

# DEFINITIONS OF DOCTRINE

## VOLUME II

Sin - Salvation - Service

by

**Claude Duval Cole**

## **Information about the publication of C.D. Cole's writings**

The Bryan Station Baptist Church has begun the task of printing the writings of Claude Duvall Cole. His first volume of "Definitions of Doctrine" was a great book and was printed about 1944. It has been out of print for many years. This book is a great doctrinal work which exalts our Lord as very few books do. It will be a blessing to all who read it. I have used it in Bible study courses and it has been a great blessing to many others. We are printing this book and also other writings by Bro. Cole. Every one of his writings has a great spiritual depth which is not found in modern writers. We hope that these publications will be a help to all who will read them. It is for this purpose that we have undertaken this work as a part of the missionary work of our church. The Bryan Station Baptist Church was organized in 1786. It has stood for the truths taught in these books all of these years and still stands on these truths today. The cost of these books is based on the bare cost of materials. We will supply these books in any amount to all for the cost of publication.

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## AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

The author's first volume entitled, "Definitions Of Doctrines" was published about twenty three years ago. He had hoped the second volume would follow soon thereafter. However, our plans did not materialize, and the material in hand became somewhat scattered. Much of it was preserved by being printed in such papers as "Florida Baptist Witness", Jacksonville, Fla.; "The Gospel Witness", Toronto, Canada; "The Biblical Echo", Orlando, Fla., and others. The first volume had been out of print for several years: and the author, due to age and infirmities, had abandoned hope of publishing any more books. However, the Bryan Station Baptist Church, Lexington, Ky., became interested in our writings and was given permission to reprint Volume I on mimeograph, and this led to the printing of this second volume in the same fashion. And all this is in view of publishing these and other books in book form later.

The reader is asked to remember that some of the chapters in this volume have been taken from the above periodicals, while other chapters are of recent preparation. And for this reason there may be slight discrepancies; however, this will be minimal as the writer has held the same doctrinal beliefs throughout the fifty-five years of his ministry. We have tried to express our convictions forthrightly, and if read carefully and prayerfully will be easily understood. He also believes that the doctrines herein set forth are God-honoring. And if they prove to be man humbling, much more will be the blessing. "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 14:11).

The brethren who wrote the Introduction and Preface to Volume I are now in glory. We have placed as an appendix a sermon by the dearest friend in the ministry we have ever known, and one of the greatest preachers the South has ever produced: the long time pastor of The First Baptist Church, Plant City, Fla. This sermon by Bro. Sebastian will warm the very cockles of the heart, and be worth the small cost of the book.

In Christian love,  
Claude Duval Cole  
February 24, 1968

# CONTENTS

## PART I: THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF SIN CHAPTER

- \* I. The Nature of Sin
- \* II. The Origin of Sin
- \* III. Depravity--Total, Universal, Inherent
- \* IV. The Unpardonable Sin
- \* V. Unable to Sin
- \* VI. Punishment of Sin No. 1
- \* VII. Punishment of Sin No. 2
- \* VIII. Punishment of Sin No. 3
- \* IX. Punishment of Sin No. 4

## PART II: THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION CHAPTER

- \* I. The Nature of Salvation
- \* II. The Gospel of Salvation
- \* III. Election
- \* IV. The Effectual Call
- \* V. Regeneration
- \* VI. Justification
- \* VII. Adoption
- \* VIII. Sanctification
- \* IX. Repentance unto Life
- \* X. Saving Faith
- \* XI. The Security of the Saints
- \* XII. Conversion.. Which Comes First, Life or Faith
- \* XIII. Righteousness for the Unrighteous
- \* XIV. Predestination--Prophecy--Providence
- \* XV. "Whosoever Will"

## PART III: THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF SERVICE

### CHAPTER

\* I. Good Works

\* II. Manual for Godly Living (Exposition of Romans Chapter Twelve)

\* III. Adorning the Doctrine of God our Saviour

### APPENDIX

\* Sermon by D. F. SEBASTIAN (Now in Glory) - "God Is For Us"

# PART I - THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF SIN

# CHAPTER I

## THE NATURE OF SIN

Sin is a patent fact--its reality does not need to be argued. Sin is a fact of experience, of observation, and of revelation. Sin is something I feel in my own heart; it is something I see in others, even in my best friends and loved ones; and it is something revealed in the Bible. The policeman pursues it, the physician prescribes for it, the law discovers it, conscience condemns it, God controls and punishes it, and yet nobody likes to own it. But as a matter of fact, sin is all that anyone owns; he is a steward of everything else he may possess. Obvious as sin is, there is a proneness to treat it like some folks treat their trashy relatives; it is ignored and even denied.

Sin may be defined but it cannot be explained. To explain sin is to explain it away. How sin got started in the universe is a profound mystery. It had no place in the original creation, which God pronounced good. Sin is a parasite, an interloper, an outlaw cell in the moral system, and a terrible monstrosity. Sin made its appearance on earth in a garden of delights, after it had defiled the heavens, and turned this fair earth into a wilderness of woe. In the original creation we read only of heaven and earth, but later we are told of everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

Sin is a cheat, a deceiver, and a destroyer. It promises pleasure and pays off in pain. It promises life and pays off in death. It promises profit and pays off in poverty--the loss of all good. Every sin is committed for profit. Nobody would sin if he did not think it would profit in some form or other. There is



profit in sin, but it is short-lived. Moses took a long look and made the wise choice. He chose to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. He esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. He chose in view of the day of judgment.

Sin is dangerous beyond expression and description. Sin is violation of the moral law of God, and violated law cries out for just retribution. Sin is against God, the Judge of all the earth, and must be accounted for before God. Crime is against human society. Human society may and does punish crime, but only God can punish sin. Human society may fail to punish the criminal, but God will not fail to punish the sinner who is without a Saviour. All crime against men is also sin against God, but all sin against God is not crime against men. Human society punishes men for what they do; God punishes men for what they are and in proportion to what they do. Every sinner will either be punished in his own person or in the person of a Surety and Substitute, even the Lord Jesus Christ, the Surety of the better covenant. The only possible way for any sinner to be brought into the favor of God as the Lawgiver was for Christ the Just to suffer for the unjust. "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:" (I Peter 3:18).

## **FALSE DEFINITION OF SIN**

1. Modernism: "Sin is good in the making." John Fiske (1842-1901), says that original sin is neither more nor less than the brute inheritance which every man carries with him, and the process of evolution is an advance towards true salvation. According to this view, the human race is on the way to salvation; there is no hope for the individual; the race will be saved when the process of evolution has made it perfect. It is

like the process of improving the razor-back hog by breeding. According to this view there is no individual responsibility and therefore no individual salvation. Poor hope for the individual who cries out, "What must I do to be saved?" Cold war everywhere, and shooting wars in various places, with terrible consequences to human happiness and safety, give the lie to the evolutionary process of salvation.

2. Christian Science: "Sin is a figment of a perverted imagination---an imaginary creation of abnormal minds." In other words sin does not actually exist; it is not a reality. Some people just imagine they sin, and this imagination is a disease of the mind. The man who is convicted of sin is unbalanced, and the man who mourns over sin and seeks forgiveness from God is terribly insane. Such nonsense is refuted by science, and Scripture, and common sense. When the prodigal came to himself, he said, "I have sinned." The insane man is the one who denies the fact of sin. "If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us" (I John 1:10).

3. The Popular View regards sin as only crime against society. Sinners are young men sowing wild oats, prostitute women, murderers, and gangsters. Some seventy or more years ago the Japanese resented the preaching of Paul Kanamoro. They complained that he talked to them as if he were an official talking to convicts. They confounded sin with vice. They could not distinguish between sin and crime. Every person is a sinner, but all are not vicious or criminals. There are many virtuous women, but no sinless women. There are many law-abiding men but no sinless men. There are many beautiful babies, but no baby without a sinful nature. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps. 51:5); "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies" (Ps 58:3); "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and

sins; Wherein in time past ye 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: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:1-3).

## **SOME TRUE DEFINITIONS OF SIN**

1. Westminster Confession: "Sin is any lack of conformity to, or transgression of the law of God." This is a good definition and includes both sins of commission and of omission. The moral law of God---the eternal standard of right and wrong is summed up in supreme love to God and to our neighbor as ourselves.

2. A.H. Strong: "Sin is any lack of conformity to the law of God, whether in act, disposition, or state." This is a better definition, since it recognizes sin as a condition of human nature. Sin resides in the heart; it is quality of being.

3. The Apostle John: "Sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4b). Or more literally: "Sin is lawlessness." There can be no sin where there is no law. If there is no Lawgiver to Whom we must give account, then there can be no sin, for sin is lawlessness.

## **MISSING THE MARK**

There is a Bible word which means "to miss the mark," and it is translated sin some 200 times in our Bible. Man has missed the mark--he has missed the purpose of his being. Man was created to reflect the glory of his creator, but he has missed this aim and has come short of the glory of God.

Man is like a clock that fails to tell the time of day; he is like a car that will not run; he is like coal that will not burn. Man is a failure in the greatest and grandest enterprise--he has failed to glorify God.

## **MAN IS OFF CENTER**

There is another word used to describe sin which means "to turn aside from the straight path." This conception of sin is expressed in "But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers: they were turned aside like a deceitful bow" (Psalms 78:57), where God complains that Israel has turned aside like a deceitful bow. And again in Isaiah where we are told that all like sheep have gone astray, and turned everyone to his own way. Man is off-center. Instead of revolving around God, and making God's will his chief delight, man has become a wandering star in the moral firmament.

## **COMPETITION WITH GOD**

Sin may be defined as competition with God for sovereignty-competition in the realm of authority. This view of sin is seen in the story of the first sin as recorded in Genesis three. The word sin does not occur in the account, but the fact of sin does, and the nature of sin is also clearly revealed. Satan told Eve that if they would eat of the forbidden fruit, their eyes would be opened, and they would become as God, knowing good and evil. And when the deed was done, God said, "Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil" (Gen. 3:22a)

Now, in what sense did man become like God by sinning? Obviously, it was not in respect to character, for in sinning he lost the good character with which he was created. Nor can it mean that man acquired the Divine attributes such as power, holiness, and wisdom. In sinning man lost the power to live

and die; he lost his original holiness and became filthy or depraved; and he lost the wisdom of his original creation and became a fool, sin brought death, depravity, and delusion. Sin is consummate folly.

The only possible sense in which man became like God was in spirit and aim--not in reality. Adam and Eve asserted their independence of God. They would make their own laws and do as they pleased. They rebelled against His will for their lives. They rejected His expressed will as to what they could have. They would determine (know for themselves) what is good and evil--what is right and wrong. They would no longer be tied to God's Word about what they could do. They would be a law unto themselves and do as they pleased. They would do that which was right in their own eyes. Thus, they entered into competition with God for sovereignty. In spirit and aim they made themselves God. They would make their own will supreme.

Every sin is competition with God in the realm of authority. If I have the right to determine what is right and wrong, then I am God - I am supreme in the matter of authority. Sin is, therefore, a declaration of independence before God, and this means war, for God has said "I am God, and there is none else" (Isa. 46:9). And again, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Ex.20:3). Great Britain could do little about it when the American Colonies declared their independence--she lost the war. But there is much God can do with His rebellious creatures. The sinner is waging a hopeless war against his Creator. God is a jealous God and will tolerate no rivals or competitors. God is the one and only person in all the universe who has the right and the ability to do as He pleases. He is the only one who has the right to act for his own glory. All that God does, whether in mercy or in justice, is to the praise of His glory. Salvation is primarily to the praise of His glory. "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to

the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory" (Eph. 1:1-14).

## **THE REALITY OF SIN**

Is sin real? Ask Adam and hear him bemoan his loss of Eden. Is sin real? Ask Abel. He cannot speak, but his blood cries to God for vengeance against his murderer. Is sin real? Ask David and hear him say, "I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me." Is sin real? Ask the rich man in

hell and listen as he says, "I am tormented in this flame." Is sin real? Ask Pharoah and hear him say, "I have sinned," when he discovered a dead boy in every home and a dead animal in every stable throughout all the land of Egypt, Goshen excepted because of blood of the passover lamb. Is sin real? Ask Peter and hear his confession: "Depart from me for I am a sinful man." Is sin real? Ask Christian parents and hear them as they pray for their godless children. Is sin real? Ask the Son of God and hear Him as He cries out under its terrible load, "My God, my God, why has Thou forsaken me." Is sin real? Ask the martyrs and let them tell you the price they paid for resisting sin unto blood.

The holier a man is the more he realizes what sin is. The fewer acts of sin are on the part of those who grieve over the state of sin. A J. Gordon, the great Baptist preacher of Boston, was a godly man, and yet just before he died, he asked to be left alone. He was overheard confessing his sins so extravagantly that it was thought he was in delirium. Luther was wont to cry out, "Oh, my sins, my sins" Jonathan Edwards was said to be the holiest man of his day, and yet his diary contains such abhorrence of himself as would make one think he was the most wicked of all.

## **THE POTENTIALITY OF SIN**

Sin as an act of transgression is only a small part of sin. Nine tenths of the mass of an iceberg is below the surface, so that only a small part of the total is seen. And there is far more sin in every man than ever appears on the surface in actual transgression. The potential evil is about the same in every man. The Bible says there is no difference for all have sinned. If we have not sinned outwardly as much as others it is due to the restraining grace of God and not to anything good in our nature. When our Lord said that out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adultries, fornications, thefts, false

witness, and blasphemies. He was not describing any particular heart but the heart of every man. When Paul said that the carnal mind is enmity against God, he was speaking of the mind of humanity.

## **SALVATION THROUGH A CO-OPERANT**

The sinner is God's competitor; the Saviour is God's co-operant. The first Adam competed with God for sovereignty and ruined all of us; the last Adam, Jesus Christ, cooperated with God for our salvation. The first Adam said, "I will;" the last Adam said, "Not my will, but Thy will be done." The first Adam despised the will of God; the last Adam said, "I delight to do Thy will, O God." And God's will led Him along the rough road of suffering through gloomy Gethsemane to bloody Calvary, where He cried, "It is finished." All men are victims of the terrible tragedy of Eden; all believers are victors through the tragedy of Calvary. And may writer and reader bow in adoring wonder.



## CHAPTER II

### THE ORIGIN OF SIN

This is one of the most difficult questions in theology. Since God made everything good in the original creation, how did sin get started? How was a good creation thrown into rebellion against its Creator? By whom and how was sin originated? There is much we cannot know about the question. But there are some necessary inferences.

1. Sin is not eternal; it had a beginning. The Gnostics believed in two eternal principles: good and evil.

2. Sin was not created by God. God created everything good; He is not the Author of sin. Moral beings were without sin when created. Satan was created a sinless and perfect being "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee" (Ezek. 28:15). God made man upright. "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions" (Eccl. 7:29).

3. Sin was not the necessary result of finiteness. Some claim that because God made man a finite being sin was inevitable. But if this be true, men will always be sinners for none of us will ever become infinite. Infinity belongs only to God.

4. Sin had its origin in a principle of negation, which means that it is not the result of any positive force. Moral beings were created good, but not immutably and independently good.

This would have made them equal with God; it would have involved the absurdity of God creating another God. God alone is immutable and independent. There cannot be more than one God, self-existent and self-sufficient, sovereign and supreme.

Moral beings, angels and man, were dependent upon God in remaining good. A sustaining power must continually go out from God if moral creatures continue as created. "Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved" (Ps. 66:9); "For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring" (Acts 17:28); "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Col. 1:16,17); "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high:" (Heb. 1:3). Now this sustaining power is of grace and not of debt. It is not a matter of justice. God could exercise this grace or not as it pleased Him. He could have upheld and confirmed in holiness all moral beings. He could have prevented sin from ever getting started among the angels, just as He graciously prevented it from spreading, confirming in holiness those referred to as the elect angels: "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality" ( I Tim. 5:21). He could have kept the sinless Adam from sinning. It will not do to say that because God made Adam a free moral agent, He could not prevent his sinning without violating the freedom of his will. God withheld Abimilech, king of Gerar, from sinning by not allowing him to harm Sarah. "And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know

that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her" (Genesis 20:6).

So sin had its origin in the withholding of that grace necessary to sustain moral beings in a state of holiness. If God had not permitted sin there could have been no display of some of His most glorious attributes. There would have been no display of mercy, for mercy must have an object of misery, and there could have been no misery apart from sin. There would have been no exhibition of wrath and anger and hatred, for these are the exercise of justice and holiness against sin. There would have been no display of such gracious love as is seen in God's gift of His Son, who was punished for sinners that they might not perish in their sins. Surely it is not too much to say that God permitted sin that He might overrule it "to the praise of the glory of His grace" (Eph. 1:6). "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain" (Ps. 76:10).

## **THE FIRST SINNER**

Sin originated among the angels. That slimy, slippery, shining, subtle thing we call sin was hatched the day Lucifer, son of the morning, said, "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God... I will be like the most High" (Isa. 14:13,14). Lucifer sought equality with God in government, and sovereignty was the bait he held out to man to turn him against his Maker. And in sinning, man has become the tool and ally of Satan.

Most people have a woefully inadequate conception of sin. Sin is the abominable thing God hates. Sin is something more than a slight misdemeanor for which God merely gives man a scolding; sin is a species of high treason against the Almighty and thrice-holy God, and is to be punished by consignment to the lake of fire.

## **THE ORIGIN OF SIN IN THE HUMAN RACE**

In the human race sin was derived from the first man: "Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned" (Rom. 5:12 R.V.)

Now there are but two conceivable ways sin can pass from one to another. The one is by way of example, as Jereboam caused Israel to sin, and as Eve caused Adam to sin. The other is by partaking of the sin of another. It is obvious that our being sinners is not due to the force of Adam's example. Moreover, in the comparison between Adam and Christ "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Rom. 5:19), it is intended to show that sin came by Adam as righteousness comes by Christ. Now we do not become righteous by following Christ as an example, but by partaking of His righteousness. "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (I Cor. 1:30). This raises the question of Adam's relation to his descendants.

## **THE HEADSHIP OF ADAM**

Adam was the head of the human race. This headship was both natural and federal---natural by the principle of generation (like begets like); federal by Divine appointment.

1. Adam was the natural father or head of the race. "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation" (Acts 17:26); "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit" (I Cor. 15:45). Every person was seminally in Adam. He begat

children in his own moral and physical likeness, not before but after his fall. His children became heir to all his ills of body and soul. They inherited his moral depravity and physical weakness. His nature was imparted to his posterity. 2. Adam was the federal head of the race. This means that Adam was appointed a public and representative person. He represented the race in the covenant of works. "But they like Adam have transgressed the covenant" (Hos 6:7 R.V.). The federal headship explains why Adam's sin was imputed (charged) to his posterity. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners" (Rom. 5:19). Adam was acting for the whole race and what he did was charged to all his descendants. This is the only way to explain the death of infants. Infants die because of Adams' sin, or they die for no reason at all, since they have not sinned personally "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come" (Rom. 5:14). If Adam did not represent infants in respect to sin, then Christ did not represent them in respect to salvation. If they were not guilty with Adams guilt, they could not be righteous with Christ's righteousness. Babies go to heaven, not on the grounds of innocence, but on the ground of the blood of Christ. If Christ had not died the whole human race, infants and all, would have been forever doomed. There will be nobody in heaven except those redeemed by the blood of Christ. Infants have the guilt of Adam imputed to them without their knowledge and consent. And on the ground of the death of Christ for them the Holy Spirit prepares their nature (which is sinful) for the enjoyment of heaven.

## **THE FIRST AND LAST ADAM**

In And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from

heaven" (I Cor. 15:45,47), Jesus is called the second man and the last Adam. This is not in respect of existence, but representation. He is not considered personally but representatively. Considered as an individual. He was not the second man or the last Adam. Individually, there were many men between the Adam of Eden and the Adam of Calvary, and there have been many men since Jesus. He is called the last Adam because there are but two public or representative men. God deals with all men through two men, and our destiny depends upon which of these two men we have our standing in before God. Believers are accepted in the beloved "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Eph. 1:6), and are complete in Him "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:" (Col. 2:10).

## **GUILT AND DEPRAVITY**

There are two aspects or branches of sin: (1) That which consists of the guilt of some deed committed: (2) Inherent corruption or depravity of nature contracted by that guilt. The sinner's standing is that of guilt before the law of God; his state is that of depravity or corruption of nature.

Two things resulted from Adams' first sin: (1) He was charged with guilt and condemned by the law of God: (2) He lost the likeness of God in holiness and became corrupt. Now which of these, or did both of these branches of sin, come from Adam? Some say the guilt of sin is imputed, hence their baptism of infants lest they should go to hell. Others say the corruption of nature was imparted. But we believe that sin in its two branches was derived from Adam. Guilt was imputed, and the corruption of nature was imparted or inherited. In other words, depravity or corruption of nature is one of the consequences of Adam's transgression. Does God punish the innocent? The answer is a loud, No! Then we must all have been

represented by Adam in the transgression or we would not be punished with a sinful nature.

## **THE FIRST ADAM DISCHARGED**

How many of Adam's sins were charged to his posterity? Only one for it is written, "For the judgment was by one (sin) to the condemnation, but the free gift is of many offenses unto justification" (Rom. 5:16).

Adam could convey sin to his posterity only as long as he was a public or representative person. Immediately after his first sin, he was put out of office and another covenant was published "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15). And when Adam exercised faith in the promised Redeemer, he was acting in a private capacity; otherwise, his faith would have been imputed as well as his sin. Let both writer and reader thank God for the last Adam who is a life-giving Spirit.

