surpassing love of the Triune God towards you. That the Eternal Three should have set Their heart upon such a wretch is indeed the wonder of all wonders. That God the Father should foreknow and foresee every sin of which you would be guilty in thought and word and deed, and yet have loved thee "with an everlasting love" must indeed fill you with astonishment. That God the Son should have laid aside the robes of His glory and be made in the likeness of sin's flesh, in order to redeem one so foul and filthy as me, was truly a love "that passeth knowledge." That God the Holy Spirit should take up His residence and dwell in the heart of one so vile, only proves that where sin abounded grace did much more abound. "Unto Him that loved us,



and washed us from our sins in His own blood; and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father: to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen" (Rev. 1:5, 6).

## **What Ought to Be Our Attitude Toward the Sovereignty of God?**

IT HAS been well said that "true worship is based upon recognized greatness, and greatness is superlatively seen in Sovereignty, and at no other footstool will men really worship." In the presence of the Divine King upon His throne even the seraphim 'veil their faces.' Divine sovereignty is not the sovereignty of a tyrannical Despot, but the exercised pleasure of One who is infinitely wise and good! Because God is infinitely wise He cannot err, and because He is infinitely righteous He will not do wrong. Here then is the preciousness of this truth. The mere fact itself that God's will is irresistible and irreversible fills me with fear, but once I realize that God wills only that which is good. My heart is made to rejoice. Here then is the final answer to the question (concerning our attitude toward God's sovereignty)—What ought to be our attitude toward the sovereignty of God? The becoming attitude for us to take is that of godly fear, implicit obedience, and unreserved resignation and submission. But not only so: the recognition of the sovereignty of God, and the realization that the Sovereign Himself is my Father, ought to overwhelm the heart and cause me to bow before Him in adoring worship. At all times I must say, "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in Thy sight."

# **Worship**

ONE of the most solemn and soul-destroying fallacies of the day is that unregenerate souls are capable of worshipping God. Probably one chief reason why this error has gained so much ground is because of the wide-spread ignorance which obtains concerning the ...

## **Real Nature of True Worship**

People imagine that if they attend a religious service, are reverent in their demeanor, join in the singing of the hymns, listen respectfully to the preacher, and contribute to the collection, they have really worshipped God. Poor deluded souls, a delusion which is helped forward by the priest-craft and preacher-graft of the day. Over against this delusion are the words of Christ in John 4:24, which are startling in their plainness and pungency: "God is Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

## **Vanity of False Worship**

"Well hath Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. Howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Mark 7:6, 7). These solemn words were spoken by the Lord Jesus to the scribes and Pharisees. They had come to Him with the complaint that His disciples did not conform to their traditions and practices in connection with ceremonial washings and cleansings. In His reply, Christ exposed the worthlessness of their religion ...

These scribes and Pharisees were raising the question of the ceremonial "washing of hands," while their hearts, remained filthy before God. Ah, dear reader, the traditions of the elders may be diligently attended to, their religious ordinances strictly observed, their doctrines devoutly upheld, and yet the conscience had never been searched in the presence of God as to the question of sin. The fact is that religion is one of the greatest hindrances against the truth of God blessing men's souls.

God's truth addresses us on the ground that God and man are as far apart as sin is from holiness: therefore his first great need is cleansing and reconciliation. But "religion" proceeds on the assumption that depraved and guilty men may have dealings with God, may approach unto Him, yea, worship and serve Him. The world over, human religion is based on the fallacy that fallen and sinful man can have dealings with God. Religion is the principal means used by Satan to blind men to their true and terrible condition. It is the devil's anesthetic for making lost sinners feel comfortable and easy in their guilty distance from God. It hides God from them in His real character—as a holy God who is of "purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity" (Hab. 1:13).

A flood of light is thrown upon this side of our subject if we weigh attentively the awful incident recorded in Matthew 4:8, 9. "Again, the devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto Him, All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me." The devil seeks worship. How few in Christendom are aware of this, or realize that the principal activities of the enemy are carried on in the religious sphere!

Listen to the testimony of Deuteronomy 32:17—"They sacrificed unto demons, not to God; to gods whom they knew not." That refers to Israel in the early days of their apostasy. Listen again to 1 Corinthians 10:20, "But I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils & demons, and not to God." What

light does that cast on the idolatries and abominations of heathendom! Listen again to 2 Corinthians 4:4, "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." This means that Satan is the inspirer and director of the world's religion. Yes, he seeks worship, and is the chief promoter of all false worship.