## CHAPTER III

# DEPRAVITY--TOTAL, UNIVERSAL, INHERENT

Depravity is a word that describes the state or disposition of man considered as a moral being. A moral being is one who is accountable to God for his thoughts, speech, and conduct. Depravity means the moral corruption of human nature; it refers to the state of sinfulness natural to the unregenerate.

Depravity is the opposite to what is required by the law of God. The sum of the divine law is love to God and our neighbor. "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matt. 22:37-39). Paul says that love is the fulfilling of the law. "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for 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). Depravity must consist then of the lack of love required by God, and the setting up of some other object or objects in the human affections. And all the objects set up in competition with God may be reduced to one, and that is self. Private self-love, to the exclusion of supreme love



to God and equal love to men, is the very root of depravity. Self-will, self-admiration and self-righteousness are but different manifestations of depravity.

Depravity is that state of nature that causes man to put self in the place of God, and to seek his own gratification, honor, and interest as the ultimate end of all his actions. Every moral being ought to live and act for the highest good, and the highest good is the glory of God. Depravity is the corruption of nature that leads men to act for self glory. The very essence of sin is selfishness. Take the first and last letters off the word SIN and you have the letter "I". Take the word self and spell it backwards, adding the letter "H" and you have the word "flesh". And the Bible often employs the word flesh to denote the corrupt nature of man. "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" (Romans 7:18); There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 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. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised

up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Romans 8:1-13); "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:3); "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13); "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63).

When Paul describes men under a variety of wicked characters, the first link in the chain is: "lovers of their own selves" (II Tim. 3:2). This exclusive love of self is the fountain of depravity from which all-evil thoughts and actions flow; it is the womb from which all sinful expedients are born; it is the incubator in which all evil inventions are hatched.

Depravity is total, reaching to all the faculties of the soul; it is universal; taking in all men by nature; and it is inherent, by which we mean that it is the result of original sin, transmitted by natural generation or physical birth.

## **TOTAL DEPRAVITY**

Total depravity means that man is depraved or corrupted in all the faculties of his being. It is not a question of degree but of extent. It does not mean that any man is as bad as he may become, or that he is as wicked as the devil. However, the potential evil is about the same in every man. The Bible says "there is no difference for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." If we have not sinned as much as others, it is due to restraining grace and not to anything good in our

nature. When Jesus Christ said, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. He was not describing any particular heart but the heart of every man. John Bradford, a martyr, once watched the officers leading a criminal to the place of execution, and remarked, "there goes John Bradford but for the grace of God." The act of transgression is only a small part of sin. Eight ninths of an iceberg is below the surface of the sea. And potentially there is far more sin in everyone of us than every appears on the surface in actual transgression.

There are degrees in depravity. All men are not the same in the degree or amount of sin. Drop a grain of arsenic into a glass of water, and the water is totally affected. Every drop of the water is poisoned. Put in another grain of arsenic and the poison is not extended, but it is intensified. It is not poisoned in more of its parts, but each part to a greater degree. So man, a child of wrath by nature "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:3), may become more depraved.

The natural man is not depraved in spots, but the whole of his being is depraved. The "carnal mind is enmity against God" (Rom. 8:7); "and the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked" (Jer. 17:9); "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (Matt. 15:19); the will is in bondage to sin "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:44), "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life" (John 5:40); "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). The human will is no better than the mind and the heart that controls it.

Men choose what they do because of the state of their minds and hearts.

Total depravity means that man, as the result of original sin, is morally or spiritually dead. And dead as an adjective does not admit of comparison. There are no degrees of death, but there are degrees in death. Here is a physical corpse. The man has been dead one day. He is totally dead--dead in all the physical parts. Here is another corpse. The man has been dead one week. He is no more dead than the other man, but the corpse is in worse condition. Now the Bible presents the natural man under the figure of a moral or spiritual corpse. Here is a young girl of sixteen summers, beautiful, vivacious, and outwardly charming. She knows nothing of the life of the brothel. But that girl, if an unbeliever in Christ, is morally or spiritually dead. She is lacking in love to God and to her neighbor. Her depraved nature is manifested in pride of apparel, pride of beauty, disobedient to parents, lack of interest in the word of God, and rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here is another moral corpse. She is a woman of the brothel; her virtue is gone, and she is abandoned to a life of sin and shame. She drinks, and swears, and smokes, and lies, and steals, and breaks up homes. She is no more dead than the girl of sweet sixteen, but she is in a worse condition in moral death.

Moral death does not mean that man does not exist as a moral being. Death never means extinction of being, but a state or condition of being. The unregenerate man performs actions, but they are wicked. Theft, and murder, and lying are all acts of moral being, but they are wicked acts.

## **UNIVERSAL DEPRAVITY**

Universal depravity means that all men are depraved. Every man, apart from inwrought grace, is lacking in that which the law of God requires. He does not love God, neither does he

love his neighbor as he loves himself. It is only the born again ones who love God: "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God" (I John 4:7); who understand the things of God "But 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" (I Cor.2:14); "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3); "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" (II Cor.4:4); who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him" (I John 5:1); or who practice righteousness "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him" (I John 2:29).

In Noah's day it is said that "the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). Of David's day it was written: "There is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Ps. 14:3). And Paul quotes this verse from David and applies it to the people of his day "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10). The only men free from corruption of nature since the first Adam sinned and fell was the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, and his birth was not according to the law of natural generation. To deny the virgin birth of Jesus of Nazareth is to make him a sinner. And who wants to trust a sinner as Saviour?

## **INHERENT DEPRAVITY**

Depravity of nature is transmitted to all men by natural generation. Like begets like; that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and the carnal or fleshly mind hates God.

The early appearance of sin in the child is proof that depravity of nature is inherited. The very first act that discovers reason in the child has sin in it. Watch the child when reason begins to dawn, and it will express itself by doing harm to others, or by lying, or by pride of apparel, or by natural inclination to revenge. Have not all parents quieted the baby by beating that which had hurt or offended it? The small child at the very dawn of reason manifests a spirit of revenge towards others and a dislike for God.

In Andrew Fuller's diary, under date of January 8, 1785, are these lines: "Much affected today in hearing my little girl say, 'How soon sabbath day comes again!' Felt grieved to see the native aversion of the carnal heart to God so early discovering itself."

Inherent depravity is seen in the fact that the child will sin without being taught to sin. "A child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame" (Prov. 29:15). Only leave the child to act naturally and freely, and it will shame its mother. But we must be taught to do the things that are not natural. Take a person who has never been taught to swim and throw him into deep water he will drown. But take a horse or some other beast and plunge it into the stream and it will swim because nature hath taught him. Man sins naturally, but he has to be taught to do good.

Inherent depravity is directly taught in many Scriptures. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps. 51:5). David is not casting reflection upon

his mother's virtue; he is confessing to a sinful nature received in birth. "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies" (Ps. 58:3). In Ephesians 2:3, we read that we "were by nature the children of wrath." In "That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed" (Romans 9:8), we are told that the children of the flesh are not the children of God-and if not the children of God, they are the children of wrath, children of disobedience; yea, children of the devil.

The Scriptures which teach the necessity of the new birth prove that depravity is total, universal, and inherent. Regeneration is not of parts but of Persons, the whole psychic being is born again. And every man needs the new birth, for except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. If depravity were not hereditary, the new birth would not be necessary; training and education would bring one into the kingdom of God. If there were a spark of goodness it could be fanned into a flame, and a birth from above would not be essential to salvation.

## **ILLUSTRATION**

The following supposed incident will illustrate the truth of depravity. A ship's crew mutiny put their officers in chains, and take command of the ship. They sail to a distant port, dispose of the cargo, and divide the money. But while they are on the voyage, they find it necessary, for self-preservation, to establish some kind of laws to govern them in their relation to one another. To these laws they adhere punctually, act with a degree of fairness with one another, and agree to an impartial distribution of their plunder. But before they reach port, one of the crew relents and becomes very unhappy. He insists that they are engaged in a wicked scheme. He urges that they release their officers, implore their forgiveness, and resume

their duties under their command. But they plead their justice, honor, and respect for one another. They remind him that they are keeping the laws they had agreed upon, and that there is peace and harmony among them. But he tells them there is no virtue in it; that all their equity while exercised in pursuit of a scheme which violates the great law of justice, is itself, a species of iniquity. He shows them that they are running the ship for their own selfish interests and glory, and not in the interest of the owner. He urges them to repent of their wicked design. He pleads with them to release their officers, and plead for mercy.

The application of this parable is easy. As sailors on the ship of life the human race mutinied in the very beginning, and every one born upon the ship has joined in the rebellion. While there has been a semblance of law and order, and some respect for one another, every man, apart from the grace of God working in him, has lived for self rather than for God, the Creator and Owner of all. The need of every one is to repent of his sin towards God, surrendering to Him and hoping for mercy through the blood of His Son. May both writer and reader abhor themselves for what they were by nature and rejoice in what they are by God's amazing grace.



## CHAPTER IV

### **THE UNPARDONABLE SIN**

"Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come" (Matt. 12:31,32).

"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 Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit" (Mark 3:28-30).

"And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven" (Luke 12:10).

The writer believes that the above Scriptures are all that can certainly be applied to the question of the unpardonable sin. He does not believe that Heb. 6:4-8 and 10:26-31 have anything to say on the subject. They do indeed sound a solemn warning against apostasy, but they give no help in defining the unpardonable sin. As to I John 5:16, we are not so sure. Dr. Broadus thought it alludes to the unpardonable

sin. Be that as it may, it throws no light on what the unpardonable sin is.

The unpardonable sin is a much abused and sadly misunderstood subject. It has, we fear, been used to frighten the unregenerate into the church, thereby making them twofold more the children of wrath. Wrong views of the matter have driven men to despair and, in some instances, into insanity.

## **A NECESSARY DISTINCTION**

We must distinguish between an unpardoned sin and the unpardonable sin. There are many unpardoned sins, but only one unpardonable sin. All the sins of the finally impenitent and unbelieving will be unpardoned, but there is one sin for which there is no pardon. Murder may be an unpardoned sin, but it is not unpardonable. Any and every sin is a damning sin if not repented of. Our Lord clearly distinguished between the one sin that "hath never forgiveness," and all other sins that shall be forgiven on the terms of repentance and faith.

### *1. WHAT THE UNPARDONABLE SIN IS NOT*

1. It is not any sin against men. Many are the sins men commit against one another, such as murder, theft, false witness, malice and envy. But none of these is the sin that will not be forgiven. Many have been guilty of these sins and through repentance and faith have been forgiven.

2. It is not any sin against Jesus Christ. Many are the sins against the Son of Man, such as denial of His deity and virgin birth, denial of His blood atonement, ignoring His claims of Lordship; in short, rejecting Him as the Lord Jesus Christ. These are sins of the deepest dye, but many who have been guilty of them have repented and found forgiveness. If rejecting Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord is the

unpardonable sin, then well nigh everybody would have committed it. To be sure the man who rejects Christ until his time runs out will be unforgiven--all sins are unpardoned--but this does not mean that he committed the unpardonable sin. Our Saviour made it clear that it is not any sin against Himself, but a particular sin against the Holy Spirit.

3. It is not any sin against the decalogue or ten commandments. There is no sin covered by the ten commandments for which there is no provision of pardon. Christ died to redeem sinners from the curse of the law, therefore, there must be forgiveness from every part of the curse.

4. It is not any sin against God the Father. "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men."

5. It is not every sin against the Holy Spirit. There are sins committed directly and specifically against the Holy Spirit. He is grieved, resisted, quenched, and ignored. Believers may and do grieve, quench and ignore the Spirit. Unbelievers resist the Spirit in the objective ministry of His word. They resist Him by rejecting the call of the gospel and by opposing and persecuting the preachers of His word. The Holy Spirit is the Author of the Bible. "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:" (Acts 7:51,52), the only passage in the New Testament where there is any mention of resisting the Spirit. To the Jews who stoned him to death, Stephen said, "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?" In rejecting the preaching of Stephen,

the Jews were behaving as their fathers had towards the prophets, and Stephen called this resisting the Holy Spirit. Unbelievers resist the outward ministry of the Spirit in the preaching of the word until their resistance is overcome by the subjective work of the Spirit in the effectual call. Dr. Broadus says that resisting the Spirit and blasphemy against the Spirit "are quite different things."

## *II WHAT THE UNPARDONABLE SIN IS*

1. It is expressly said to be blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. To blaspheme is to speak injuriously against somebody. Blasphemy is an insulting or slanderous remark about some one. Every blasphemy is not unpardonable; it is only the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. The Jews at Antioch spoke against Paul and his doctrine, "contradicting and blaspheming" (Acts 13:45). Paul, before his conversion, compelled the saints to blaspheme: "And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities" (Acts 26:11). Paul tells the Jews that they caused the name of God to be blasphemed among the Gentiles: "For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written" (Rom. 2:24). And Paul himself was formerly a blasphemer: "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief" (I Tim. 1:13). But none of these cases was blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

2. The Scriptures with which we began this article give us a clear and unmistakable instance of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, and therefore, an example of the unpardonable sin. The Pharisees blasphemed against the Spirit when they said, "He hath an unclean spirit." (Mark 3:30). Matthew tells us that they attributed the miraculous work of the Spirit in Christ to Beelzebub, the prince of demons. Of course, they blasphemed our Lord too, in saying that He had an unclean

spirit, but that was not what made their sin unpardonable. They recognized the Holy Spirit in the miracle, and slandered Him by calling Him an unclean spirit. And in doing this, they were guilty of an eternal sin.

## CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THE SPIRIT IS BLASPHEMED

1. There must be an unmistakable work of the Spirit. Dr. Broadus thought the sin was committed in connection with public miracles, and therefore, not committed in our day. He says, in commenting on Matt. 12:31,32: "There is here no allusion to the peculiar gracious office and work of the Spirit in calling, renewing, and sanctifying the soul; it is the Spirit of God as giving power to work miracles."

2. There must be knowledge that it is the work of the Spirit. Paul had blasphemed Jesus of Nazareth, and yet obtained forgiveness, "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief" (I Tim. 1:13). Paul did not believe that Jesus spoke and wrought miracles by the Spirit of God. He was ignorant of the Spirit working in Jesus, sincerely believing Jesus to be an impostor and possessed of an evil spirit. But the Pharisees knew better; they knew the miracles had been performed by the power of the Holy Spirit, and blasphemed against Him by calling Him Beelzebub, an unclean spirit. It was not a case of mistaken identity with them as it was with Saul of Tarsus. Thomas Goodwyn, one of the Puritans, says that two things are necessary in committing the unpardonable sin: "Light in the mind and malice in the heart." Anxiety or fear of having been guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is in itself evidence that one is not guilty of it. Those who are afraid they have committed the sin may be assured they have not.

### *III WHY BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT IS UNPARDONABLE?*

1. It is not because the sin is too great for the blood of Christ to atone for. This would limit the intrinsic value of His blood. We believe the death of Christ is sufficient for the salvation of every accountable being, including the devil and his angels, had it been designed for them.

2. It is not because the sin is too great for the grace of God to cope with. Where sin abounds grace much more abounds. This is obvious when we consider some of the cases God has pardoned. Take, for example, the case of Manasseh, the wicked son of the godly Hezekiah, whose wicked career is recorded in II Chron. 33:2-10: "But did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel. For he built again the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down, and he reared up altars for Baalim, and made groves, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them. Also he built altars in the house of the LORD, whereof the LORD had said, In Jerusalem shall my name be for ever. And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. And he set a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God, of which God had said to David and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen before all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever: Neither will I any more remove the foot of Israel from out of the land which I have appointed for your fathers; so that they will take heed to do all that I have commanded them, according to the whole law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses. So

Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen, whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel. And the LORD spake to Manasseh, and to his people: but they would not hearken." Surely, if any man could sin away the day of grace, Manasseh had done so. Surely, if the enormity of offenses makes them unpardonable, those committed by this man must have been such. Surely, if there are crimes too much for the mercy of God to save from, it must have been those of which this Satan-controlled King was guilty. Surely, if there is a sinner too much for the Holy Spirit to cope with, it was this wretch who provoked God so grievously. And yet the happy sequel is the story of his conversion. Consider also the case of Saul of Tarsus, denominated the chief of sinners, who, by the grace of God, became the greatest exponent of the faith he once opposed. Truly, "Where sin abounded grace did much more abound."

3. The unpardonableness of sin must be attributed to the sovereign will of God. And He has sovereignly (I do not say arbitrarily) determined that there is one sin He will not forgive. He could if it pleased Him to do so. We believe with Job that "What His soul desireth, even that He doeth." There is one kind of sin for which there is no provision of pardon. Therefore, there is one kind of sin for which Christ made no atonement. There is one sin of which the Holy Spirit will not convict, and from which He will not convert. There is one sin God will not pardon. The Bible calls it blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, and we dare not call it by any other name.

The Holy Spirit is thus highly honored in the divine economy. His personality and deity may be denied by men and He may be contemptuously referred to in the neuter gender as "it," but He is in truth a person of high esteem in the Godhead.

"To God the Spirit's Name

Immortal worship give,  
Whose new-creating power  
Makes the dead sinner live:  
His work completes the great design,  
And fills the soul with joy divine."



# CHAPTER V

## "UNABLE TO SIN"

or

## THE IMPECCABILITY OF THE BORN AGAIN

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin: for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (I John 3:9).

This verse of Scripture plainly states that the person who is born of God cannot sin. It does not say, as some teach, that such a person is able not to sin. It is one thing to be "able not to sin," and quite another thing to be "not able to sin," for that would deny the doctrine of apostasy, a doctrine they believe and teach. It is obvious that if a person is unable to sin, he could not lose his salvation. There are those who teach that a person may get sanctified--get the so-called second blessing--get to where he is able to live above and without sin. But they also teach that the person who is able not to sin, may also be able to sin and be lost. But our text says emphatically that the born again person--the one born of God--cannot sin, that is, he is not able to sin.

## I REFUTATIONS OF THE TEXT

Our text refutes several well-known and prevalent errors in present day preaching:

1. It refutes the doctrine of apostasy, the teaching that one born again may sin and be lost. To quote the text in any translation is sufficient to disprove that a saved person may ever be lost again.

2. It refutes the teaching about a second blessing--a blessing subsequent to regeneration. This text is not speaking of any second blessing by whatever name it may be called; it is speaking of the new birth and of the one born of God. The inability to sin is not because of any second work of grace, but because of the initial work of the Spirit in regeneration.

3. It is against the idea that faith precedes and is the cause of the new birth. The new birth is the work of God; it is the birth of the Holy Spirit, Who is the sole Agent. There is no such thing as selfbirth, either in the physical or spiritual realm. In the physical realm, the mother gives birth to the child; no child is self-born. And in the spiritual kingdom--in the kingdom of God--the child is born of God. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is (Gk. has been) born of God" (I John 5:1). "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth" (Jas. 1:18). Speaking of believers, John says, "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13a). Faith is not the cause of the new birth, but rather the effect. Faith is a fruit of the Spirit: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith" (Gal. 5:22).

## II THE MEANING OF THE TEXT

Let us try to get at the meaning of this text. Does it mean that a born again person cannot sin in any sense whatsoever? To give it such a meaning is to turn Scripture against Scripture. Moreover, it makes the apostle John contradict himself.

In I John 1:9, it is written, that "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." But if we are not able to sin in some sense, there would be no sins to confess, and there would be sin in confessing that of which we are not guilty. In I John 2:1, we are told of provision made for sinning saints: "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." This must apply to the believer for no unbeliever has Christ for an advocate. In "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" (Hebrews 7:25), we are told that Christ makes intercession for those who come to God by Him, which means that they plead Christ as the ground of their acceptance with God. "God accepteth no man's person." Our salvation is "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved," (Eph. 1:6). And again, in "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it" (I John 5:16), we are specifically exhorted to pray for a sinning brother. It would contradict every book in the Bible and the experience of every believer who has ever lived to affirm that no regenerate person ever sins in any sense whatsoever. On the other hand, our text does teach unmistakably that in some sense every regenerate person is impeccable, that is, he is unable to sin; or rather, there is some kind of sin he cannot commit. So our task is to discover what the sin is, or in what sense he cannot sin.

### III VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS OF THE TEXT

There are various interpretations of the text before us, and something can be said in favor of most of them. There is truth in these interpretations, but whether it is the particular truth of the text is another question. We will examine some of the interpretations and give our humble judgment of them.

1. There are those who teach that the born again person--the believer in Christ--is not under law, but under grace; and where there is no law, there can be no sin. The thought is that the born again person cannot sin because he is not under law. Now it is true that the believer is not under law "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. 6:14), and it is also true that "sin is not imputed when there is no law" (Rom. 5:13). "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Rom. 4:8). It is gloriously true that the sins of the believer are not charged to him; if they were nobody but a sinless person could be saved, which would preclude the salvation of anybody. The writer rejects this interpretation of the text before us, and this for two reasons. First, it is not a question of whether sin is charged; it is a question of whether sin is committed. There is some sense in which the regenerate person does not even commit sin. And in the text it is not because of position in Christ, but of condition by virtue of being born again. Second, the above interpretation smacks of antinomianism, which means being against the law. The believer is not under law as a way of life or means of salvation, but he loves the law as being holy, and just, and good; and is under law to Christ: "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" (I Cor. 9:21). Sin is by whomsoever committed. As an illustration of antinomianism, a Baptist preacher once proposed a shameful piece of conduct to another preacher, and when he was rebuked for such a proposal, said, "That

would be all right; you know we are not under law but under grace."

2. There are others who interpret "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (I John 3:9) after this fashion. They remind us that the believer stands sinless in Christ, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. This is a glorious truth, but we do not believe it is the truth of our text. Surely this explanation is foreign to the apostles whole line of thought. John is not dealing with imputed righteousness, but with human conduct.

3. Then there is the idea that the new nature does not and cannot sin. This view of the text makes John have in mind what Paul did when he wrote of the conflict between the two natures of the born again person. "Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 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. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me" (Romans 7:17-21); "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Galatians 5:17). But we are quite certain the apostle John did not have this truth in mind. He uses the personal pronoun: "Whosoever is born of God." He is not talking about what the new nature cannot do, but about what the person, who has been born again, cannot do.

4. A more likely interpretation is that the born again person cannot sin habitually--cannot practice sin as the rule or habit

of his life. This was the view held by Dr. A. T. Robertson, who insisted that the tense of the verb demanded this interpretation. It is also the view of Dr. C. B. Williams, who says that the verb is the present of continuous action. Now it is true that one born of God cannot roll sin as a sweet morsel under his tongue--that he cannot cherish any sin, hug it to his bosom, and take it with him to heaven. The seed of God remains in him and he cannot live as an unregenerate. There is much that can be said in favor of this meaning of the text. It is favored by the context as well as by the tense of the verb. He that committeth (practices) sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth (practices sin) from the beginning. The devil takes no vacation in his career of sinning.

5. Dr. B. H. Carroll gives the verse this meaning: "Whoever is born of God sinneth not unto death." He thinks the context demands this explanation. The thought, as he sees it, is that one born of God may sin, but not unto death; his sins are pardonable. "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin; and there is a sin not unto death" (I John 5:16-17). The writer cannot go along with this interpretation for this reason: the verse is applicable only to one born of God while an unregenerate person may commit sins that are not unpardonable.

6. The writer has come to regard the interpretation given by Andrew Fuller as the most probable of any. Speaking of "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (I John 1:8) and "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (I John 3:9), Fuller says; "It appears that the word "sin" in these passages is of different significations. In the former it is to be taken properly, for any transgression of the law of God. If any man say, in this sense,

he has no sin, he only proves himself to be deceived....But in the latter it seems from the context, that the term is intended to denote the sin of apostasy. If we were to substitute the term apostasy for sin, from the sixth to the ninth verse, the meaning would be clear. Whoso abideth in him apostatizeth not; whosoever apostatizeth hath not seen him, neither known him....He that is guilty of apostasy is of the devil; for the devil hath been an apostate from the beginning....Whosoever is born of God doth not apostatize; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot apostatize, because he is born of God."

Fuller goes on to say that this sense of the latter verse perfectly agrees with what is said of "sin unto death" in "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin; and there is a sin not unto death" (I John 5:16-18). And he says it also agrees with chapter two, verse nineteen: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us" (I John 2:19). "Altogether," says Fuller, "it affords what we might presume to call an incontestable proof of the certain perseverance of true believers." The apostle is saying, that those who abandoned their former profession of faith and departed from them, had not really belonged to them as born again people. An if to say, that born again people do not apostatize from the true principles of faith. The born again person never renounces his faith in Christ, for he is "kept by the power of God through faith" (I Peter 1:5).

"We know that any one born of God does not sin, but he who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him" (I John 5:18 R.S.V.) This is a better rendering than the authorized version, which makes the man born of God keep

himself. Satan would have the believer turn away from Christ and renounce faith in Him, but he is kept by the power of God and cannot lose his faith. The devil cannot make apostates from the ones who are born of God. "Christ in you," says Paul, is "the hope of glory" (Gal. 1:27). Christ does not save the sinner and then abandon him to the devil. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (John 10:27-28). The man born of God perseveres in faith; if he should lose his faith, it goes without saying, he would lose his salvation. Stony ground hearers have only temporary faith and endure for a while only, because they do not have the root of the matter in themselves. But the one born of God is not like that, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (I John 5:4). Glorious victory is assured for all who make their calling and election sure!



## CHAPTER VI

### **THE PUNISHMENT OF SIN - 1**

We are about to write upon a very solemn theme. The flesh will not be entertained, but the spirit may be profited. Much grace is always needed for a profitable hearing of God's word; the flesh which profiteth nothing will hinder. Our treatment of this theme will be admittedly heavy reading and it will require interest and effort on the part of the reader to get the truth. Many people have ruined their taste for good reading by feeding their minds upon trashy literature. What many people read is a revelation of their mental laziness and moral depravity. They demand that which will gratify their fleshly lusts. We are sometimes accused of speaking over people's heads, dealing with subjects they cannot understand. Well, the only way we could keep from speaking over the heads of some people would be for us to quote nursery rhymes and talk about rag dolls and stick horses.

No criminal will enjoy a lecture on the time, place and nature of the punishment to be meted out to him, and no lost man will enjoy a sermon on the punishment he will receive for his violation of the law of God. When "Pastor" Russell was speaking to a large crowd, in denial of the truth on this theme, a thoroughly worldly man promised him a liberal donation because he said it made him so comfortable to feel that there is no hell. And when Robert Ingersoll was once inveighing against the doctrine of eternal punishment, a drunkard stood up and said, "Make it mighty strong, Bob, for a lot of us fellows

are depending on you." And every lost man vainly hopes that there is no such a thing and place as hell.

There is widespread denial of the truth about eternal punishment. I expect there is more literature being circulated today against this truth than against any other truth of the Bible. My good friend and brother, Dr. T.O. Reese, says: "The subject of eternal punishment is confessedly the most horrible and offensive doctrine held by evangelical Christians. It has been stigmatized as unreasonable, cruel, and God dishonouring, and those who teach and preach it have been called narrow bigots, Pharasaic dogmatists, and heartless theologians."

You can hardly name a modern sect that does not either deny or eviscerate this Bible doctrine. Besides such groups as Christian Science, Russellites, Seventh Dayists, and Christadelphians, there are many individuals in the evangelical denominations who boldly and brazenly deny this truth. We allow that no truth should be rejected merely because heretics may hold it, but when such an imposing array of them is on one side of a question, there is certainly need for serious reflection, and a challenge to "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

We are to preach upon this subject, first of all, because it is a part of the once delivered faith. Whatever God has revealed is to be our study and proclamation. Then, a discussion of this truth will increase the gratitude of the saints for their glorious salvation. They will see that they have been saved from something as well as to something. Moreover, a sermon on this solemn subject may, under God, put fear into the hearts of sinners, and cause them to flee the wrath to come. "Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee" (Job 36:18). "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the

judgment" (Heb. 9:27). "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." (Lk. 13:3).

## **THE NATURE OF MAN**

Man is a compound being of three elements: body, soul, and spirit: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thess. 5:23). We can also think of man as a dual being when we wish to differentiate between that which is material and that which is immaterial. Our Lord divided man into two constituent parts when he admonished us not to fear Him that can only kill the body, but to "fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell (gehenna)." (Matt. 10:28).

The soul being the principal part of man is often employed for the man himself. In "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7), we read that God breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life (Heb. lives) and he became a living soul, that is, a living person, or a living man. In "And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls: for Joseph was in Egypt already" (Exodus 1:5), we are told that seventy souls came out of the loins of Jacob, meaning seventy persons. In "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water" (I Peter 3:20), we learn that eight souls, that is, eight persons were saved by water. The word soul is even applied to a dead person. Numbers 6:6: "...he shall come at no dead body." The word here for body is nephesh (soul), and the clause, if literally rendered, would be, "And he shall not approach a dead soul," that is, a dead person. The word nephesh (soul) is translated body eight times in our English Bible. But this must not be

taken to mean that soul and body are the same, for our Lord clearly distinguished between soul and body.

In the New Testament the immaterial part of man is spoken of as the real person in distinction from the body as the house in which he lives. II Cor. 5:1: "...we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, ...for in this we groan,...." The pronoun "We" so often occurring in this passage stands for the immaterial and invisible part of man, which dwells for a while in the mortal body, and then moves out to go to be with Christ. This certainly teaches conscious existence with the Lord after death.

The Scriptures also teach the conscious existence of the lost after death. The rich man was in conscious suffering after the death of the body, and Lazarus was in conscious comfort. The rich man's body was buried and the soul or spirit of Lazarus was taken into Abraham's bosom by angels. Their experiences after death could not have been bodily experiences, therefore, they were possessed of another element which had conscious existence after death.

## **NOT A PARABLE**

I do not call the story of Lazarus and the rich man a parable. Our Lord did not say, "Hear another parable" neither does the Holy Spirit say that He was speaking in parables. The following extract from a well-known writer is worthy of consideration:

"The rich man and Lazarus I am not free to regard as a parable, while having no controversy with those who so regard it. Not only is it not called a parable, but names are introduced, a thing without precedent in our Lord's parables. I prefer to look at the rich man and Lazarus as actual characters, whose history in this world and beyond is

solemnly traced by the Lord for the moral profit of men everywhere."

What is said of the two men in this life is quite in keeping with actual occurrence, therefore, what is said of them in death and afterwards must also be true to facts. We grant that the physical torment is symbolical, but it is a symbolism of soul torment. Is the symbolism terrible? Then the truth intended to be taught is also terrible.

### **THE MARTYRED STEPHEN**

When Stephen was martyred his body fell in death under a hail of stones, but he said to Christ, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Physical death is the separation of the spirit from the body. James says that "the body without the spirit is dead" (Jas. 2:26).

### **PAUL'S EXPERIENCE**

Paul had some wonderful experiences on account of which he was given a thorn in the flesh to keep him humble. Once he was caught up into paradise, where he heard "unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter" (II Cor. 12:4). He says that he did not know whether he was in the body or out of the body; only God knew. This certainly teaches that a disembodied spirit can consciously exist and be intelligently active. Paul, as some today do, did not think a disembodied spirit is a self contradiction.

## CHAPTER VII

### **THE PUNISHMENT OF SIN - 2**

"The wages of sin is death," God said to Adam, concerning the forbidden fruit, "in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen 2:17). This threatened penalty of death was not pronounced upon Adam as a private individual merely, but as a public and representative person. It was a race penalty. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12). The first sin was a race sin and the penalty thereof must have been a race penalty. The whole human race was in Adam, the first man, both seminally and legally, and his act was considered as their act; not personally but representatively. Every man by nature is guilty with Adam's guilt, just as every believer is righteous with Christ's righteousness. Believers are not righteous personally, that is, by their own obedience; they are righteous representatively by the obedience of Christ, their Surety.

The death threatened against, and passed unto, all men was not a corporeal death merely. Physical death is a mere incident and is not universal. There have been two notable exceptions (Enoch and Elijah), and there will be many alive, who will not die physically, when the Lord returns. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed ... for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (I Cor. 15:51,52). Furthermore, physical death did not occur until some 930 years after the sin was

committed; whereas God said, "in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen 2:17).

The death which passed unto all men was the loss of divine favor and exposedness to divine wrath. It was not the death of man considered as a physical being but as a moral and accountable being. Moral death was the result of a break with God. Man broke with God when he tried to seize the reins of government and do as he pleased. Sin separates from God and brings His condemnation. Physical death is the result of the separation of the body and spirit "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (Jas. 2:26). Moral death is the result of separation of man as a moral being from God. The sinner, although alive physically, is alienated from the life of God "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" (Eph. 4:18); "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled" (Col. 1:21).

## **LIFE AND DEATH**

The words life and death are antonyms, and it is axiomatic that a man cannot be both dead and alive in the same sense at the same time. But one may be dead in one sense and alive in another sense at the same time. This is obvious from the saying of our Lord: "But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead" (Matt 8:22). He meant for those dead morally to bury the physical dead.

Life and death are not synonyms of existence and non-existence, but rather of condition of existence. Death never means non-existence or the cessation of being. In the moral sense life is a condition of existence, and death is the opposite condition of existence. To have life as a moral being

is to exist under the favor of God and to be free from the wrath to come. To be dead as a moral being is to exist without His favor and to be exposed to His wrath. This will become more apparent as we continue these discussions.

## **THE SECOND DEATH**

The second death is punishment in the lake of fire. And this will be for both soul and body of the lost. Physical death is not everlasting, for "there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust" (Acts 24:15). Death (dead bodies) and hades (lost souls) are to be cast into the lake of fire. "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death" (Revelation 20:14). And this is the second death. We will not here and now give proof that the second death is eternal. This will come out in a later article (D.V.). However, it does not seem reasonable that the fire will burn them up in the sense of putting them out of conscious existence. If this were true the only difference between the martyred saints and the wicked would be in time and place of suffering. The martyrs (many of them) were burned to death, and if their tormentors are only to be burned up and put out of existence, then their salvation was not the previous thing they supposed it to be. A brother who believes in conditional immortality wrote me that he knew of no Scripture that taught that the wicked would suffer in hell longer than five minutes. Cheap salvation! Sweet morsel to the wicked! If that were true.

Man is both a physical and a psychic being, that is, he has both body and soul. As a physical being his body was made of the same substance as that of the beasts of the field. "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul....And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought



them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof" (Genesis 2:7,19). As a psychic being he became a living soul when God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (Heb. lives). This is not said concerning the origin of the soul of the beast. The beast has a soul (this will be proven later), but it did not get its soul like man got his. Man as the acme of creation was made in the image of God, which must mean that he has something which does not belong to the beast of the field. This image of God in man is spirit. God is a Spirit and man must have a spirit to be in His image. In making man a living soul, God communicated to him that which made him in His image. Man, by virtue of his creation, has a body and a soul which gives him kinship with the beasts, but he also has a spirit which relates him to God. F.W. Grant makes a very helpful distinction between the soul and spirit:

"The "soul," is in Scripture the seat of the passions, emotions, sensibility, as the spirit of the mental and moral judgment. These latter, in any real sense, the beast has not. The spirit it is which is in man, which knows the things of a man "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (I Cor. 2:11). But he learns them, gathering the materials of judgment through the soul-the senses; and as the body begins to develop before even the soul, so does the soul before the spirit. Spirit in man depends, thus, really upon the soul; and it is striking that just when absent from the body his real distinction begins to manifest it self. The soul survives, indeed, the stroke of death; but is now called what he never was before, a 'spirit' "But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit....Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have"

(Luke 24:37,39); "For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both. And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God" (Acts 23:8,9); "To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect" (Heb. 12:23): "By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;" (I Peter 3:19).

Grant tells us that man is called Adam, from Adamah (Heb.), the ground, to remind him of his origin "dust thou art"; and he is called a soul to remind him of his likeness to the beasts; but he is never called a spirit until after he takes his departure from the body. We read of the spirits of just men made perfect, and of spirits in prison.

## **THE FIRST DEATH**

Man as a physical and also a moral being is subject to two kinds of death: namely, physical and moral. There is only one physical death for any man. "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). Notice the accuracy of Scripture. It is not "man" the generic, but "men" as individuals. Physical death is not appointed for "man" the whole race, but for men. We have already pointed out exceptions.

Man considered as a moral being may experience two deaths: the first and the second. All who are saved will experience but one death; all who are not saved will experience two deaths. "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death" (Rev. 2:11). Nobody has escaped the first death, for that death passed upon all men.

The first death is also clearly defined in the Scriptures. It is to be "dead in law," or judicial death. It is to be dead in trespasses and sins. It is death in the sense of guilt and depravity. It is the death of condemnation. The antithesis of judicial death is "justification of life." "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life" (Rom. 5:18). "He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24). Everlasting life is equivalent to justification and is opposed to condemnation. As a moral being the believer is justified by God, and will never be condemned. He has passed out from under the curse of God's law and exists under the favor of God. Life and death in the judicial sense are generally overlooked by commentators.

The believer is told to "reckon himself as dead to sin and alive to God through Jesus Christ" (Rom. 6:11). This means that the believer is dead to the guilt of sin--no longer exposed to the wrath of God; and that he is alive or justified before God by virtue of the imputed righteousness of Christ. We also have this aspect of life and death in I John 5:12: "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." And again in John 3:36: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." The sword of divine justice hangs over the head of the unbeliever; the benedictions of the heavenly Father are pronounced upon the believer in Christ.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE PUNISHMENT OF SIN - 3

We are hearing much about the complacency of the American public concerning the outcome of this war. But there is a complacency far more prevalent and in the face of infinitely greater danger. There is a complacent attitude towards HELL that is so alarming as to be shocking and heart-breaking. And it is our firm conviction that this complacency is the result of failure to preach the truth on the solemn and momentous subject of eternal punishment. Those denominations that deny eternal punishment have literally sown the country down with their pernicious proaganda. They have put their "no hell" doctrine in nearly every home in the land, while we Baptists and other evangelicals have hardly raised our voice in giving the truth on the subject.

We have our theme songs for certain occasions; why not have our theme texts for the present distress? And let them be after the order of Matt. 10:28: "And fear not them which kill the body, but fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Gehenna). Too much of our preaching is for entertainment rather than for information. We are trying to have conversions without conviction. We are calling the self-righteous into the church when we ought to be calling sinners to repentance. We are breaking alabaster boxes and filling our sermons with the odor of spikenard when we ought to be telling the truth about human depravity. We are tying pink ribbons of perfection about the necks of our people when we

ought to be waving the red flag of warning. We have let our prejudice for heaven hide the terrible realities of hell.

## **A STUDY OF WORDS**

Those who oppose the truth of eternal punishment make a show of wisdom and confuse the average person by their use of Hebrew and Greek words. We make no claim to scholarship, and anybody who can even use Young's Analytical Concordance can follow us in this study of words.

### **QEBER AND SHEOL**

QEBER is the Old Testament word for grave and is always used in connection with the body. It is translated grave or its equivalent in every place. It is never used in connection with the soul.

SHEOL is the Old Testament word for the unseen state, and is the place of departed spirits. It never means the grave; although in the King James Version it is wrongly translated grave 31 times. In the Revised Version it is brought into the English text without being translated.

Man has both body and soul and in death QEBER is the word used of the disposition of his body and SHEOL speaks of the disposition of his soul . There is conclusive evidence that the two words are not interchangeable. QEBER, the grave, refers to locality; SHEOL, the state of disembodied souls, is a condition.

QEBER occurs in the plural 27 times; SHEOL never occurs in the plural. The burial of one hundred bodies in a cemetery would mean one hundred graves, but the entrance of one hundred souls into SHEOL would not mean one hundred SHEOLS, but the one state of disembodiment.

QEBER is referred to as the exclusive QEBER, or grave, of an individual. For example, "my grave (qeber)" in Genesis 50:5; "grave" (qeber) of Abner II Sam. 3:32; "their graves" (Jer. 8:1). etc.

SHEOL is never spoken of as the exclusive SHEOL of any person. The one condition of disembodiment is common to all who have died.

SHEOL is associated with pain and sorrow. "The sorrows of hell (sheol) compassed me about," (I Sam. 22:6). "The pains of hell (sheol) got hold upon me," (Ps. 116:3).

QEBER is never associated with suffering, for the body in the grave is unconscious, and cannot feel pain or experience sorrow. SHEOL is always connected with the soul, never with the body. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (sheol)." (Ps. 16:10). QEBER is never connected with the soul, but always with the body.

## **HADES AND MNEMEION**

These are New Testament Greek words and are identical with the Old Testament Hebrew words SHEOL and QEBER. Hades, like SHEOL, means the unseen state of the disembodied soul; MNEMEION, like QEBER, means the grave. All that has been said about QEBER may also be said about MNEMEION, for both are connected with the body and mean the grave. And to prove that SHEOL and hades are identical it is sufficient to compare an Old Testament Scripture with the New Testament quotation:

"Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (sheol); neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption," (Ps. 16:10).

"Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (hades); neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (Acts 2:27).

The reference in the above verses is to our Lord. His soul was in SHEOL or HADES between His death and resurrection. His body was in the grave, but it did not see corruption. This condition of body in death was peculiar to Christ. Of David it is said that he "fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: But he whom God raised again, saw no corruption" (Acts 13:36,37). "Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption" (Acts 2:27-31).

## **THE SEPTUAGINT**

This is the name of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament made by the Jews of Alexandria, about 280 B.C., under order of Ptolemy Philadelphus, King of Egypt. In this Greek translation, out of the 65 times in which the word SHEOL occurs, the seventy render it Hades 61 times. Not once do they translate it grave (MNEMEION).

## **GEHENNA**

This is a new word introduced by our Lord. Gehenna is translated hell nine times and hell-fire three times. It belongs almost exclusively to the vocabulary of our Saviour, being found only one time: "And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it

is set on fire of hell" (Jas. 3:6), when not employed by Him. Gehenna is the place of eternal punishment, and the only word rightly translated hell. It is not the grave, the place for dead bodies; nor is it hades, the place of departed souls. It is the place for both soul and body of the wicked after their resurrection and judgment. Hades is temporary, as also is physical death. "And death (thanatos) and hell (hades) were cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:14). Gehenna (hell is eternal). "...two hands to go into hell (gehenna), into the fire that never shall be quenched" (Mk. 9:43).