### **The Exclusiveness of True Worship**

"God is Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). This "must" is final; there is no alternative, no choice in the matter. It is not the first time that we have this very emphatic word in John's Gospel. There are two notable verses where it occurs previously. "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John 3:7). "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the son of man be lifted up" (John 3:14). Each of these three "musts" is equally important and unequivocal. The first has reference to God the Spirit, for He it is who regenerates. The second refers to the work of God the Son, for He it is who made atonement for sin. The third has reference to God the Father, for He it is that seeketh worshippers (John 4:23). This order cannot be changed; it is only those who have been born of the Spirit, and who are resting upon the atoning work of Christ, that can worship the Father.

To quote again the words of Christ to the religionists in His day, "This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. Howbeit in vain do they worship Me." Ah, my reader the worldling may be a generous philanthropist, a sincere religionist, a zealous denominationalist, a devout churchman, a regular communicant, yet is he no more capable of worshipping God than a dumb man is of singing. Cain tried it, and failed. He was not irreligious, He "brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord" (Gen. 4:3). But "unto Cain and his offering He had not

respect. Why? Because he refused to own his undone condition and his need of an atoning sacrifice.

In order to worship God, God must be known: and He cannot be known apart from Christ. Much may be predicated and believed about a theoretical or a theological "God," but He cannot be known apart from the Lord Jesus. Said he, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6). Therefore it is a sinful make-believe, a fatal delusion, a wicked farce, to cause unregenerate people to imagine that they can worship God. While the sinner remains away from Christ, he is the "enemy" of God, a child of wrath. How then can he worship God? While he remains in his unregenerate state he is "dead in trespasses and sins;" How then can he worship God.

What has just been said above is almost universally repudiated today, and repudiated in the name of Religion. And, we repeat, religion is the principal instrument used by the devil in deceiving souls, for it insists—whether it be the "Buddhist religion," or the "Christian religion"—that man, yet in his sins, can have dealings with and approach unto the thrice holy God. To deny this is to stir up the enmity and call down upon one so doing the opposition of all mere religionists. Yes, it was that very thing which brought down upon Christ the merciless hatred of the religionists of His day. He refuted their claims, exposed their hypocrisy, and so incurred their wrath.

To the "chief priests and the elders of the people" (Matthew 21:23), Christ said, "The publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you" (Matthew 21:31), and at the close of his discourse it is added, "They sought to lay hands on Him" (v. 46). They attended to outward things, but their inward state was neglected. And why was it that the "publicans and harlots" entered the kingdom of God before them? Because no religious pretensions stood in their way; they had no self-righteous profession to maintain at all costs, no pious reputation to keep up. Under the preaching of the Word they were

convicted of their lost condition, so took their true place before God and were saved. Only such can be worshippers.

### **The Nature of True Worship**

"God is Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." To worship "in spirit" stands contrasted from the fleshly rites and imposing ceremonies of Judaism. To worship "in truth" stands opposed to the superstitions and idolatrous delusions of the heathen. To worship God "in spirit and in truth" means in a manner suited to the full and final revelation which God has now made of Himself in Christ. It means to worship spiritually and truly. It means giving to Him the homage of an enlightened understanding and the love of a regenerated heart.

To worship "in spirit and in truth" stands opposed to a carnal worship which is external and spectacular. It bars out all worshipping of God with the senses. We cannot worship Him who is "Spirit" by gazing on ornate architecture and stained glass windows, by listening to the peals of a costly organ, by smelling sweet incense or "telling" of beads. We cannot worship God with our eyes and ears, or nose and hands, for they are "flesh" not "spirit." "Must worship in spirit and in truth" excludes everything that is of the natural man.

To worship "in spirit and in truth" bars out all social worship. The soul is the seat of the emotions, and very much of the so-called worship of present-day Christendom is only social. Touching anecdotes, stirring appeals, thrilling oratory of a religious character, are all calculated to produce this very thing. Beautiful anthems by a well-trained choir, rendered in such a way as to move to tears or to ecstasies of joy may stir the soul, but will not and cannot affect the inner man.