Gehenna is the Grecianized form of Ge-hinnom (valley of Hinnom), which became a place of the heathen worship, not far from Jerusalem. Ahaz and Manasseh were promoters of foreign religions and set up the horrible worship of Moloch, the god of the Ammonites, in this Valley of Hinnom. Moloch was represented by a hideous ox-headed human figure made of iron and hollow. A fire was built in this image and when it was red hot a living child would be cast into its arms and thus sacrificed to this heathen god. The good king Josiah put a stop to this idol worship "And he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech" (II Kings 23:10). This valley later on became the city dump for Jerusalem and the garbage of the city was kept continually burning. And because the fires never went out, our Lord employed it as the symbol of the lake of fire, the place of eternal punishment. While a fit emblem of hell, it must be carefully noted that our Lord in speaking of Gehenna never referred to the city dump of Jerusalem except as an emblem to designate that place of eternal torment for the wicked. He was not saying that all the lost will be thrown into the valley of Hinnom. The city dump of Jerusalem is not the place of eternal punishment, but only an emblem or figure of it.



## CHAPTER IX

### **THE PUNISHMENT OF SIN - 4**

In this article we wish to deal more specifically with the duration of the punishment to be meted out to the finally impenitent and unbelieving. The Bible is quite clear and explicit that the punishment is to be eternal or endless.

The Annihilationists try to make a distinction between eternal punishment and eternal punishing. A man remarked to us only a few days ago that he believed in eternal punishment but not in eternal punishing. We reminded him that the words were the same: that punishment is the noun form and punishing the verb. Moreover, in the expression, "eternal punishing," the participle is used as a noun, and therefore, means the same as "eternal punishment". In a certain conference of Annihilationists, they put forth this statement: "We believe in eternal punishment, not eternal punishing---the latter a great delusion, the former a great truth." But this is a distinction without a difference. When A.J. Pollock was once told by two Adventists that eternal punishment does not mean eternal punishing, he asked: "Does three months' punishment mean three months punishing?" They admitted that it does. "Then, he replied, eternal punishment means eternal punishing."

**DESTROY -PERISH-LOSE-CONSUME -BURN -UP**

There are some who contend that the above words mean to annihilate or to put out of existence. We affirm that they speak

of the destruction of well-being, and not the destruction of being. They speak of ruin but not of loss of existence.

Hos. 13:9 "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thine help." Here God is addressing people who have destroyed themselves, but they are still conscious, and are told their help is in Him.

Job. 19:10; "He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone." But Job was still in existence, and lamenting the ruin or destruction that had been visited upon him by God.

Jer. 5:3: "Thou hast consumed them but they have refused to receive correction." How could they have refused to receive instruction if they had been annihilated? A good way to test the definition of any word is to substitute the definition for the word. Let the reader go back and substitute the word annihilation for the words destroy and consume in the above passages, and he will readily see that they do not mean annihilation.

The Greek word "apollumi" is variously translated into the English by such words as destroy, perish, and lose. That this word does not mean annihilation is obvious when we study verses where it is used. Paul says that if his Gospel is hid to the lost (apollumi). And he says that the preaching of the cross is to them that are perishing (apollumi) foolishness. In John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" , "apollumi" is translated perish and is contrasted with everlasting life in Christ, which is judicial life, or everlasting existence under the favor and blessing of God. In John 3:36 "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" , we read that he who does not trust Christ shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth (remaineth) on him. The prodigal was

said to be lost (apollumi). The woman's coin was lost (apollumi). The sheep were lost (apollumi). How obvious that the word "apollumi" does not mean extinction of being! Another word in the Greek is "katakaia" translated burn in our English Bible. It is not the word which means to burn as a lamp, for profit; it means to burn so as to hurt or injure. The wicked are likened to worthless chaff and tares: "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable" (Lk. 3:17), but the burning of these things is not the same as burning men with bodies and souls. Of the burning of the wicked it is written, "their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched" (Mk. 9:46). "Their worm," refers to something that does not die, and "the fire" speaks of fire that is not quenched. Dr. Gill thinks the worm is the conscience which will continually remind the wicked of their sins, accuse them, upbraid them, and torment them. "For every one shall be salted with fire and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt," (Mk. 9:49). This is the most terrible picture ever given of the punishment of the wicked, and it is clearly a picture of endless suffering.

## **EVERLASTING AND ETERNAL**

Opponents of eternal punishment claim that the primary meaning of "aion" and "aionios" is not endless. But if they had to translate from the English back into the Greek they would have to use "aion," and "aionios" as the meaning of everlasting or eternal. If these words do not mean everlasting then we do not have any words in the Greek to denote endlessness.

We are fortunate to have a Scriptural definition of "aionios." In "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" (II

Cor. 4:18), it is contrasted with the word temporal (proskairos); "but the things which are not seen are eternal (aionios)." The word proskairos (temporal) is found in three other places in the New Testament. In "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;" (Heb. 11:25), it is translated "for a season" referring to the "for a while," and in "And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended" (Mark 4:17), it is translated "but for a time." Now in contrast "aionios" speaks of that which is not for a season, or for a while, but for ever.

Mosheim, a man of unquestioned learning, says that "aion" properly signifies indefinite or eternal duration, as opposite to that which is finite or temporal.

"Aionios" is used in the Greek New Testament 68 times, and in every instance the word in itself has the meaning of endless duration. Here are a few texts to be pondered. "The eternal God" (Rom. 16:26); "The eternal Spirit" (Heb. 9:19); "Eternal redemption" (Heb. 9:12); "Eternal salvation" (Heb. 5:9); "Eternal life" (John 3:15,16,36; 5:24); "Eternal glory" (II Tim. 2:10); "To be cast into everlasting fire" (Matt. 18:8). Now take a text where life and punishment are in contrast: "And these shall go away into everlasting (aionios) punishment but the righteous into life eternal" (aionios). Matt. 25:46. If the life of the believer is eternal then the punishment of the wicked is eternal; else words have no meaning.

This is a good place to say that everlasting and eternal are adjectives of duration and not of quality or kind. They do not describe the kind of life the believer has, nor the kind of punishment for the lost, but the duration of life and the duration of punishment.

The only way to oppose the doctrine of eternal punishment is to oppose the Bible. Opposition to this truth is born of prejudice and sentimentality, and sets aside the Word of God. One writer bluntly says:

"If the Bible teaches "everlasting punishment," so much the worse for the Bible, because we cannot believe it: you may quote texts and have behind the texts the very finest scholarship to justify certain interpretations, but it is no good. We are no longer slaves of a Book, nor the blind devotees of a creed; we believe in love and evolution."

And another writer writes thus: "Of course God cannot be just if He arbitrarily and rigidly predestines millions to endless torment. Hence if holding to the dogma of endless torment, logically rejects predestination to save divine justice."

This last question "lets the cat out of the bag," and reveals the real ground of opposition. God's right to punish sin is denied. Men dare to sit upon the bench and tell God what He can justly do with His enemies. Who fixes the penalty for sin, anyway, the criminal or the court? We are reminded that "No thief e'er felt the halter draw with good opinion of the law."

## **DEGREES IN PUNISHMENT**

The Bible is plain that all sinners will not suffer the same. It will be more tolerable for some than for others. It shall be easier on the heathen countries than on those which have spurned Gospel privileges. "But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you...But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee" (Matt. 11:22,24); "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall

be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city" (Mk. 6:11). "...unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required" (Lk. 12:48). Judgment is to be according to works: "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works" (Rev. 20:13). Degrees in punishment does not mean that some will be more severe than others. "Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation" (Mark 12:40), speaks of some who shall receive greater damnation. "Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee," (Job 36:18).

## PART II - THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

# CHAPTER I

## THE NATURE OF SALVATION

Salvation--the most important word ever uttered, and yet how meaningless to the masses whose minds are set on things on the earth!

Salvation--the greatest blessing that can possibly come to a human soul, and without which it would be better never to have been born, and yet the most neglected thing in the world!

Salvation--the blessed gift of God--without money and without price--paid for by His blessed Son, and yet that which conceited men think they can earn with their own puny hands!

Salvation presupposes the fact of sin. And sin involves a Supreme Being Whom we call God. If there is no God, there can be no sin, and if there is no sin, there can be no sinners, and if there are no sinners to be saved, there can be no salvation. Salvation means deliverance, and Bible salvation is deliverance from sin.

Sin consists of a guilty standing and a depraved state before God. Salvation is deliverance from both guilt and defilement. Salvation is to be made safe and sound in relation to the thrice-holy God. Man, as a sinner, is in danger from the wrath of a holy and just God, and is also outside the pale of Divine fellowship. Salvation is deliverance from the eternal consequences of rebellion against the government of Almighty God. Without salvation the sinner is forever excluded from the



glorious presence of God and forever exposed to the terrible wrath of God.

## **THE NEED OF SALVATION**

In the light of eternity salvation is the only need. In comparison all other needs fade into insignificance. All other needs are temporal; salvation is for eternity. All other blessings are for a season; salvation is an everlasting blessing. It is called everlasting life. The opposite of everlasting life is everlasting punishment in the lake of fire, called the second death.

Salvation covers every eternal need. It covers the housing problem, for in the Father's house are many mansions. It covers the food problem, for Christ is the bread of life of which one may eat and never hunger. It covers the employment problem, for the saved will serve God day and night in His temple. It covers the social problem, for the saved of all the earth will sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God--all language and cultural barriers will vanish. It covers the health problem, for in the new heavens and the new earth there will be no more pain, for the former things are passed away. Moreover, God Himself shall dwell with His people, and will wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Salvation is a universal need, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Every normal person has a guilt complex. A New York preacher once announced as his subject, "How to Get Rid of Guilty Feelings." He told the audience he would pause while all who were free of guilty feelings might leave the building. To his surprise nobody left. He said he would not have been surprised if it had been a small town congregation where everybody would be known to each other, but in New York where all were more or less strangers to one another, he had not expected all of them to

acknowledge they were sinners. But that New York congregation were true to their feelings in this matter-every one of them had a guilt complex. This, in itself, is proof of the existence of God. Conscience testifies loudly to the fact that there is a God with whom we have to do.

The story of religion is made up of the efforts men make to get rid of guilty feeling. This is the explanation of what is called "conscience money;" the thief is trying to get rid of his guilty feelings by returning what he had stolen. This is why the Romanist goes to confessional; he is wanting to get something off his conscience. This is the explanation of Communism; the Communist rids himself of a guilty feeling, if and when he can persuade himself to believe there is no God to Whom he must give an account. The very fact that the atheist raves against the idea of God indicates that his own conscience gives him trouble on the question. This accounts for all heathen religions; people are striving to get rid of guilty feelings. It explains the faith of God's elect; they are trusting Christ for acceptance with God and freedom from condemnation.

Human nature is bad. The Bible does not have one good thing to say about man apart from the inwrought grace of God. The Bible says "the carnal mind is enmity against God;... and that they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:7,8). Man, as a sinner, is beyond repairs; he must be born again--- there must be a new creation. Donald F. Ackland puts this truth in another way, when he says that sin has created a God-shaped vacuum in the human heart, and that the story of religion is the way men try to fill that vacuum.

We do not find human nature fully developed in countries where gospel privileges have been enjoyed over a long period of time. Christ said that His people would be the salt of the earth. Salt is a preservative, and saved people will preserve

human society from utter moral corruption. Many are blessed temporarily by the gospel who are not eternally saved by it. Humanity as such is safer in a community where there are Christian people.

When Carey went to India about 165 years ago, he found human nature in the rough, human nature fully developed. Andrew Fuller tells us what Carey found in India. He found religions by which the natives were trying to get rid of guilty feelings. These religions consisted in a large part in self torment. One would hold his hand above his head until it would be so stiff he could not take it down. Another would lie on iron spikes just blunt enough not to pierce him to death. They had what was called the worship of the Juggernaut. A massive wooden god was carried on a huge carriage drawn by many men howling and shrieking, and anyone who would throw himself under its wheels to be crushed to death was counted happy. Another part of their religion was the burning of widows on the funeral pyre of their dead husbands. It was common to throw new-born infants into the river as offerings to the gods. And the baby that would not take its mother's milk would be placed in a basket and hung in the branches of a tree to be devoured by ants and birds of prey. And that was human nature---the same nature possessed by both writer and reader. God be praised for the grace that made us new creatures in Christ.

## **PREREQUISITES TO SALVATION**

There must be a just basis for salvation, else God would cease to be just in forgiving sin. There can be no salvation at the expense of justice. And justice cannot be dispensed apart from the punishment of sin. There is no miscarriage of justice in heaven's court, for every sin shall receive a just recompense of reward. Divine justice must be vindicated and the law of God must be upheld in the case of every sinner. In

the death of Jesus Christ, God's eternal Son, there is a just basis for salvation. Christ died the Just for the unjust. He redeemed us from the curse of the law by being made a curse for us. He was made to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God through faith in Him. Christ put away the guilt of sin by the sacrifice of Himself. God forgives the sinner for the sake of Christ. As our Surety He paid the sin-debt to the last farthing. As our Substitute He took our place under the law and died the very kind of death which denoted that He was accursed of God (Cf. Gen 33:13 and Deut. 21:23). Terrible price to pay for our salvation, but it was what the law of God demanded and the only way in which God could be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus: "To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26). "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Heb. 2:10). Christ could not be a perfect Saviour apart from suffering the just demands of the law for His people.

## **VARIOUS ASPECTS OF SALVATION**

We have seen in previous articles that sin has wrought awful havoc with the human race. It has ruined every man and every part of man. The consequences of sin are manifold, and there is an aspect of salvation for every aspect of sin. And there is a Bible word by which each of the several parts or aspects of salvation is described. If the sinner be viewed as in a state of death, then regeneration or the new birth is the Bible word to denote the impartation of life. If the sinner is considered as a child of the devil, then adoption is the term which expresses the judicial act of God by which he is made a son of God. If we think of the sinner from the standpoint of his body, being mortal and having in it the germs of death by which it will be turned into a dust-heap, then glorification is

that aspect of salvation in which the body will be fashioned like unto the glorious body of Christ. If the lost person be regarded as in a state of depravity or moral defilement, sanctification is the work making him holy and pure before God. If we think of the sinner as in a state of spiritual darkness unable to understand the gospel, then calling is the Bible term to express the act of God giving light by which the sinner can see or understand that Christ crucified is the wisdom and power of God in the plan of salvation. If the sinner be thought of as in a position of condemnation-- cursed by God's law he has violated---then justification speaks of his perfect standing before the throne of God. If salvation be approached from the standpoint of the eternal purpose of God, according to which He graciously saves sinners, then election and predestination are the Bible terms which denote the choice and destiny of God's people.

## **THE THREE TENSES OF SALVATION**

Some aspects of salvation are instantaneous, while others are progressive. The deliverance from the guilt of sin is at the very instant of faith; the deliverance from the defilement of sin is a long process, in which the believer experiences pain as well as pleasure. While mourning over indwelling sin, he rejoices in-hope--the well founded expectation---of the glory of God. The believer rejoices in Christ, has no confidence in the flesh, and painfully longs to be perfectly whole. Being poor in spirit, conscious of his lack of personal worthiness he expects God to perfect that which concerneth him. He believes that God who began the good work of grace in him will perform it until the day of Christ. The believer is perfectly justified---no charge can be laid to his account---but he is not yet glorified, and will not be until Christ comes and he awakes in His likeness. It is positively beyond comprehension what God has prepared for them that love Him. And may we not forget that we love Him

because He first loved us, and loosed us from our sins in His own blood.

## **SALVATION BY GRACE**

Salvation is by grace, which means that it is undeserved, and also that there is no divine obligation to save any sinner. Salvation by grace means that it is not of debt or reward, but is the free gift of God. God might have left every one of us to his fate, to perish in his sins. It was love in God and not loveableness in the sinner that accounts for salvation. "God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). Salvation is, therefore, the gracious and sovereign work of God. All our graces are children of His grace and the fruit of His Spirit "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:22,23). From foreknowledge in eternity past to glorification in eternity future, salvation is all of grace, "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). God thinks so much of His only begotten Son that He has determined to make all His sons just like Him. And there is no human merit or human strength at any stage or in any aspect of salvation. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9).

"Lord, I was blind: I could not see  
In Thy marred visage any grace;  
But now the beauty of Thy face  
In radiant vision dawns on me.

"Lord, I was dead: I could not stir  
My lifeless soul to come to Thee;

But now, since thou has quickened me,  
I rise from sin's dark sepulche.

"Lord, Thou hast made the blind to see,  
The deaf to hear, the dumb to speak,  
The dead to live; and lo, I break  
The chains of my captivity."

--Matson, 1833-99.

## CHAPTER I I

# THE GOSPEL-WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT DOES

Paul was called by the Lord to be a foreign missionary, and is known as the Apostle to the Gentiles. As he lay on the ground on the Damascus road, Christ said to him, Get up, for I am sending thee to the Gentiles: "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26:18). After his conversion, commission, and baptism, Paul preached Christ in the synagogues of Damascus, proving Jesus to be the very Christ to the discomfiting of the Jews. Because of a plot to kill him, the Apostle goes to Arabia for a season, returning to Damascus, and three years later going to Jerusalem. For the second time, Paul is told that he is to go far hence to the Gentiles; that the people of Jerusalem will not receive his testimony. In obedience to this call, Paul blazes a trail deeper and deeper into heathen territory. He wants to preach the gospel where Christ was not named, so that he might not build upon another man's foundation. In this spirit of a pioneer he wants to go to Rome and then to Spain. He wants converts at Rome as well as among the Gentiles. He is not ashamed to preach the Gospel anywhere, although he knew it would be met with scorn and contempt. However, he did not expect to preach in vain, and so he says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of



Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth ;...." (Rom 1:16).

To understand the audacity of these words we must listen to them with the ears of a Roman. Here was a little insignificant Jew with his head full of notions about another Jew whom the Roman governor had delivered to be crucified in order to satisfy other Jews and keep order in the province. This was what the natural Roman would think about Paul and his message. But Paul knew that he had good news which would bring salvation to every one who would believe it.

## **WHAT IS THE GOSPEL**

We are fortunate to have a direct Scriptural statement of what the gospel is, but for the sake of clarity, and by way of amplification, we shall treat the question both negatively and positively.

### **NEGATIVELY:**

1. The Bible is not the gospel. This is entirely too vague and general as a definition of the gospel. The Bible does indeed contain the gospel, but it contains other truths also. All Bible truth is not gospel truth. In the Bible there is truth about law and sin and death and judgment and numerous other things that are not the gospel. One may preach the gospel. Many think the Old Testament is the law and the New Testament is the gospel. But the truth is that both law and gospel are found in both Testaments. Some of the finest gospel texts are in the Old Testament, while some of the strongest law texts are in the New Testament. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is full of the gospel; from this chapter Philip preached Jesus to the eunuch and he was saved. Paul and others had only the Old Testament from which to preach the gospel.

The law should be preached, just as all the Bible should be preached. The law, properly preached, will reveal to men that they are sinners and slay their self-righteousness. For this purpose Christ preached the law to the rich young man: "And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" (Matt. 19:16), and to a certain lawyer "And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 10:25). By the law is the knowledge of sin. Paul did not know that he was a lost sinner until he saw what the law required: "For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died" (Rom. 7:9). The law tells man what he ought to do; the gospel tells the sinner what Christ has done. The law condemns the best man; the gospel justifies the worst man. The law makes demands; the gospel bestows blessings. The law deals in justice: the gospel deals in mercy. The law belongs to the covenant of works; the gospel belongs to the covenant of grace.

2. Baptism is not the gospel. Paul clearly differentiated between baptism and the gospel when he said, "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel" (I Cor. 11:17). He reminded the Corinthians of the few he had baptized, and then to the church as a whole he said, "I have begotten you through the gospel" (I Cor. 4:15).

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are not saving sacraments, but preaching symbols. They do not procure salvation, but proclaim salvation through Christ. They are not saving acts, but contain a saving message in symbol or picture. Baptism does indeed wash away sin symbolically or figuratively, but the blood of Christ washes it away actually. Baptism has its place in the Christian life, but it must not become a substitute for the blood of Christ as an object of faith or trust.

3. The Church is not the gospel. Joining the church is not the same as believing the gospel. One should believe the gospel before joining the church.

4. The new birth is not the gospel. The new birth is an experience---a work wrought in us; the gospel is the good news of something done for us. The gospel is objective light (II Cor. 4:4); the new birth gives subjective light so that the gospel can be savingly understood: "For 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" (II Cor. 4:6); "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). The gospel is the story of what Christ did on the cross; the new birth is what the Holy Spirit does in us when He imparts life to us. Justification is the result of Christ's death for us "But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;" (Rom. 4:24); regeneration is the effect of the Holy Spirit's work in us. Justification is life imputed; regeneration is life imparted.

5. Repentance is not the gospel. Repentance is what the sinner must do to be saved; the gospel is what Christ has already done for our salvation. "Repent ye and believe the gospel." Here repentance and the gospel are differentiated. No man is saved by faith in his repentance; he is saved by faith in the gospel.

6. Faith is not the gospel. The gospel is the object of faith. Saving faith is in the gospel. Faith does not save; it is faith in the gospel that saves. We do not have a perfect faith to be saved, but there must be a perfect gospel.

## **POSITIVELY:**

1. The gospel is good news. The acid test of a gospel message: is it good news to bad men? The gospel is for sinners; it is the revelation of the righteousness God has provided through Christ for the unrighteous: "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17).

2. The gospel is good news about a person, the Lord Jesus Christ. "For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Men are not saved by doing this and that, or going here and there; they are saved by coming to the Lord Jesus Christ, who has so graciously said, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37b). Salvation is not a matter of geography. There is not a safe spot from the wrath of God anywhere. Salvation is not in bodily flight; it is in heart trust in Him Who is our passover, sacrificed for us.

3. The gospel consists of certain historical facts with a certain and particular theory or explanation of those facts. The facts are given us in I Cor. 15:3,4: ". . . Christ died for our sins ....; was buried, and .... rose again .." Or as Paul puts it in Rom. 4:25: "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

The least part of a fact is the visible part of it, and has no meaning without an explanation, and so Paul not only gives the facts but also explains them. The mere fact that Jesus of Nazareth was crucified is no more the gospel than that the two criminals were crucified beside Him. It is the explanation of the facts that makes His death the gospel rather than their deaths. His death was the death of Christ, the Son of God, and it was for our sins.

Christ, the Son of God, died for our sins. What does that mean? Some claim that it merely means that Christ died on our behalf, but not our Substitute. They insist that we should have no theory of the atonement, but with a little investigation we find that such people have a theory of the atonement. Let them tell us how Christ could die on our behalf---how His death could save us-unless He died as our Substitute to render satisfaction to Divine justice for our sins. For His death to save us, it must cancel our guilt before the law of God, and how could it cancel our guilt unless He suffered for the guilt that was ours? He suffered, the Just for the Unjust, and how could this be unless He suffered in our room and stead? Christ dying as a martyr for a good cause, or as a mere example of faithfulness unto death, or as a gesture of love to conquer the human heart, would in no sense redeem sinners from the curse of the law. Divine justice calls for Divine punishment, and the only way the sinner can escape judgment is for Christ to bear the punishment due the sinner. Those who deny blood atonement worship a god different to that of the Bible, and practice a religion different to that of the Bible.

## **WHAT THE GOSPEL DOES**

In a word, it saves all who trust it. And the gospel to be trusted is what Christ, the Son of God, did in laying down His life for our sins and taking it up again for our justification. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom.1:16) is usually made to mean that the preaching of the gospel has power to convert sinners, that is, to make believers. But this is not what the verse says. It is the power of God to or for believers. It presupposes a believer. The gospel saves believers, but it has no power to make believers. The preaching of the gospel is the means of making believers, for faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by

the word of God. We repeat, that the preaching of the gospel is the necessary means to faith, for "how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" If sinners are saved, the gospel must be preached to them as the means to faith and resultant salvation. However, there is a difference between means to faith and the power for faith. The power to make believers is in the effectual call of the Holy Spirit. Paul preached Christ crucified indiscriminately to the Jew and Greek. To the natural Jew such a gospel was a stumbling block, and to the natural Greek it was foolishness; but the called, both Jews and Greeks, saw the wisdom and power of God in the plan of salvation through a crucified Christ.

The apostle is not writing about the power of his preaching, but of the power of what he preached. What he preached, Christ crucified, had power to cancel the sin-debt. We sing "There is power in the blood," by which we mean that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin. That which is shameful and foolish to the masses is the very thing God uses to save sinners. What Christ did in death and resurrection has power to cancel the sin-debt. The gospel was provided by God; it was not a human expedient. God put His Son to death; He laid on Christ our iniquity. We are not saved because men killed Jesus: that was murder. We are saved because He was stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. God sacrificed His own Son for our safety. Amazing and sensational?-- yes! But we must remember that sin is terrible in its nature and effects, and nothing but a sensational remedy will avail.

## **ILLUSTRATION**

Here is a man who has committed murder for which the penalty is death by hanging. The murderer was acting as the tool of another man who, himself, was under sentence of death, with no provision for pardon. But the law allows a

substitute for the murderer. The substitute is found and is hanged in the murderer's place out of love for the doomed man. Now the death of the substitute cancels the guilt of the murderer and sets him free. It is the power of the court and also power with the court. The court is satisfied with the death of the substitute and the guilty man goes free. It is the power of the court and also power with the court that is satisfied with the death of the substitute and the guilty man goes free. To interpret this parable: man became a sinner against God as a dupe of the devil, who was already a sinner under sentence with no provision for pardon. The Divine law allowed a substitute for the human sinner. The Son of God gladly gave Himself as the sinner's substitute, suffering, the Just for the unjust, that the sinner might not perish in his sins.

## **BENEFICIARIES OF THE GOSPEL**

Paul says, "To every one that believeth." The death of Christ does nobody any good who scorns it and refuses to trust it. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

A fuller discussion of saving faith must be reserved for a later article the Lord enabling. However, there is space for a few words here and now. There is so much that passes for faith, that we must be on our guard lest we mistake what saving faith is. Saving faith is something more than the mere assent of the mind to a proposition, however true; it is heart trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Saving faith is not being satisfied with self; it is being satisfied with what Christ did on the cross for our salvation. One who is once satisfied with Christ will never be satisfied with anything else.

The value of faith depends upon the worth of its object. If I trust an object or a person that cannot or is not willing to save

me, then my faith has no value---it is vain faith, however strong. Faith itself may be dangerous, as well as saving. It is safe to trust the Lord Jesus Christ, because He is both willing and able to save. He is able to save because He is alive. No dead person can be a real Saviour, and must not be an object of faith. It is the office of a priest to make sinners right with God. Old Testament Priests could not make sinners right with God because of two things; they could not continue as priests, and they did not have saving sacrifices to offer---the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin. But Christ continues forever, and hath an unchangeable priesthood: "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). Here is ground for saving faith, and a challenge to strong faith. Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

"HALLELUJAH! Jesus saves me;  
Oh, the sweet and precious story!  
I will give Him all the Glory,  
And adore His love to me.

"HALLELUJAH! Jesus hears me;  
When in prayer His throne addressing,  
While in faith I seek His blessing,  
Then His smile revealed I see.

"HALLELUJAH! Jesus leads me;  
I will doubt His promise never,  
But believing, followed ever  
Him who gave His life for me.

"HALLELUJAH! Jesus keeps me;  
In the Rock He safely hides me,  
Every comfort He provides me,  
Never friend so dear as He."

[Return to Contents](#)



## CHAPTER III

### ELECTION

Every person who has any respect for the Bible will admit that there is a doctrine or teaching about ELECTION. Concerning this doctrine Christendom has split into two camps. Those denominations which believe salvation to be wholly of divine grace apart from any human merit at any and every point, have made deliberate statements in their confessions of faith, while those who have a place for human merit have left the matter out of their confessions. For example, when Mr. Wesley broke with the Church of England, he made certain changes in The Thirty Nine Articles, eliminating entirely the Seventeenth which relates to Predestination and Election. However, Mr. Wesley did express himself on the question. In one place he speaks thus: "The Scriptures tell us plainly what predestination is: it is God's foreappointing obedient believers to salvation, not without, but according to His foreknowledge, of all their works from the foundation of the world." God, from the foundation of the world foreknew all men's believing or not believing. And according to this, His foreknowledge, He chose or elected all obedient believers, as such to salvation.

#### CONDITIONAL OR UNCONDITIONAL

Mr. Wesley has made the issue clear: those who believe election is conditioned upon something good foreseen in the sinner as the ground of the Divine choice are rightly called Arminians, while those who deny anything good in the sinner as the ground of the choice are rightly called Calvinists. In

another place Wesley says that Arminians believe election is conditional. What does the Bible say? Paul speaks thus in Rom. 11:5,6: "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more of grace: otherwise work is no more work." Paul is alluding to conditions in Israel in the days of Elijah, who felt that he was the only true worshipper of God left in the land. God corrected the prophet by saying, "I have reserved to myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal." The obvious meaning is that God had graciously intervened to prevent the seven thousand from following the multitude into idolatry. "Even so," says Paul, referring to the believing remnant of his day, who were naturally no better than the unbelieving mass, but who had been graciously chosen to salvation. To the same effect, the Apostle says to the Corinthians: "For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what has thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (I Cor. 4:7).

Spurgeon strikes oil when he says that those who do not believe in election as a matter of doctrine, do believe it in their hearts as a matter of experience. He was once preaching to a congregation composed largely of Methodists. They shouted their approval of his message until he said, "This brings me to the doctrine of election." Expressions of disapproval became evident, whereupon, Mr. Spurgeon told the audience that they did believe the doctrine of election, and that he would make them shout "Hallelujah" over it. And this was the way he did it. He wanted to know if there were any difference between them and the wicked, such as drunkards, harlots, and blasphemers. They all united in saying there was a difference. He then put the question of who made the difference, saying that whoever made the difference, should have the glory of it. "Did you make the difference?" To this question they all said "NO". He

then told them that the Lord made the difference, and asked them if they thought it was wrong for Him to make a difference between them and other men? They agreed it was not wrong. Spurgeon then concluded by saying, "Very well then; if it was not wrong for God to make the difference, it was not wrong for Him to purpose to make it, and that is the doctrine of election." Then they cried, "Hallelujah," just as the preacher said they would. The martyr, John Bradford, once watched officers of the law as they led a criminal to prison, and exclaimed, "There I go but for the grace of God."

Every real believer, when on his knees, subscribes to the doctrine of unconditional election. No person can really pray while boasting of anything good in and of himself. "Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 18:10-14). Sovereign grace will come out in prayer, though it may be left off the platform. No saved man will get on his knees and claim before God that he made himself to differ from other who are not saved. And in praying for the lost we supplicate God to convict them of sin and convert them to faith in Christ. We do not depend upon the freedom of their wills, but beseech God to make them willing to come to Christ, knowing--that when they do come to Christ, He will not cast them out "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). It is told that a Methodist minister once heard a Presbyterian, "That was a pretty good Armenian

sermon." "Yes," replied the Presbyterian, "We Presbyterians are pretty good Arminians when we preach, and you Methodist are pretty good Calvinists when you pray."

In praying for the lost just what are we asking God to do? What did Paul ask God to do for Israel? Did he not ask Him to spiritually enlighten them so that they would cease trying to save themselves and trust Christ for the righteousness they were trying to establish for themselves? "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 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. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom.10:1-4). It appears shocking to believe that any aspect of salvation is conditioned upon anything the sinner can do apart from the inwrought grace of God.

## **THE HISTORIC BAPTIST POSITION**

Nearly all declarations of faith published by Baptists have dealt with the subject of election. The writer might state that he is in agreement with all these confessions since they are in virtual agreement with one another. The historic Baptist position on election has been succinctly and clearly stated in the "Abstract of Principles" of the Louisville Seminary. Article V of this confession reads as follows:

"Election is God's eternal choice of some persons unto everlasting life--not because of foreseen merit in them but of his mere mercy in Christ--in consequence of which choice they are called justified and glorified."

In harmony with the above statement several things may be said by way of amplification:

1. Election is God's choice. It is God's choice in eternity of those He will save in time. There must be selection or universalism. The word election is associated with God, not with man. "And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days" (Mark 13:20), speaks of the elect, whom He elected, rendered in the King James version: "The elect whom he hath chosen." The theology that God votes for us, the devil votes against us, and that we cast the deciding ballot is entirely outside the pale of Scripture teaching, and is almost too ridiculous to notice. Our Lord said to His disciples, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:" (Eph. 1:4); "But we are bound to give thanks alway 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" (II Thess. 2:13). Self election is a bad form of self-righteousness.

2. Election is God's choice of some persons. Universal election is a contradiction of terms. This is too obvious to need argument. In "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded" (Rom. 11:7) Paul says that the election (elect) hath obtained salvation, and the rest were blinded.

3. Election is God's eternal choice. In Eph. 1:3,4 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:" we read of the spiritual blessings we have in the

heavenlies, "According as he hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world." In II Tim. 1:9 Paul says that God "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."

4. Election is God's gracious choice. This means that there was nothing in the creature as the cause or ground of the choice, "but of His mere mercy in Christ." Unconditional election finds illustration in the case of Jacob and Esau, "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 calleth" (Rom. 9:11). This naturally gives rise to the human objection: "Is there unrighteousness with God?" Paul replies in the negative and then asserts God's sovereignty: "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth" (Rom 9:18). God's own sovereign pleasure alone determines or selects the object of His mercy.

5. Election is unto salvation. It is not denied that there has been a Divine Choice of nations to external privileges and blessings, nor that individuals have been chosen to particular service; but we affirm that the Scriptures also teach an election of individuals to everlasting life. "But we are bound to give thanks alway 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:" (II Thess. 2:13). Election is not salvation, but unto salvation, which means it was before and not after salvation. Men are saved when they trust Christ not when they were elected. Eisenhower was not president when he was elected, but when he was inaugurated. There was not only an election to but also an induction into the office. And so God's elect are

inducted into the position of saintship by the effectual call the quickening work of the (Holy Spirit) through which they become believers in the gospel. "That no flesh should glory in his presence" (I Cor. 1:29).

6. Election is a challenging doctrine. Article IX of the New Hampshire Confession says in part: "That it (election) may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the Gospel; that it is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence." Peter exhorts to diligence in making our calling and election sure by which he means to make it sure to ourselves. There is ever the danger of one taking his salvation for granted without due evidence of it. No unbeliever or nominal Christian has any right to take comfort from the doctrine of election. This is the children's bread. Sometime ago the writer attempted to witness to a man concerning his need of a Saviour. He used the doctrine to justify his indifference, nonchalantly saying that when God got ready to save him He would do it. I said, "There is truth in what you say, but it is not the truth you need, for unless you repent and believe you will go to hell."

## **OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED AND ANSWERED**

Many are the objections brought against the doctrine of unconditional election. Sometimes the objectors are loud and furious. The tirades of Mr. Wesley against the doctrine make one sick at heart. And many Baptists have been almost as harsh.

1. It is objected that election limits God's mercy. Right here we criticize the critic, for he who makes this objection limits both God's mercy and His power. He admits that God's mercy is limited to the believer and that all others will experience the wrath of Divine justice. But our critic denies God's power in

causing the sinner to believe without doing violence to the human will. In conversion God does not slay the human will, but only the enmity of it. At this point we must face two selfevident propositions. First, if God is trying to save every member of Adam's fallen race, and does not succeed, then His power is limited and He is not the Lord God Almighty. Second, if He is not trying to save every member of the fallen race, then His mercy is limited. We must of necessity limit His mercy or His power, or go over "boots and baggage," to the Universalists' position. But before doing that, let us "to the law and to the testimony," which says, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion .... Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy and whom he will he hardeneth" (Rom. 9:15-18). There is not space here for exegesis except to say that in hardening the sinner, God does not infuse a sinful nature, but allows the sinful nature to develop its natural enmity. The writer has always preferred the word preterition to reprobation in describing God's dealing with the non-elect. In hardening God leaves the sinner to himself, so far as efficacious grace is concerned; in mercy He makes new creatures in Christ Jesus.

When Robert Morrison was about to go to China, he was asked by an incredulous neighbour if he thought he could make any impression on those Chinese. His curt reply was: "No, but I think God can." The writer often wonders why more sinners have not been saved in the past centuries, but he never attributes it to lack of power in God. If God could make children unto Abraham out of stones, then He is able to make children unto Himself out of all kinds of sinners.

2. It is objected that election damns a part of the human race. But the objector is wrong. It is divine justice that condemns the whole race, and election keeps many from being damned. Election is for "the already condemned." Election neither puts sinners under condemnation nor keeps them there. Election is



not unto damnation, but unto salvation. Election harms nobody, but saves a multitude no man can number. If we are to object to a doctrine that saves only a part of the human race, then we object to the gospel, for that is all the gospel does.

3. It is objected that election makes God unjust. This objection betrays a bad heart. It obligates the Lawgiver to save the Lawbreaker. It makes salvation a Divine obligation. It reverses the position of God and the sinner. It puts the sinner on the throne and God at his feet. Salvation is not a matter of justice, but of mercy. It was not the attribute of justice that led God to provide salvation, but the attribute of mercy. Justice is simply getting what one deserves. Those who go to hell will have nobody to blame but themselves, while those who go to heaven will have nobody to praise but God.

4. It is also objected that election is opposed to the doctrine of "Whosoever Will." But the objector is wrong again. Our view of election explains and supports the doctrine of "Whosoever Will." Without election the invitation would go unheeded and nobody would believe. It is not natural for the sinner to trust Christ, and this is because the carnal mind is enmity against God. Salvation through trust in a crucified Christ is a stumbling block to the Jew and foolishness to the Greek; it is only the called, both Jews and Greeks, who see in it the wisdom and power of God in salvation. Christ said, "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him (the one drawn, C.D.C.) up at the last day" (John 6:44). The human will is free, but its freedom is within the limits of fallen human nature. "But 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" (I Cor. 2:14). There must be the miracle of the new birth, for except a man be born from above he cannot see or enter into the kingdom of God.

The writer allows nobody to believe stronger in the doctrine of "Whosoever Will," nor to preach it with more sincerity than he does. But he also believes that there would be no believers if the Holy Spirit did not convict the sinner of his helplessness and convert him to faith in Christ. The saved man is God's workmanship, the product of His grace.

5. It is still further objected that unconditional election destroys the spirit of missions. This objection deserves serious consideration. It is admitted that some have allowed belief in the doctrine to paralyze missionary endeavour. But this was because they held a limited view of the doctrine; they failed to see that the gospel is the means by which the elect are saved. On the other hand, the greatest names in the missionary enterprise were ardent believers in unconditional election. William Carey, often called the father of modern missions, was a staunch Calvinist. Andrew Fuller, first secretary of the society that sent Carey to India, held tenaciously to the doctrine of unconditional election. "The proof of the pudding is in the eating." Belief in election did not destroy the spirit of missions in Judson, Spurgeon, Boyce, Eaton, Carroll, Graves, Shields, and a host of other Baptist leaders. The First Baptist Church of Murray, Kentucky, once called by Dr. J.F. Love the greatest missionary church on earth, heard Boyce Taylor preach election for nearly forty years.

He who allows his belief of election to dampen his missionary ardour has a perverted view of the doctrine. Election does not determine the extent of missions, but the results of it. The gospel commission does not read, "to the elect" but "to every creature." If it should read "to the elect," then we could not preach to anybody for the simple reason that the elect cannot be identified until they exercise faith which works by love. And such would already be saved, and hence the gospel would not be the power of God unto salvation. The gospel is for men as lost sinners, and not as elect sinners. God has His elect, but

they are not our elect, and His elect cannot be known until they are saved. Witnessing is our business, taking care of the elect is His business. Let us be faithful to our task and leave the results with Him, remembering that Paul may plant and Apollos may water, but that God must give the increase.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE EFFECTUAL CALL

We are about to write upon one of the most neglected truths of the Bible. There was much said about it during the Puritan period, and later by Spurgeon and others, but today there is only a voice here and there dealing with this Bible doctrine. We dare say that nine out of ten church members would not even hazard a guess or opinion concerning this blessed truth.

The word "call" is sometimes used to express the act of naming, as, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus" (Matt. 1:21). At other times the word is employed to denote the act of inviting or summoning, as in Luke 14:13: "When thou makest a feast, call the poor ...."

When the word "call" is used for inviting, we must distinguish between a call that is not heeded and one that is successful or effectual--one that is responded to. The chief aim of the gospel is to call men to salvation through faith in Christ. Now it is obvious that many such calls go unheeded, and men remain lost, notwithstanding plain preaching and urgent appeals. On the other hand, we see the preaching of the gospel effective in many cases---we see lives transformed by it. We may see a lost man ignore and reject the gospel at one time, and then the next time or at some later time, he is saved by it. What makes the difference? The preacher? No, for it may be the same preacher in both instances. Is the difference in the gospel? No, for it is the very same gospel in each case. The difference is made by the Holy Spirit in His light-giving

and life-giving power. When the gospel is preached "in word only", that is, without the quickening power of the Holy Spirit, the sinner remains spiritually dead, and will be either indifferent or antagonistic to the gospel call.

The effectual call is just about equivalent to regeneration. In Rom. 8:30 we are given the chain of Divine acts in salvation: "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." It is to be noted that "called" is used rather than "regenerated," Christians are often denominated "the called," as well as "the born again."

## **SCRIPTURES THAT DISTINGUISH THE TWO CALLS**

There are two calls from God to men. One is the general call and goes to all who hear the gospel with the physical organ of hearing; the other is special and effects the salvation of those whom it is given. Men come into a saved state by this divine call. Men are saints by calling. Paul addresses the saints at Rome and Corinth as those "called to be saints." Paul preached the gospel indiscriminately to Jews and Greeks at Corinth. To the natural Jew it was a scandal, and to the natural Greek it was foolishness, "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (I Cor 1:24). It was only the called among both groups who saw the power and wisdom of God in the plan of salvation through the crucified Christ.

Let us look at some Scriptures that speak of a general call. In Prov. 1:24 God says: "I have called and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded." This call was externally made by God through the prophets, and was universally ignored---no man regarded. In Matt. 22:14 we read, "For many are called, but few are chosen." Here is a call that came to a greater number than was chosen and saved. In

the parable of the great supper, recorded in Luke 14, none of those who had been invited came—they all with one consent began to make excuse.

Now let us consider some Scriptures that speak of a special and effectual call. In Rom. 8:28 we are told that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Here "the called" means more than "the invited," for many are invited to come to Christ who never come and hence are not saved, and to whom all things do not work together for good. In Rom. 8:30 we read that the called are also justified. But many are called by the preaching of the gospel who are not justified. Paul is writing about a call that is effectual in salvation when he says in I Corinthians 1:26 "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called." In II Peter 1:10 we are exhorted "to make our calling and election sure." In all these passages, calling is more than a mere outward invitation to believe the gospel.