True worship is the adoration of a redeemed people, occupied with God Himself. The unregenerate look upon "worship" as an obeisance which God exacts from them, and which gives them no joy as they

seek to proffer it. Far different is it with those who have been born from above and redeemed with precious blood. The first time the word "redeemed" occurs in Scripture is in Exodus 15, and it is there also, for the first time, we behold a people "singing," worshipping, adoring God Himself. There, on the far shores of the Red Sea, that Nation which had been brought out from the house of bondage and delivered from all their enemies united in praising Jehovah.

"Worship" is the new nature in the believer stirred into activity, turning to its Divine and heavenly Source. It is that which is "spirit" (John 3:6) turning to Him who is "Spirit." It is that which is the "workmanship" of Christ (Eph. 2:10) turning to Him who re-created us. It is the children spontaneously and gratefully turning in love to their Father. It is the new heart crying out, "Thanks be to unto God for His unspeakable Gift" (2 Cor. 9:15). It is sinners, cleansed by blood, exclaiming "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ" (Eph. 1:3). That is worship; assured of our acceptance in the Beloved, adoring God for what He has made Christ to be unto us, and what He has made us to be in Christ.

It is worthy of our closest attention to observe that the only time the Lord Jesus ever spoke on the subject of Worship was in John 4. Both Matthew 4:9 and Mark 7:6, 7, were quotations from the Old Testament. It should indeed stir our hearts to discover that the sole occasion when Christ made any direct and personal observations on worship was when He was speaking, not to a religious man like Nicodemus, nor even to His apostles, but to a woman, an adulteress, a Samaritan—a semi-heathen! Truly God's ways are different from ours.

To that poor woman our blessed Lord declared, "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him" (John 4:23). And how did the Father "seek" worshippers? Does not the whole of the context supply the answer? At the beginning of the

chapter the Son of God is seen taking a journey (vv. 3, 4). His object was to seek out one of His lost sheep, to reveal Himself to a soul that knew Him not, to wean her from the lusts of the flesh, and fill her heart with His satisfying grace; and this, in order that she might meet the longings of Divine love and give in return that praise and adoration which only a saved sinner can give.

Who can fail to see in the journey which He took to Sychar's well in order to meet that desolate soul and win her to Himself, that we have a most blessed adumbration of that still greater journey which God's Son took—leaving heaven's peace and bliss and light, coming down to this world of strife and darkness and wretchedness. He came here seeking sinners, not only to save them from sin and death but to give them to drink in and enjoy the love of God as no angel can enjoy it; that from hearts overflowing with the consciousness of their indebtedness to the Saviour and His dear Son for them, they, realizing and accepting His superlative excellency, might pour forth unto Him the sweet incense of praise. That is worship, and the remembrance of God's seeking love and Christ's redeeming blood are the springs of it.

One of the most blessed and beautiful examples recorded in the New Testament of what worship is, is found in John 12:2, 3. "There they made Him a supper, and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with Him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment." As another has said, "She came not to hear a sermon, though the Prince of preachers was there. To sit at His feet and hear His word was not now her object, blessed as that was in its proper place. She came not to meet the saints though precious saints were there; but fellowship with them, though blessed, was not now her object. She came not, after a week's toil, for refreshment; though none knew better the blessed springs of refreshment which are in Him. No, she came to pour out upon Him that which she had long treasured up, which was the most valuable of all her earthly



possessions. She thought not of Simon the leper, sitting there a cleansed man; she passed by the apostles; so, too, Martha and Lazarus, her sister and brother in the flesh and in Christ. The Lord Jesus filled her thoughts: He had won her heart and now absorbed all her affections. She had eyes for no one but Him. Adoration and homage were now her one thought to pour out her heart's devotion before Him." That is worship.

The subject of worship is most important, yet it is one upon which many have but the haziest ideas. We read in Matthew 2, that the wise men" were laden with treasures" to present to Christ (v. 11). They brought to Him rich "gifts." That is what worship is. It is not a coming to receive from Him, but to render unto Him. It is the pouring out of the heart's adoration. O that we may bring to the Saviour "gold and frankincense and myrrh," i.e. adoring Him because of His Divine glory, His moral perfections, His fragrant death.