## **THE NATURE OF THE EFFECTUAL CALL**

1. It is subjective or internal. There is an outward or objective call in which the gospel is presented or offered to the sinner. The subjective or internal call is made within the sinner. In this call grace operates on the mind and heart. In this call the Spirit compels them to come in; not by forcing the will, but by changing the mind and heart---by changing the governing disposition of the soul---so that they become willing. Bancroft defines the effectual call in these words: "By the effectual invitation or call is meant that exercise of Divine power upon the soul, immediate, spiritual, and supernatural, which communicates a new spiritual life, and thus makes a new mode of spiritual activity possible. Repentance, faith, trust, hope, and love, are purely and simply the sinner's own acts; but as such are possible to him only in virtue of the change

wrought in the moral condition of his faculties by the re-creative power of God."

2. It is a special call. There is a general call whenever and wherever the gospel is preached. God is sincere in this call, and the sinner is responsible to heed it, but the fact is he never does. The special call is something over and beyond the preaching of the gospel. The special call is made to those who are denominated sheep, elect, predestinated, and is always effective

Christ said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish" (John 10:27,28). And speaking of the lost sheep among the Gentiles, He said, "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice" (John 10:16). Paul recognized the elect when the "gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost" (I Thess. 1:5).

Bunyan illustrates the difference between the general and the special call by the barnyard hen. She has a general cluck to which little attention is given, and she has a special cluck for her babies when the hawk is about to swoop down upon them the cluck that brings them flying to find protection under her wings. So God has a special call that brings His lost sheep to find shelter and safety beneath the spreading wings of Calvary.

Spurgeon finds an illustration of this special call in the physical resurrection of Lazarus. He says that if our Lord had not addressed Lazarus personally, saying, "Lazarus come forth," all the dead would have lived at His command.

Our Lord makes a distinction between the spiritual and physical resurrections in John 5:25,28,29. He is speaking of the spiritual resurrection when He says: : "The hour is coming

and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." He is speaking of the bodily resurrection when He says: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves, shall hear his voice. And shall come forth...."

3. It is a miraculous and invincible call. Peter says it is a call "out of darkness into his marvelous light" (I Peter 2:9). Christ says that it is a call that makes the dead to live. This call has the power of God behind it. It is the mighty Spirit of God working in grace to make the sinner see his helpless state and the value of the blood of Christ. To successfully resist this call would mean that the sinner is mightier than God. There was death and corruption in Lazarus to keep him from responding to Christ's command to come forth. But there was power from God that overcame all natural obstacles. There is likewise much in the sinner to resist the Gospel call, but in the effectual call of the Spirit this resistance is overcome. The effectual call is a Divine call that startles the careless sinner into concern; a call that enlightens the sin-darkened understanding; a call that opens the sin-closed heart to receive Christ as Lord and Saviour. Apart from the work of the Spirit the word of the Spirit will be rejected. Unless the Holy Spirit creates light within the soul, the light within the Book will not be seen. The power of conversion is not in the inspiration or perspiration of the preacher, but in the illumination and regeneration of the Spirit.

The outward call of the gospel by the preacher may be likened to the law indicting the criminal and calling him to trial; the special call is the sheriff coming in contact with the criminal, arresting him and bringing him into court. The criminal's refusal to submit to arrest is no proof that he is superior to the law; but if the law is unable to bring him into court, that would be proof that he is stronger than the law. Now when the preacher calls upon sinners to repent and believe the gospel and they refuse, this does not indicate that the sinner is



stronger than God. But if the Holy Spirit calls him---comes to grip with his darkened mind to give light---come to work repentance and faith in him---come to give him a new birth---and does not succeed, then that would be proof that the sinner was stronger than God, the Holy Spirit. Human depravity is too much for the preacher, but not too much for the Holy Spirit. This is why we pray for God to convert the sinner when we have preached to him.

The general call is like the father calling Johnny to get up early in the morning. He says "okay doke", turns over and goes back to sleep. The call did not bring him out; it had no effect on him. The special call is the father coming in thirty minutes later. He pulls the cover off and puts on the cowhide. This is effectual and brings Johnny out.

B.H. Carroll likens the general call to sheet lightning which is beautiful and grand, but strikes nothing; the special call is like forked lightning, it strikes somewhere.

## **THE NECESSITY OF THE EFFECTUAL CALL**

1. Human depravity---the condition of fallen human nature makes a special and supernatural call necessary for the conversion of the sinner. Man by nature has his understanding darkened by sin, his heart is hard, and his mind is enmity against God. If the sinner loved God and understood the gospel, he would at once, on hearing the gospel, lovingly and gladly respond to the good news about Christ as the Saviour. But he must undergo a change of mind and heart before he will receive Christ as Lord and Saviour. And this change is not self-wrought, but God-wrought. Paul told Timothy to preach in the hope that "God peradventure will give them repentance (change of mind) to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the

snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will," (II Tim. 2:25-26).

2. This special call of the Holy Spirit is necessary because the gospel call--the word only--is not sufficient for the conversion of the lost man. "Knowing, brethren, beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost. . . ." (I Thess. 1:4-5). Bunyan says "I believe that, to effectual calling, the Holy Ghost must accompany the word of the gospel, and that with mighty power." The gospel is suitable and sufficient as the means of conversion, but there must also be an agent with power to effect it. There must be the Divine workman as well as Divine equipment. The word is said to be the sword of the Spirit. In the call that goes unheeded we have the gospel and the preacher; in the effectual call we have the gospel, the preacher, and the Holy Spirit. And it is the Holy Spirit who makes the gospel effective in the conversion of the sinner.

## **THE REASON FOR THE EFFECTUAL CALL**

The effectual call---the call of the Holy Spirit---the call that secures salvation--in every case is made in pursuance of God's eternal purpose. In Rom. 8:28 this call is said to be "according to his purpose". And II Tim. 1:9 is to the same effect: "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." Salvation is not an accident---it is not a chance happening--but the coming to pass of God's eternal purpose in Christ. The effectual call is the divine act by which the foreknown are brought into a saved state. It is the inaugural of the elect; the induction into saintship. Salvation is of the Lord, and every Christian should ascribe his conversion to the work of the Holy Spirit. Every Christian is a God made man, and therefore, a grace made man, since he has not merited

salvation. It is God who has made us to differ from the lost, therefore, we can humbly and gratefully say with Isaac Watts:

"Why was I made to hear Thy voice,

And enter while there's room;

When others make a wretched choice,

And rather starve than come?

T'was the same love that spread the feast

That sweetly forced us in;

Else we had still refused to taste

And perished in our sins."

## CHAPTER V

### REGENERATION OR THE NEW BIRTH

John Ruskin (1819-1900), English art critic, author and political economist said that "the first and last and closest trial question to any living creature is, 'What do you like?' Go out into the street and ask the first man you meet, what his taste is, and if he answers you candidly, you know him body and soul. What we like determines what we are, and is a sign of what we are. ." If the taste Ruskin speaks of applies to moral and spiritual things, then he has something, and his words are sober truth. Man has moral as well as physical taste. What one likes as a moral being---what he likes in relation to the true God and His word-determines what he is as a moral being and is a sign to others of what he is. One can know himself, and others can know him by this taste-test. Moral taste is moral desire and moral desire determines moral deed.

David's moral taste is revealed when he says, "one thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple" (Ps. 27:4). Also, when he says, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" (Ps.42:1-2). This desire for God shows the Psalmist to be a man after God's own heart. Dr. Broadus gives a three fold test of personal character: What one reads when he is tired, what he thinks about when he is alone, and where he goes when he is away from home.

This taste-test reveals the necessity of regeneration for every man. Man, in his natural condition, does not like God---the God of the Bible; he does not long for God's presence as David did; he rather shuns God, as Adam and Eve did when they sinned and hid themselves from Him. The natural man has no taste for the things of God. The carnal mind is enmity against God. Man in his natural and fallen state would not enjoy heaven if he should go there. Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. Regeneration is the only remedy; every man must be born again ---born from above---made a new creature---if he is to see or enter into the kingdom of God.

## **THE NATURE OF REGENERATION**

Regeneration is that aspect of salvation in which the dead sinner --the sinner with all the faculties of the soul in moral ruins, and paralyzed towards God and holiness, being unable to please God---is made a child of God with a taste for the things of God.

Regeneration, therefore, may be defined as the gracious work of God in the human soul by which the heart is enabled to love God, the mind is enabled to understand the gospel of Christ and the will is brought to choose Christ as both Lord and Saviour. This definition is in harmony with our New Hampshire Confession which says that "Regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind; that it is affected in a manner above our comprehension, by the power of the Holy Spirit of God in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith and newness of life."

John Favel (1650-1691) says that the heart of man is his worst part before regeneration, and the best part afterward; that it is the seat of principles and the fountain of actions; and

that the eye of God is, and the eye of the Christian ought to be principally fixed upon it. Regeneration is not the bringing of a person into existence; it is the birth of one already in existence; therefore, a second birth. Nor is it the bringing of any new faculties or parts into existence. The unregenerate man has as many parts or faculties to his being as the regenerate man. No part of man was annihilated in the fall, but all parts were ruined or depraved. Regeneration is not based upon non-existence, but upon a depraved existence. The soul of man is endowed with heart, and mind and will, and the unregenerate man has all these faculties, although in a ruined or depraved state. He has a mind and can think and understand, but he does not like to think about God, and cannot understand the things of God; he has a heart so that he can and does love, but he does not love God; he has a will so that he can and does choose, but he does not choose Christ as Lord and Saviour. Regeneration is essentially a changing of the fundamental taste of the soul. By taste we mean the direction of his mind and bent of his affections, the trend of his will. And to alter that taste is not to impart a new faculty, or create a new substance, but simply to set upon God the affections which hitherto have been set upon self and sin. To borrow an illustration from Dr. Strong: The engineer who climbs over the cab into a runaway locomotive and who changes its course, does so not by adding any new rod or cog, but by simply reversing the lever. So in regeneration God is reversing the lever of the soul. He is changing the taste so that a man loves what he once hated and hates what he once loved.

Regeneration is not the eradication of the sinful nature, but the impartation of a new nature---a sinless nature. The saved man has been born two times, and has twofold disposition or nature. This creates a conflict between the fleshly and spiritual natures: "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other:

so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17). Paul had this conflict in his own experience. He delighted in the law of God after the inward man, but was conscious of another law or force, so that he could not do the good he desired to do "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 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. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 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 which is in my members. 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 the flesh the law of sin" (Rom. 7:14-25).

## **TWO ASPECTS OF THE NEW BIRTH**

In the first aspect the soul is passive; it is simply acted upon. God changes the governing disposition by a creative act, that is, without the use of means, and without any co-operation on the part of the sinner. How could it be otherwise unless death contributes to life, unless filth purifies itself, and a corpse adorns itself? In a word, regeneration must be altogether of God unless nature acts contrary to nature. If the carnal mind hates God; if the things of God are foolishness to the natural man; if they that are in the flesh cannot please God, what hope is there that such a nature will act as though it were otherwise? There is no such thing as selfbirth, either in the

physical or spiritual realms. The mother gives birth to the child, and in the moral realm we are born of God.

In the second aspect of regeneration, God secures the initial exercise of the new nature, and in this the soul is active. Repentance and faith are heart exercises of the sinner in response to the quickening work of the Spirit. The two aspects of regeneration are simultaneous. At the very instant God gives a holy disposition to the soul, He pours in the light of Gospel truth and induces the exercise of the holy disposition He has imparted.

This distinction seems necessary from the twofold representation of the change in the Scripture. In some passages the change is ascribed wholly to God "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13). In changing the fundamental taste of the soul there is no use of means or co'operation from the sinner. In fact the truth is rejected until the disposition is changed. Now in other passages we find the truth is employed as means and the mind acts in view of the truth. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures" (James 1:18); "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (I Peter 1:23). To deny these two aspects you would have an unregenerated believer on the one hand, or a regenerated unbeliever on the other hand, neither of which is possible. The first aspect is the narrower and is what theologians mean when they speak of pre-regeneration.

## **THE NECESSITY OF REGENERATION**

What we have already written reveals why the new birth is necessary, but we will amplify and illustrate.



The depravity of human nature makes the new birth necessary. The physical birth produces no qualities that are pleasing to God. "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom 8:8). Paul reminds the Jews that being the fleshly descendants of Abraham did not make them the children of God: "That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed" (Rom 9:8). Man has the inherited corruption of a fallen nature. David was not casting reflection upon his mother's virtue, but was confessing to inborn depravity, when he exclaimed, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psm 51:5). A man may say, "I know I do things that are wrong, but I have a good heart after all." But God gives a different verdict. Christ taught that the human heart was the very fountain of all that is sinful: "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, and evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these things come from within, and defile the man" (Mark 7:21-23). The human affections are misplaced. Man naturally loves the things that are contrary to God. He must be born from above in order to love God. "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and every one that loveth is (Gk. has been) born of God, and knoweth God" (I John 4:7).

The human will is antagonistic to God. God's will should be supreme in every life, but man by nature is dominated by self-will. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way" (Isa. 53:6). In the life of Christ, the one perfect life, the will of God was supreme: He came not to do His own will, but the will of the Father. Moreover, man by nature, is in a state of moral darkness, ignorant of the things of God. He cannot understand the things of the Spirit: "For they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:14). There

must be a spiritual birth before there can be spiritual understanding.

The writer once heard of a little girl with a defect of vision from birth. Her parents were slow to realize that she could not see many objects which were familiar to others. She was almost grown before an oculist was consulted. He advised and performed an operation, and the child was kept in a dark room for many weeks. One bright and balmy night she stepped out alone upon the lawn. Instantly, she rushed back into the house in a glow of excitement. "Oh come," she cried, "And see what has happened to the sky." Her parents hurried out with her, but saw nothing but the familiar glory of the stars--- something she had never seen before. Nothing had happened to the sky, but something had happened to her eyes. So the unregenerate man has the eyes of his understanding darkened in respect to spiritual and saving truth. The stars of the gospel truth shine brightly in the firmament of God's word, but the lost man does not see them. "But if our gospel be hid it is hid to them that are lost" (II Cor. 4:3).

## **THE EFFICIENT CAUSE OF REGENERATION**

By the efficient cause we mean the power by which the effect is secured. What power brings about the new birth? The various answers to this question may be summed up in three general views.

1. Some put the efficient cause or power of regeneration in the human will. This view emphasizes the plan of salvation and makes response to the plan, that is, faith in the gospel, depend upon the human will. The sinner is told that if he will believe the gospel he will be born again. This confounds justification and regeneration. We read again and again that we are justified by faith, but never that we are regenerated by faith. Man's volition's---the exercise of his will---are practically

the shadow of his affections. You cannot separate man from his shadow and have him going in one direction and his shadow in another direction. Neither can you have a man's will going in the opposite direction from the way his heart goes. Men choose what they do because of the condition of the heart. John 1:13 is fatal to this view: "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

2. Another view makes the truth the efficient cause of regeneration. This view puts the power of the new birth in the gospel. A. Campbell is one of the best exponents to this view. He says, "We plead that all the converting power of the Holy Spirit is exhibited in the Divine Record." This denies any subjective or internal work of the Holy Spirit on the heart of the sinner. The preacher is to make the gospel so attractive that the sinner, apart from any change in his heart, will accept it. But to the heart that hates God the plainer you make the gospel, the more he will hate it. If this were true then it would be absurd to pray to God to regenerate, for that is more than He can do---regeneration is simply the effect of the word preached. This is called "the word only," theory, which is refuted by Paul in I Thess. 1:5: "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost..." This view has led to a lot of silly and unscriptural expressions, such as, "energizing the truth," or "illuminating the truth." There is nothing wrong with the truth, the trouble is with the sinner's darkened understanding. God does not make the truth more true but He opens sin-blinded minds to understand it "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?" (I Cor. 3:5); "For 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" (II Cor. 4:6). The

word gives knowledge of spiritual things. The gospel is objective light; the Holy Spirit gives subjective light.

Dr. T. T. Shields once preached on I Tim. 1:15, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." A few days later he received a letter from a man that read like this: "I enjoyed your sermon last Sunday very much, and could not see why anyone in your audience could not be saved. But your prayer following the sermon spoiled it for me. You asked God by His Spirit to lead sinners to an acceptance of the gospel. I write to ask what the Spirit has to do with it. The way of salvation was presented, and all they had to do was to accept it." This man was right, if the truth and the human will are all that is necessary, and prayer for God to do something in the sinner would be foolish. This view utterly ignores the truth of human depravity.

3. The position of the writer is, that the immediate agency of the Holy Spirit is the efficient cause of regeneration. The power of the Holy Spirit is immediate, that is, it does not depend upon or flow through anything, not even the gospel itself. The gospel is hated and rejected as foolishness until direct power of the Spirit changes the governing disposition of the heart. As some one has said, "Our natural hearts are hearts of stone. The word of God is good seed sown on the hard, trodden, macadamized highway, which the horses of passion, the asses of self-will, the wagons of imaginary treasure, have made impenetrable. ONLY THE HOLY SPIRIT can soften and pulverize the soil." The gospel is good seed, but good seed cannot make good soil. Paul may plant and Apollos may water, but God must give the increase.

"Come, Spirit, source of light,  
Thy grace is unconfirmed;  
Dispel the gloomy shades of night,

The darkness of the mind.

"Now to our eye display  
The truth Thy words reveal;  
Cause us to run the heavenly way,  
Delighting in Thy will.

"Thy teachings make us know  
The mysteries of Thy love;  
The vanity of things below,  
The joys of things above."

## CHAPTER VI

# JUSTIFICATION, OR THE DIVINE ACQUITTAL

Demosthenes well says that knowledge begins with definition. Every teacher needs to remember this, and be careful to define his terms. The Bible abounds in big words---words of tremendous importance---and we should exercise much care in defining these words.

The book of Job is full of questions. "Canst thou by searching find out God?" (11:7). "If a man die, shall he live again?" (14:14). "How can he be clean that is born of woman?" (25:4b). "How should man be just with God?" (9:2). And this last question is repeated in Job 25:4 "How then can man be justified with God?" This last question is to have our attention in this article. Let us fix the question in our mind: How can rebellious man, who has tried to dethrone the God of all the earth, find acquittal with God?

A man was once asked if he would not like to be saved. He replied: "Yes, but I do not see how God can save me without doing wrong." This man was a thinker. He went on to say that he had sinned: that God's word declares the wages of sin to be death, and that as a sinner, he must receive what he had earned. He confessed that he deserved to be punished, and could not see how God could remain just without punishing him for his sins. Job's question was this man's question.

There were no questions until sin entered the world. Eve was deceived into thinking that the forbidden fruit would make one wise and thus resolve all future questions. But this attempt to become wise resulted in separation from God with resultant darkness in the face of innumerable questions. Adam and Eve had been walking by faith---by faith in what God had said---but in disobedience they embarked upon a career of walking by sight, which means to believe what one sees. Eve saw that the fruit of the forbidden tree was good for food, and pleasant to the eyes. Now in salvation, the sinner is restored to the principle of walking by faith, which means to believe what God says. "The just shall live by faith" (Heb. 10:38). "So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Rom 10 :17). If sin reigned by bringing questions into the world, then grace reigns by giving answers to these questions. How can man the sinner be acquitted before the Holy and righteous God? This is a big question, but there is a blessed and infallible answer found in the Bible. We will consider:

## **THE NATURE OF JUSTIFICATION, OR WHAT JUSTIFICATION IS**

Justification is that particular aspect of salvation which consists of deliverance from the guilt and penalty of sin. It is the legal aspect of salvation in which one has right standing before God as Lawgiver. So far as guilt and condemnation are concerned, the believer is as perfect as if he had never sinned. Paul challenges the whole universe to lay anything to the charge of God's elect "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth" (Rom. 8:33). At Antioch in Pisidia, the apostle preached the crucified and risen Christ, saying, "And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:39).

Justification is a forensic or law term. It does not refer to any inward work of grace as regeneration does. It has nothing to do with moral improvement, but with judicial standing. It means acquittal, vindication, acceptance before a judgment seat. The Council of Trent (1547) gives the Roman Catholic view of justification, in which the term is defined as "not the mere remission of sins but also sanctification and renovation of the inner man." But such a definition confounds justification with regeneration and sanctification, other aspects of salvation.

Take the word in its every day use, and it will be obvious that it has nothing to do with improvement of character or moral change. To justify one's views does not mean to change them or to correct them but rather to vindicate them. To justify a course of conduct does not mean a change of conduct, but the vindication of what one has done. To justify a friend does not imply any change in your friend, but the vindication of him before some judgment seat, it may be, the bar of public opinion.

Take a clear illustration from Scripture: "If there be a controversy between men, and they come into judgment, that the judges may judge them, then they shall justify the righteous and condemn the wicked" (Deut. 25:1). Here it is plain that no moral improvement is implied. The judges were not to make anybody better, but to declare who was right in the eyes of the law. A human court or judge can only maintain justice by justifying the innocent, but God maintains justice and magnifies grace by justifying the ungodly: "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. 4:5). There are no innocent people for God to justify, for all have sinned. The next question is that concerning the author of salvation.



## **THE AUTHOR OF JUSTIFICATION, OR WHO IS THE JUSTIFIER?**

This question finds explicit answer in Rom. 8:33: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." There is no salvation through self-justification. In Luke 10:29 "But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?" , we are told of a certain lawyer who was willing to justify himself, but he was not saved thereby. Paul said, that even though he might not have anything against himself, he would not thereby be justified, for it is the Lord who judges "For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord" (I Cor. 4:4). There were Pharisees who justified themselves before men, but that did not mean salvation. To be justified before God one must be justified by God. One might have a clean bill of moral health from his friends and neighbours, but to be saved he must be pronounced righteous by God. God Himself must pronounce the acquittal, else we stand condemned before His righteous law. One's conscience may not condemn, but the question of guilt and penalty is not left to the conscience. Nobody's conscience would consign him to hell. It is not the human conscience but a holy God who must first be satisfied before there can be justification. This leads on to another question:

## **THE SOURCE OF JUSTIFICATION, OR WHAT CAUSES GOD TO JUSTIFY THE UNGODLY?**

The grand answer to this question is found in Rom. 3:24: "Being justified freely by his grace." The adverb "freely" means "Without any cause or reason in the sinner." It is the same word used in John 15:25, where Christ says, "They hated me without a cause." There was nothing in Christ to merit the hatred of men, and there is nothing in any sinner to cause God to justify him; the cause is in God Himself. It is not

good in the sinner but grace in God that moves Him to justify. In Rom. 11:6, the apostle says, "And if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace." To mix anything of human merit with divine grace is to destroy grace. It is either all of grace or none of grace. There is no conjunction joining anything with grace as the source or cause of justification. And yet, men dare to mix something of man with the grace of God as the moving cause of justification. This is to divide the honour and praise of salvation between the sinner and the Saviour, between men and God. Men may do that here on earth, but in heaven all honour and praise are ascribed to God. And this calls for still another question:

## **THE JUST BASIS, OR MERITORIOUS GROUND OF JUSTIFICATION**

On what ground can God justify the ungodly and yet remain just? It is on the ground of blood atonement, "Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom 3:24). "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7). "Much more then, being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. 5:9). "Christ and Him crucified" is the only righteous ground for the justification of any sinner. And there is no "AND" anywhere in the Bible connecting anything with His blood as the just basis of justification.

The only way God can justify a sinner without doing wrong is to charge the sinners' sins to Christ and credit Christ's obedience to the sinner's account. This is called imputed righteousness, or the righteousness of God. It is the righteousness Christ wrought out on the cross when He was obedient unto death. God justifies the penitent believer on the ground of the obedience of his Surety and Substitute, Jesus Christ. Obedience is always necessary to righteousness. And as the sinner has no record of obedience, he is therefore

unrighteous on his own record. If the sinner is to become righteous before God, it must be by the obedience of Christ. Whose obedience is reckoned to the sinners' account. The sinner is saved by obedience, but it is by the obedience of "Christ, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (I Cor. 1:30).

Let us remember that the Lord Jesus came to this world as a public or representative person. He was God before He became man, and as God He had no personal obligations to the law except to enforce it as Lawgiver. He Who gave the law was made under the law for the purpose of redeeming them that were under law, that we might be adopted as sons of God "To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal.4:5). Having no personal obligations, Christ could assume the obligations of a Surety. A surety is one who assumes all the legal responsibilities of the principal---of the one who contracted the debt. As the Surety for His people, it was Christ's duty to die. He himself said that He ought to have died. After His death and resurrection, He joined Himself to the two as they walked to Emmaus, and said to them: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?" (Luke 24:26). It was in grace that He took upon Himself suretyship engagements, but when He did, He was duty bound to die for sinners. Even yet, we are not through with questions relating to justification. Let us consider:

## **THE WAY OF JUSTIFICATION, OR WHAT THE SINNER MUST DO TO BE JUSTIFIED**

The sinner is justified by faith and by faith alone. "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Rom. 3:28). "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God," (Rom. 5:1). "It is of faith that it might be by grace" (Rom. 4:16). To add anything to faith on the

sinner's part is to add something to grace on God's part. And since faith looks to Christ for salvation, to add anything to faith would be the same as adding something to Christ. Perish the thought! He must have all the glory.

Saving faith is much more than the mere assent of the mind to gospel truth, or to the acknowledgment of gospel facts. Trust in, or dependence upon Christ for salvation is a necessary element in saving faith. I believe in George Washington, that is, my mind acknowledges certain facts about him but it has never occurred to me to trust him for salvation. This might be termed historical faith---the kind of faith nearly every one has in God and Jesus Christ. But a necessary element in saving faith is reliance or trust.

"Not saved are we by trying  
From self can come no aid;  
'Tis on the blood relying,  
Once for our ransom paid;

'Tis looking unto Jesus,  
The holy One and Just;  
Tis His great work that saves us,  
It is not try, but trust.

"No deeds of ours are needed  
To make Christ's merit more,  
No frames of mind, or feelings,  
Can add to His great store;

'Tis simply to receive Him,  
The holy One and Just,  
'Tis only to believe Him  
It is not try, but trust."

The virtue of faith lies in the worth of its object. Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection, is the only object of saving trust. Faith, however strong, in any other object cannot justify. This makes faith a thing as different as possible from merit. Richard Hooker says: "God doth justify the believing man, yet not for the worthiness of his belief, but for the worthiness of Him which is believed." It does not make a beggar worthy of food to take it from the hand of his benefactor. Nor does it make a sinner worthy of salvation to receive it as a gift from Jesus Christ. It rather implies his unworthiness. The sinner is justly charged, but freely forgiven. It is not our faith, as a thing of merit, that is accounted for righteousness, but Christ the object of faith. The Lord Himself is our righteousness. We are not saved on account of our faith; we are saved on account of Christ. We are forgiven for Christ's sake. We must not trust our faith, but Him. And now in closing, there is a final question.

## **THE EVIDENCES OF JUSTIFICATION, OR WHAT ONE DOES TO PROVE HIS FAITH**

We are justified evidentially by works, and by works alone. The only evidences of saving faith are our works. And this includes baptism as a work of righteousness. Any man who claims to be saved and refuses to be baptized, when properly taught the significance of baptism, has a mark against him, in my judgment. We are saved by faith alone, but not by faith that is alone, for faith without works is dead. The man who has saving faith also received a holy disposition in the new birth---a disposition or nature that seeks to please God. Saul's first question after his conversion was, "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6). Saving faith works by love. In the new birth there were a triplet of graces brought into being: faith, hope, and love---and these are inseparable.

There is no real difference between Paul and James on the subject of justification. They complement, but do not contradict each other. They deal with different classes in their treatment of justification. Paul writes about the justification of a sinner; James writes about the justification of a saint. Both of them illustrate their teaching by the same person: Abraham. Paul takes Abraham as a sinner and writes about justification in the sense of salvation; James takes Abraham, after he had been saved many years, and shows that he was justified by works when he offered up Isaac. Paul writes about God receiving a sinner; James writes about God approving a saint. Paul speaks of justification of persons; James speaks of justification of profession. One's profession of faith is justified by his works. James challenges the faith of the man who says he has faith, but has no works---can faith, the faith he talks about, save him? Every saved person is justified, both by faith and also by works. As an alien sinner, he is justified by faith in the blood of Christ; as a professing believer, he is justified again and again by his works. There is no way to show our faith except by our works. The saved man is one who is depending upon Christ alone for salvation and who, out of love, is daily seeking to please Him. The saved man is poor in spirit, mourning over his sins, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and longing to be perfectly whole. The saved man anticipates perfection, but does not claim it. And may both writer and reader be able to join Paul in saying, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (II Tim. 1:12).

## CHAPTER VII

### ADOPTION

There are no superfluous words in the Word of God. Every Bible term has its own distinct meaning and must not be confounded with any other term. The words regeneration, justification, and adoption, while closely related, express distinct ideas and aspects of salvation.

There are only five uses of the word adoption in the New Testament. The term is used only by Paul in Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians. In these five references there appears to be three different applications of the term. In Rom. 9:4 the application is to Israel as a nation. In this case adoption did not mean salvation, for in the context Paul prays for the salvation of Israel. The nation had been adopted, but most of the individuals within the nation had neither been regenerated nor justified. By adoption Israel had been separated from other nations and brought into the peculiar relation to God as a son. "And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn" (Ex. 4:22). "Ye are the children of the LORD your God: ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead" (Deut. 14:1); "Do ye thus requite the LORD, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee?" (Deut. 32:6); "They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my

firstborn" (Jer. 31:9); "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt" (Hos. 11:1).

There were elect individuals within the elect nation. When Elijah made intercession against Israel, complaining that he was left alone and in danger, God corrected him, saying, "I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal" (Rom. 11:4). And Paul adds, "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (Rom. 11:5).

In "That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed" (Rom. 9:8) Paul says that the children of the flesh are not the children of God, by which he means, that one is not a child of God because of his fleshly descent from Abraham. Matt. 8:12 says that "the children of the kingdom shall be cast into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matt. 21:43 tells us that "the kingdom of God shall be taken from you (Nation Israel) and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." This nation is identified in I Peter 2:9 as a holy nation, which means that it is a spiritual nation in distinction from the fleshly descendants of Abraham.

In Rom. 8:23 "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" the word adoption is used with reference to the body and is called the redemption of the body. The body as such is not yet adopted. When the body of the believer is redeemed or adopted the people of God will then be publicly manifested as sons of God: "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God" (Rom. 8:19).



In the other three references the application seems to be to the believer as such without any distinction between soul and body. They refer to the adoption of persons. In "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will" (Eph. 1:5), we are told that we were predestinated unto the adoption of sons, which means that adoption was according to God's eternal purpose of love. In eternity past God determined to adopt us as sons. Adoption rests upon redemption, that is, upon blood atonement. In Rom. 8:15 "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" , we find that the believer is given the Spirit of adoption by which he instinctively cries, "Abba, Father." The apostle uses the double form for Father: "Abba", his mother-tongue, and Pater (Greek), the tongue of the learned. "Abba" is used to denote the filial spirit of the adopted son. In using this word, Paul alludes to a law among the Jews which forbade a servant to call the head of the house, Abba, which meant father.

The custom of adoption prevailed among the Romans, Greeks, and other ancient people, but not among the Jews. There are three cases of adoption mentioned in the Old Testament: of Moses: "And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water" (Ex. 2:10); Genubath "And the sister of Tahpenes bare him Genubath his son, whom Tahpenes weaned in Pharaoh's house: and Genubath was in Pharaoh's household among the sons of Pharaoh" (I Kings 11:20); and Esther "And he brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter: for she had neither father nor mother, and the maid was fair and beautiful; whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter...Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter, was come to

go in unto the king, she required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her" (Esther 2:7,15), but they all occurred outside of Palestine-in Egypt and Persia, where the practice of adoption prevailed. And in the New Testament the idea occurs only in the epistles of Paul to churches beyond the border of Palestine. As a Roman citizen, and a man of travel, the apostle would be familiar with the customs of the Romans and others. And so he borrows the idea and applies it to the act of God and Christian experience.

Adoption may be defined as that aspect of salvation in which God, by a legal process, makes one His son who by nature is not His son. Adoption, in itself, is nothing more than the legal act of a court, but when God adopts a son He gives to that son a subjective experience, a filial spirit, the feeling of a child-the feeling which cries Father. Here is where adoption and the new birth come together. The new birth expresses the origin and quality of spiritual life, while adoption expresses a legal relation between the believer and God. We shall consider adoption in its relation to the doctrines of justification, regeneration, and resurrection. These are separate and distinct blessings possessed by all who have believed to the saving of the soul. May we consider:

## **JUSTIFICATION AND ADOPTION**

Both terms are forensic or judicial. They are court terms. Justification expresses the legal act by which the guilt of sin is removed, and the believer is reckoned righteous before God. Adoption expresses the legal act by which one outside the family of God is brought into the family as a son. Adoption expresses a relationship not even implied in justification. When a court justifies a person, that person does not by that act become a son of the judge. Another process of law is

necessary if he is to become a son of the judge. To make the accused his son, the judge would have to do more than merely acquit him and set him free. Justification frees from condemnation; adoption makes one a son in the eyes of the law. Justification is the act of a merciful judge setting the prisoner free; adoption is the act of a generous father, taking a son to his bosom and endowing him with liberty, and a heritage. Let us next consider:

## **REGENERATION AND ADOPTION**

Both regeneration and adoption express relationship, but they are not identical. Regeneration is the biological term and involves a change of nature; adoption is a legal term and denotes a change of position. Regeneration speaks of relationship by birth; adoption speaks of relationship by law. Regeneration confers the nature of sons; adoption confers the name of sons. Regeneration gives a meetness for the inheritance; adoption gives a title to the inheritance. The believer is in the family of God by a twofold process: birth and adoption. In regeneration the Holy Spirit made us alive; as the Spirit of adoption, the Holy Spirit enables us to pray and to cry, Abba, Father. In regeneration the Holy Spirit makes us a child of God; as the Spirit of adoption, He gives us the cry of a child, which is the evidence of life. All real prayer, acceptable worship, and godly living is in the energy of the Holy Spirit; the flesh profiteth nothing. And now let us think of:

## **RESURRECTION AND ADOPTION**

The body is redeemed in the resurrection, but resurrection and adoption are not the same. Adoption, when applied to the body, involves a resurrection, but a certain kind of resurrection; the resurrection of the redeemed body. Resurrection simply expresses the thought that the body will be raised from the dead, while adoption speaks of the nature

of the resurrected body. It will be a redeemed or glorified body---a body fashioned like unto the glorious body of Christ. The body of the lost will be raised: "And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust" (Acts 24:15), but it will not be adopted---it will not be a glorified body.

In civil adoption, the adopting party usually has regard for actual or supposed qualities in the child which appear good or agreeable; Scriptural and spiritual adoption into the family of God is wholly of grace through the merits of Christ. In civil adoption, the adopting father imparts his goods and gives his name to the adopted child, but he cannot impart to it his own nature. In spiritual adoption, God makes those whom He adopts not only partakers of His name and blessings; He also imparts to them His nature, changing them into His own blessed likeness in Christ, to Whose image they are ultimately conformed.

Among the Romans there was a twofold adoption, one private, the other a public affair. The adopting party would make the child his own by due process of law, but in a private way, then later it would be made public. Believers are the adopted sons of God now, but it will not be publicly manifested until the Lord comes for them and they are manifested in glory.

Since this article has not attained the usual length, we shall go on to make some general remarks. The doctrines we are now publishing will appear to the secularist as impractical in view of the present distress throughout the world, when men's hearts are failing them for fear of the things coming on the earth. We may be reminded of the deterioration in human relations, involving both nations and individuals. We are being told that the human race is about to destroy itself in nuclear

warfare, and that such doctrines as we are publishing have no practical value in preventing the threatened holocaust. To such reminders and objections, it is sufficient to reply, that our articles are dealing with the individual's relation to God, and involves his eternal welfare. This present order of things, however bad, will ultimately come to an end, and the eternal order will be fixed for all men, either in terrible torment or in ineffable glory and happiness.

The individual's relation to God is of paramount importance, for the reason that the violated law of God is the only source of real and eternal danger. Salvation is deliverance from sin, and sin is unspeakably dangerous because it is against God. To be rightly related to God through Christ means everlasting life. To be delivered from the curse of the law of God means eternal safety. To be a child of God is to be an heir of God, and to have the promise of a home in the Father's house of many mansions. Physical death is to be the lot of all while the Lord is away. Human weapons of destruction are limited to the killing of the body, while God, the Judge of all the earth, is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.

To have right relations with God is to be rightly related to everybody and to everything. To be rightly related to God puts everything else in its proper perspective. To be right with God guarantees glory in the end. None can really hurt whom God blesses.

"Come, Thou fount of every blessing,  
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;  
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,  
Call for songs of loudest praise.

"Here I'll raise my Ebenezer,  
Hither by Thy help I'm come;  
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure,

Safely to arrive at home.

"Jesus sought me when a stranger,  
Wandering from the fold of God;  
He, to rescue me from danger,  
Interposed His precious blood.

"Oh, to grace how great a debtor  
Daily I'm constrained to be!  
Let Thy grace, Lord, like a fetter,  
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.

"Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it;  
Prone to leave the God I love;  
Here's my heart, Oh, take and seal it,  
Seal it for Thy courts above."

## CHAPTER VIII

# SANCTIFICATION

If any defense is needed for writing on the subjects we are dealing with in this present series of articles, it is sufficient to say that they deal with men's relation to God. The secularist is apt to complain that such articles are not practical and profitable, inasmuch as they do not bear directly on politics, economics, and other social sciences. It might be argued that we are making no contribution towards solving the problems now perplexing the statesmen of the world. Human relations, whether on the individual or collective level, are generally accepted as of much importance, and this we do not deny or ignore. Great industries have their public relations agencies. Governments have their agencies which deal with domestic and foreign relations. And since every man must have dealings with God, the Creator and Lawgiver, to have right relations with Him is of supreme importance. To ignore or deny this is to take a fatal attitude. Every man must undergo a change of attitude towards God or suffer eternal and fatal consequences.

The proper presentation of any Bible doctrine lies largely in correct definition of terms. Much of the false teaching so rampant today began with incorrect definitions of Bible words. This is particularly true with regard to the doctrine of sanctification. If we accept the definition of the word as given by the so-called holiness sects, then we will have to accept their teaching on the subject.

In getting at the true meaning of Bible words, we must remember that human dictionaries do not determine, but merely register the meaning of words according to their current usage. This explains why Webster and others define baptism as the act of dipping, pouring, or sprinkling. These men did not profess to be theologians, and their definitions merely reflect the opinions of recognized theologians whose opinions differ. It was observed that some denominations dip or immerse and call their act baptism, while others pour or sprinkle and call their act baptism; and so baptism is defined as being any one of these acts. Bible doctrines cannot be settled by the human dictionaries. We must get our definitions of Bible words from the Bible itself. We shall observe:

### **SOME INADEQUATE AND ERRONEOUS VIEWS OF SANCTIFICATION**

1. The view that sanctification is merely a progressive work of grace in the soul. This is only a partial explanation of the doctrine. It covers only one aspect of the doctrine. It ignores the objective side of sanctification, and makes it only a subjective experience in which the believer grows in grace. Sanctification is both objective and subjective, positional as well as experiential.

2. The view that sanctification is a blessing for only a few sample saints, the mark of an advanced and mature Christian. This view distinguishes between the ordinary Christian and those who are more pious and godly. But the fact is that every born again person is a saint. All the saved are sanctified. Sanctification like justification is through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ: "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26:18).



Paul wrote to the carnal believers at Corinth and addressed them as saints, that is, sanctified persons.

3. The idea that sanctification is a second work of grace in which sin is eradicated from the soul. This makes sanctification subsequent to justification, a blessing which may be lost unless the second blessing of sanctification is received. This would break the Scripture which says that the justified are (in the purpose of God) already glorified: "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. 8:30).

4. The Romanist view that nobody is sanctified until after death when the church, by a tedious and painful ceremony, canonizes the person on the ground of personal merit. According to this view there are no living saints. In reply, it is sufficient to say that Paul wrote to living people and addressed them as saints.

## **THE BIBLE TEACHING**

Let us bear in mind that the words saint, sanctuary, holiness, and sanctification are from the same root word, which means "to set apart", or "to cause to pass over". By comparing Ex. 13:2 with Ex. 13:12 we get the Bible meaning of the word sanctify. In Ex. 13:2 God says, "Sanctify unto me all the first-born, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine." In verse 12, the command is repeated but instead of the word sanctify, the words "set apart" (margin: "Cause to pass over") are used. The thought is that of separating from and setting apart to, or causing to pass over to. The first-born Israelite was separated from the other children in the home and considered as the peculiar possession of the Lord on the ground that the death

angel passed over the house, sparing him the fate of the first-born Egyptian.

There is no moral element implied in the word sanctification, and so it is used of things as well as of persons. We find that vessels, and beasts, and a mountain (things without moral value) are said to be sanctified. They were simply separated from one use and set apart to another use. Isaiah speaks of idolators as sanctifying themselves, which means that they separated themselves from the true congregation of Israel to engage in idolatrous worship. "They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD" (Isa. 66:17).

Nor does the word sanctification imply any internal change in the thing or person sanctified. Mt. Sinai was sanctified "And Moses said unto the LORD, The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it" (Ex. 19:23), but there was no internal change; the soil and minerals remained the same as before. Jeremiah was sanctified before he was born. "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jer. 1:5), which precludes the idea of any internal change. Our Lord was sanctified "Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" (John 10:36); "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth" (John 17:19), and this does away with the idea of eradication of a sinful nature in sanctification, for He was ever the sinless One.

## **SANCTIFICATION OF PERSONS**

The sanctification of persons does involve the question of morals because men are moral beings. And there is one aspect of sanctification which, when completed, will be the eradication of sinful nature and will consist of personal holiness. The various aspects of sanctification should not be confounded but clearly distinguished. The Bible speaks of sanctification by the blood of Christ, by the Holy Spirit, by the word of God, and by the Father.

### **SANCTIFICATION BY THE BLOOD**

In Heb. 10:10 "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" , we are told that our sanctification is by the will of God through the offering of the body of Christ once for all. The same truth is given us in Heb. 13:12: "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." We note three things about this aspect of sanctification.

1. It is positional or objective. The above Scriptures express what the believer is before God by virtue of the blood of Christ. This is imputed holiness, for Christ is "made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (I Cor. 1:30). It is as Scriptural to speak of imputed righteousness.
2. It is eternal. "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10:14). In Christ the believer is holy forever; in Christ he is eternally perfect.
3. It is absolute. In Christ we are absolutely holy-we are as holy as He is holy. This aspect of sanctification is not gradual and relative, but absolute and eternal. If Christ is our holiness,

then we are as holy as He is. How precious this makes the blood of Christ to the believer!