The object of worship is God: and the inspirer of worship is God. Only that can satisfy God which He has Himself produced. "Lord ... Thou also hast wrought all our works in us" (Isa. 26:12). It is only as the Lamb is exalted in the power of the Spirit that saints are made to cry, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour" (Luke 1:46, 47). The general and conspicuous absence of that worship which is "in the spirit and in truth" is due to an order of things over which the Spirit of God does not preside, where the world, the flesh and the devil have free play. But even in circles where worldliness, in its grosser forms at least, is not tolerated, and where outward orthodoxy is still preserved, there is, almost always, a noticeable absence of that unction, that freedom, that joyousness, which are inseparable from the spirit of true worship. Why is this? Why is it that in numbers of churches, meeting houses, Brethren assemblies, where the letter of God's Word is ministered, that we now so rarely find those overflowings of heart, those spontaneous outbursts of adoration, that "sacrifice of praise" which should ever be found among God's people? Ah, is the answer

hard to find? It is because there is a grieved spirit in the midst. This, my brethren, is the reason why there is so little living, refreshing, worship-producing ministry of Christ today.

### **Hindrances to Worship**

What is worship? Praise? Yea, more; it is the adoration flowing forth from a heart which is fully assured of the excellency of Him before whom it bows, expressing its profoundest gratitude for His unspeakable Gift. There it is at once apparent that the first hindrance to worship in a child of God is lack of assurance. Whilst I entertain doubts as to my acceptance in Christ, as long as I remain in a state of uncertainty as to whether my sins were atoned for at Calvary, I cannot, really, praise and adore Him for His death for me; I cannot actually say, "my Beloved is mine, and I am His." It is one of the favorite devices of the enemy to keep Christians in the "Slough of Despond," his object being that Christ should not receive from them the homage of their hearts ...

Another great hindrance to worship is failure to judge ourselves by the Holy Word of God. The priests of Israel did not remain at the brazen altar in the outer court of the tabernacle. It needs to be pointed out that before they passed into the holy place, there to burn incense, they were required to wash at the laver. Approach unto the laver of brass speaks of the believer's unsparing judgment of and upon himself (cf. 1 Cor. 11:31). The using of its water points to the application of the Word to all our works and ways.

Now just as the sons of Aaron were required under pain of death (Ex. 30:20) to wash at the laver before they entered the holy place to burn incense, so must the Christian today have the defilements of the way removed before he can suitably approach unto God as a worshipper. Failure at this point brings in death, that is, I remain under the contaminating power of dead things. The defilements of the way are the result of my passing through a world which is "alienated from the life of God" (Eph 4:18). If these are not removed, then I continue

under the power of death in a spiritual way, and worship becomes impossible. This is brought out fully in John 13 where the Lord said to Peter, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." How many Christians there are who, through failure to place their feet in the hands of Christ for cleansing, are hindered from exercising their priestly functions and privileges.

One other fatal hindrance to worship needs to be mentioned, and that is worldliness, which means the things of the world obtaining a place in the Christian's affections, his ways becoming "conformed to this world" (Rom. 12:2). A solemn example of this is found in the history of Abraham. When God called him to leave Chaldea and go into Canaan, he compromised: he went only as far as Haran (Gen. 11:31; Acts 7:4) and settled down there. Haran was Half-way House, the wilderness lying between it and the borders of Canaan. Later Abraham fully responded to God's call and entered Canaan, and there "he builded an altar [which speaks of worship] unto the Lord" (Gen. 12:7). But there is no mention of his building any "altar" during the years he dwelt in Haran! O how many children of God today are compromising, dwelling at Half-way House, and in consequence they are not worshippers. O that the Spirit of God may so work upon and within all of us that the language of our lives, as well as that of our hearts and lips, may be "Worthy is the Lamb"—worthy of whole-hearted consecration, worthy of unstinted devotion, worthy of that love which is manifested by keeping His commandments, worthy of real worship. May it be so for His name's sake.

## **The Wrong Emphasis!**

ONCE a man makes the conversion of sinners his prime design and all-consuming end and NOT THE GLORY OF GOD, he is exceedingly

apt to adopt a wrong course. Instead of striving to preach the Truth in all its purity, he will tone it down so as to make it more palatable to the unregenerate. Impelled by a single force, moving in one fixed direction, his object is to make conversion easy; and therefore, favorite passages (like John 3:16) are dwelt upon incessantly, while others are ignored or pared away. It inevitably reacts upon his own theology; and various verses in the Word are shunned, if not repudiated. What place will he give in his thoughts to such declarations as, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" (Jer. 13:23); "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw Him" (John 6:44); "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you" (John 15:14)?

He will be sorely tempted to modify the truth of God's sovereign election, of Christ's particular redemption, of the imperative necessity for the super-natural operations of the Holy Spirit.

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