## **SANCTIFICATION BY THE HOLY SPIRIT**

This is internal and experiential in which the believer is separated from the world and set apart as belonging to God. Paul thanks God for the Thessalonians "because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (II Thess. 2:13). Peter writes to those who are the "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 1:2).

Salvation in the sense of conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is the initial work of grace and not a second blessing. And it is to be followed by blessing after blessing. Paul expresses confidence "that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1: 6). The Holy Spirit convicts of sin and leads one to faith in Christ. And he keeps in faith those begotten unto faith. There are no abandoned projects in the economy of grace.

## **SANCTIFICATION BY THE WORD**

This is personal and practical sanctification and has to do with our daily walk, or every day life. In praying for His disciples, our Lord said, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). The word of God has a separating influence on the life of the believer. If the word has a large place in our life, sin will have a proportionately small place. An increased desire for the word will mean a decreased desire for the world. Sin will keep us from the word or the word will keep us from sin. A woman was complimenting her friend on her knowledge of the Bible. She said, "I would give all the world

for your knowledge of the Scriptures." "Well," said the friend, "that is exactly what it cost me."

Sanctification by the word is also progressive. We make progress in personal holiness by feeding on the word: "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (I Peter 2:2). When we consider how little the average Christian feeds his soul on the word of God, we are not surprised to find them dwarfed spiritually—Christians who never grow up to maturity. Sanctification is a divine work and a human obligation. The believer has not strength of his own for godly living, and to think otherwise is highly presumptuous and reveals a spirit of self-righteousness. On the other hand, to deny the obligation to holy living is to justify sinful living.

There is a close analogy between good health in the physical and good health in the spiritual sense, or between good health in a man considered as a physical being and as a moral being. There are three things essential in each case.

1. There must be wholesome food. Physical health may be impaired by what one eats. We have pure food laws for our protection. But in spite of this many people make of their stomachs a sort of garbage can for harmful foods. And we need to know how to eat as well as what to eat. Many would have better health physically if they would masticate what they eat. They may be said to bolt their food. They do not use their teeth, but try to make their stomachs do what the teeth were given to do. Now there must be wholesome food for the soul if the Christian is to have good health. The Christian's food is what he puts into his mind—it is what he reads and hears and looks at. There is a lot of mental food dished out to Christians that impairs their spiritual health. The believer needs to shun the lustful, trashy, filthy literature, constantly pouring off the presses in shocking abundance, as he would shun poison for

the body. The proper food for the Christian is the Bible and such books and magazines as are true to the Bible.

2. Another essential to good health is proper exercise. And the best exercise is that which uses all the members of the body. Every member of the body has its own muscles for it was intended to be used, and if not used the muscles will become weak and flabby. Put your arm in a sling and keep it there month after month-never give it any exercise-never use it---and after a while you can't use it. Put your well leg in a cast and keep it there six months, and you can no more walk than fly.

Now spiritual exercise is just as essential to the health of the soul as physical exercise is to the body. Spiritual muscles can also become weak and flabby. The strength we get from spiritual manna must be used. We must exercise our spiritual gifts by doing good. We are created in Christ Jesus for the purpose of doing good works. There is much for Christians to do, and we are exhorted by Paul to be rich in good works. The lost are to be witnessed to, the sick are to be visited, and the afflicted are to be comforted. To talk of Christ to others will make Him more precious to our own hearts. Witnessing to others about Christ is the best tonic for a run-down feeling spiritually. We may lift ourselves out of the doldrums by giving somebody else a lift. We save our lives by losing our lives for Christ's sake in the service of others.

3. A third essential to good health is the right kind of atmosphere. We must have oxygen if we are to breathe. Mrs. Cole cannot have normal health in Florida. The altitude is too low and the air is too damp and heavy. And on Frisco Peak in Arizona, the altitude is too high and the air is too light---not enough oxygen for her. The climate and atmosphere has to be considered in the matter of physical health.

Now for the spiritual health we must breathe the right atmosphere—we must have the proper environment. And this has to do with our associations. We are to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" (Eph. 5:11). Bad company will ruin good character "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners" (I Cor. 15:33). The blessed man does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, that is, he does not follow the advice of those who hate God. He does not stand in the way of sinners, which means that he is not a joint partaker of their ways. He does not sit in the seat of the scornful, that is, the blessed man has no part with those who mock at holy things.

The believer is in the world, but he is not of the world. He must not shun physical contact with the world, but must have no moral fellowship with its ways.

Complete personal sanctification in the sense of sinless perfection is a goal to be striven for and not a reality to be boasted of. Regeneration has been called the crisis of the disease of sin, and sanctification the progress of convalescence. To live in the truth of the glorious doctrine of sanctification will keep the believer humble, happy, hopeful, and helpful on his journey to glory. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it" (I Thess. 5:23,24).

## CHAPTER IX

### REPENTANCE UNTO LIFE

It is the opinion of the writer that the word repentance was better understood in the days of Christ and the apostles than it is today. The first message of John the Baptist was on repentance, although he did not define the term: "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:1,2). And our Lord began His ministry by saying, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mk. 1:15). When Christ and the apostles preached repentance, the meaning of the word was fixed in the minds of the people, so that definition of the word was not necessary. But this is not true today. There is so much confusion over the doctrine; there are so many conflicting ideas; the word is used with such a variety of meanings, that the preacher needs to take great pains to know and to teach the true meaning of the word. If a man does not know what repentance is, he cannot know whether or not he has repented. The writer believes that many a saved person is confused over the matter and is anxiously asking himself, Have I repented? We believe the average Christian has a better view of saving faith than he has of "Repentance unto life." However, if one is sure of his faith in Christ, he may also be sure that he has repented.

Repentance and faith are mutually inclusive, like the two sides of a coin; they are inseparable graces, so that you cannot have one without the other. The two doctrines are mutually helpful so that to understand the one will help to understand



the other. The New Testament sometimes uses both terms to express a saving experience, while at other times only one or the other term is employed. When we read that repentance is unto life, saving faith is implied; and when we read that the believer has everlasting life, repentance is implied. While inseparable, repentance and faith are also distinct exercises of the human soul. Paul testified, "Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21).

## **DEFINITION AND AMPLIFICATION**

Etymologically, repentance means a change of mind. The English word comes from a compound Greek word: metanoeo. The Greek noun nous means mind. The Greek verb noeo tells what the mind does: it thinks or considers. Then the Greek preposition meta, when connected with noeo expresses the idea of a change. And so metanoeo (repentance) means to consider the past, to think back and change the mind. It is afterthought as opposed to forethought. In repentance the sinner is occupied with his past record before God.

If one should feel that it is minimizing a great truth to define repentance as a mere change of the mind, it is enough to say that in the Bible the mind includes what we mean by the heart; it includes the affections as well as the intellect. And remember also that gospel repentance is a change of mind toward God about sin. The carnal mind is enmity against God, and to change the mind from enmity to love for God is no small change. It is as difficult as it is to raise the dead or create a world. This may cause one to ask, How can a sinner repent since a stream cannot rise higher than its source? The answer is obvious: we cannot repent except by Divine grace. The New Hampshire Confession says, "Repentance and Faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God." This plain

statement finds ample support in Scripture. Paul writes that "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth" (II Tim. 2:24). "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31); "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18). We should preach the duty of repentance and at the same time, pray for God to give repentance.

The Divine order, when repentance and faith are used together, is repentance and faith; not faith and repentance. In repentance the sinner takes the place of a sinner; in faith he takes Christ as Saviour. In repentance one sees himself as a sinner before God; in faith he sees Christ as Saviour from the wrath of God. In repentance one is sick of sin; in faith Christ is precious. In repentance the sinner is helpless; in faith Christ is mighty to save. In repentance there is sorrow for sin; in faith there is joy for salvation. In repentance the sinner distrusts himself; in faith he trusts the Lord Jesus Christ. A man who reversed the Divine order, and put faith before repentance, once asked the writer to explain how one could repent toward God who did not first believe there is a God. This question revealed the man's idea of faith. To trim faith was simply the belief in the existence of God, something the devils also believe "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble" (James 2:19). Of course, one must first believe there is a God before he can repent towards God, but this is not the faith that saves. In saving faith there is an element of trust---trust in Christ Who put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

Our Lord said, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel," thus putting repentance before faith. To urge an impenitent sinner to trust Christ is like urging a well man to take medicine, or

like begging a rich man to beg for alms. Repentance is the effect of seeing oneself as he really is: ruined, guilty, undone, and in danger of hell. Repentance is the effect of seeing sin in its true colors. The natural man, morally speaking, is color blind; sin appears attractive and entrancing. The natural man has a ruined taste; he calls sweet bitter and bitter sweet; he confounds good and evil; he is all mixed up on the question of right and wrong. Repentance is caused by the withering work of the Holy Spirit, Who takes the sword the word of truth and slays man's natural self-esteem and self-righteousness, causing him to cry, "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30).

Repentance involves two facts: the fact of sin and the fact of grace. If a man is not a sinner he would not need to repent, and if God is not gracious it would do no good to repent. The writer once found himself in a Bible Conference with certain brethren who insisted that repentance has nothing to do with sin. One of them challenged anybody to find the expression "repentance for sin," in the Bible, or where we are commanded to "repent OF sin." It is the contention of this school of thought that repentance has only to do with one's attitude toward Christ, and that one repents by trusting Christ as Saviour. It is true that the exact words "repent of sin" are not in the Bible, but we do have the equivalent of the expression in several places. In Jer. 8:6 we read that "no man repented him of his wickedness". In Acts 8:22 it is written: "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness." In Rev. 2:21, Jezebel is said to have been given time "to repent of her fornication." In Rev. 9:20,21 "And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts", we are told that certain men who had been

visited with plagues repented not of the works of their hands. So repentance implies sin, sorrow for it, and a changed attitude towards God about it. Nobody but a sinner can repent, and there is nothing to repent of but sin. It is absurd to talk about repentance for doing what is good.

## **THE NATURE OF REPENTANCE**

1. Repentance is not a work to be done in order to be saved. This would conflict with the many Scriptures which teach salvation without works; "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them"

(Eph. 2:8-10); "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;" (Titus 3:5); "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" (II Tim.1:9), with many others. Repentance is not something one does with his hands, but what he feels in his soul. It is not a benevolent act, although benevolence will be the fruit of it. A man once boasted that he could do more repentance with a barrel of flour and a side of bacon than was ever done at a mourner's bench. This sneer at the mourner and the claim that one repents by doing deeds of charity are alike unscriptural. He who has never mourned over his sins cannot rejoice in Christ as Saviour.

2. Repentance is not bodily exercise. It is internal, rather than external; inward attitude of the soul, rather than outward exercise of the body. Job sat in ashes when he repented, but sitting in ashes is not repentance. The publican beat upon his

breast when he repented, but smiting one's breast is not repentance. Sitting in ashes and smiting the breast were outward signs of how these men felt in their souls. Sin was a grievous thing to them.

3. Repentance is not internal grief and sorrow as the price of salvation. There is nothing meritorious but rather the conscious lack of merit. In repentance the sinner says in effect: "Nothing in my hands I bring, Simply to Thy Cross I cling." Repentance is emptying oneself of all self-confidence, and when it is "repentance unto life" includes confidence in Christ as the one and only ground of salvation. There is no specific length of time one has to mourn nor any certain degree of sorrow one must feel. This is because mourning is not the price of salvation. One mourns over his lost condition--mourns because he is not saved, not in order to be saved. The sinner cannot be saved by his mourning. Mourning may reveal his interest in salvation, but will not merit salvation. You go to your physician for a check-up just as a precautionary measure. He gives you a thorough examination and tells you that you have cancer. This will naturally cause grief and anxiety. But all the mourning you might do would not contribute to any cure. Worry and grief would not cause you to get well. Now suppose your doctor---after a brief pause assures you that he can cure you without surgery. If you believe him there will be wonderful peace of mind, but if you keep on in your grief that will be evidence you do not trust him. From the standpoint of the sinner's duty there is no need to mourn any length of time over sin. As soon as he feels concern over his lost condition and hears about Christ as Saviour, he ought to put his trust in Him and cease his mourning. The preacher should never tell the grief-stricken sinner to keep on mourning, but should tell him to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. However, from the standpoint of God's sovereign dealings, He often allows the

sinner to grieve and struggle with sin for a long time before He shows him the sufficiency of Christ as Saviour.

4. Repentance is not any self-torture of the body. This confounds repentance with penance as something meritorious. The monk does penance by sleeping on a hard bed or wearing a coarse shirt. Luther was doing penance by climbing a stairway in Rome on his hands and knees. When Anselm of Canterbury died, his garments were found to be full of vermin he had harbored in order to mortify the flesh.

We will let a Roman Catholic tell us what penance is. We quote Dr. Chaloner in "The Catholic Christian Instructed:" Question: "What do you mean by the sacrament of penance?" Answer: "An institution of Christ by which our sins are forgiven which we fall into after baptism." "In what does this consist?" Answer: "On the part of the penitent, it consists in three things: contrition, confession, and satisfaction. By satisfaction we mean a faithful performance of the penance enjoined by the priests."

Penance is called the second plank after shipwreck. It is the way of salvation the second and all subsequent times after the first salvation by the sacrament of baptism.

5. Repentance is not some hard term imposed by God for salvation. This would make it inconsistent with God's way of salvation which is not a hard way but an easy way. If salvation were by a hard way, nobody could be saved because man by nature is without strength to do good. If salvation is by grace through faith; if it is without money and without price; if it is the gift of God, how can it be said to be on hard terms? The way of salvation is indeed made hard, not by God, but by the pride of the natural heart. It is pride and self-sufficiency that leads one to ask, "What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" (Matt. 19:16). We must indeed strive to enter in at the strait gate, but this striving is not with an unwilling Saviour, but

against a nature that wants ground for boasting. Everything in our old self-centered and self-confident nature fights against the way of salvation by grace through faith.

6. Gospel repentance is toward God. One may repent towards his parents. A wild young man away from home, having broken the hearts of his father and mother with his wayward life, may be moved to tears by hearing a description of the old homestead and of the grief of his aged parents. He may experience a change of mind towards father and mother and return home to take care of them in their declining days, but this would not be gospel and evangelical repentance.

7. Repentance unto life includes faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It has respect to Christ as Saviour, as well as to God as Lawgiver. It does not end in despair but in hope. Judas repented and hanged himself, but this was not gospel repentance, and a different word in the Greek is used to describe it. In gospel repentance we have sins perceived, sins abhorred, and sins abandoned in the heart, as one turns to Christ for salvation. The believer will never in this life be able to quit sinning, but in his heart he wants to. Someone has called repentance the repudiation of sin. In true repentance there is not only the desire to escape the consequences of sin, but to be rid of sin itself as a thing displeasing to God. Much so-called repentance is illustrated in the little girl's prayer: "O God, make me good-not too good-not real good-but just good enough to keep from being whipped." True repentance is a permanent and abiding grace in the soul. It is an attitude that belongs to the whole Christian life in regard to sin and the Saviour. As one grows in grace, sin becomes increasingly hateful and Christ becomes more and more precious.

## THE NECESSITY OF REPENTANCE

The necessity of repentance was emphasized by Christ, by John the Baptist, and by the apostles. Our Lord preached, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). Paul preached that God had commanded "all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30). Let us note some reasons for repentance.

1. Salvation without repentance would fill heaven with people who hate God and love sin. It would perpetuate rebellion by transferring rebels from earth to heaven. Salvation is deliverance of a person from sin, not merely from a sinful environment. Faith toward Christ without repentance toward God would make Christ nothing more than a fire escape—nothing more than a Deliverer from hell. But Christ is the Saviour from sin as well as from the punishment of sin. One element in repentance is hatred of sin, and to hate sin is to love God.

2. Refusal to repent is even worse than the sin for which one ought to repent. One may tell a lie, and this is an awful sin, but refusal to repent is worse. And why? Because one may lie from fear or other weakness of the flesh, but failure to repent is to justify the lie. Peter denied the Lord out of weakness and fear, but he did not justify his denial. He wept bitterly; he repented. Nor did he give up in despair, like Judas, but clung to the Lord and profited from his sin. His fall cured him of boasting and taught him the needed lesson of humility.

David manifests the spirit of the true penitent in the 51st Psalm. In the parable of the prodigal son we have a classic example of repentance. We have the father's heart, the father's provision, and the son's repentance. The son left home in a spirit of pride and independence, and this was a sin against the father. He went deeper and deeper into sin until



he was reduced to abject poverty: rags and hunger and shameful occupation. He felt the shame of all this, but that was not repentance. Now a change takes place in his attitude toward his father. He returns to the father in a spirit of contrition and confession. He does not return to boast of his success while away from his father, but rather to confess his failure and need. He does not return with an offering for his acceptance with the father. He had nothing to offer but rags and a broken life. The only hope of acceptance was the father's love which forgave him all. Cannot every child of grace read his life's story in the experiences of the prodigal? The story of the prodigal does not illustrate faith toward Christ, but only repentance toward God. It has nothing about God as Lawgiver, but only as Father. It does not give the ground of the sinner's acceptance before God, but only the fact of it. It has nothing to say on the doctrine of atonement, and was not given as a complete picture of the way of salvation. It was spoken by Christ to the Pharisees and scribes in reply to their complaint that He received publicans and sinners. He who uses this parable to deny or discount the truth of blood atonement makes it serve a purpose not intended by Christ. It does not give a complete picture of God, for God is Judge as well as Father. It does not give us, as a certain liberal has said, the very heart of the gospel. The heart of the gospel is the story of Christ crucified. The gospel is concerning Him in Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sin. Repentance is associated with remission of sin, "and without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9:22). And the blood of Jesus Christ was shed that God might be just in justifying the believer. "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:24-26).

On the one hand, there is no remission apart from the death of Christ; on the other hand, there is no remission apart from repentance on the part of the sinner. May writer and reader bow in adoring wonder at the wisdom of God in human salvation!

## CHAPTER X

### SAVING FAITH

All is not gold that glitters; all is not silver that shines; every cow that moos does not fill the pail; neither will all who profess faith, and say "Lord, Lord" reach heaven. When we speak of saving faith the implication is, that there is a faith that does not save. We preach salvation by faith without any works of human merit, and in this we are right on safe ground. It is the uniform teaching of Scripture that the sinner is saved by faith only: "It is of faith that it might be by grace" (Rom. 4:16). If the sinner does anything beyond faith for salvation, he frustrates the grace of God. But we have reckon with counterfeits in the matter of faith, as in other things. There are many counterfeits in the realm of religion. Satan is the master counterfeiter. If God has a Son named the Lord Jesus Christ, then Satan also has a son who is called the son of perdition: "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;" (II Thess. 2:3). If God has His ministers, then Satan has his ministers who transform themselves into ministers of righteousness to deceive "Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (II Cor. 11:15). If God has a gospel, then Satan has his gospel, which Paul calls another gospel, which is not the true gospel "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" (Gal. 1:8). If Christ has His church, then Satan has his

synagogue "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee" (Rev. 3:9). If there is a faith called the faith of God's elect, then Satan counterfeits this faith: "But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Heb. 10:39). Counterfeit money passes through many hands without being detected, and many counterfeit Christians pass as true believers. It appears that Judas was not detected as a false professor by the other disciples, for no finger was pointed at him when Christ predicted that one of them would betray Him. This is a challenge to every professor, including the writer, to make sure he possesses saving grace and saving faith. Let us now consider:

## **SOME SUBSTITUTES FOR SAVING FAITH**

1. There is what might be termed historical or theoretical faith. This is a mere assent of the mind to the revealed truth. This is without any emotional or devotional element. The truth does not reach the inward parts, and the heart is not in it. It is lacking in love and trust. It is to believe about Christ as one might believe about Washington or Lincoln.

2. There may be a natural and temporary faith. This finds illustration in the parable of the sower. The stony ground hearer received the word at once with joy, but not having the root of the matter in him, he endured only for a while, and under testing lost interest in what he had professed. Everything was on the surface, and therefore, was hasty and unreal; nothing more than fleshly emotion. It was not of God and therefore not abiding. In a real experience of grace, the word does not at first make glad. The Holy Spirit drives the truth through the bowels of self-esteem and the sinner feels bad. It is the Spirit's way to expose the sinner to himself

before He reveals to him Christ as Saviour. It is the conscious sinner who looks to Christ for salvation.

3. There is what the Scriptures call vain faith. In showing the necessity of the resurrection of Christ, Paul says, "And if Christ be not raised your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (I Cor. 15:17). The apostle is saying that faith in a dead Christ would be in vain. Here he was not thinking of the nature of faith, but of the object of faith. Vain faith is to trust that which does not have power to save. Weak faith may be saving faith, while strong faith may be vain faith. Strong faith in a dead Christ could not save, while weak faith in the living Christ is saving faith. This makes the object of faith of supreme importance. If the sinner trusts the wrong object, his faith will be vain. The only object of saving faith is the crucified and living Christ; the strongest faith in any other object will be worthless. All of us ought to have greater faith in Christ; however, it is not the strength of our faith that saves, but the strength of the saviour. Isaiah describes the idolator who makes his god from the same tree with which he warms himself and cooks his food. His strange conduct is explained thus: "A deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" (Isa. 44:20). Spiritual insanity of the human race is amply revealed in the things people trust for salvation. Only those taught by God trust in Jesus Christ "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (John 6:45).

4. Feelings may be substituted for faith. Much preaching is calculated to produce feelings rather than faith. Preachers should beware of telling sob stories and getting sinners to act on their emotions when they have been given no saving object to trust. The true order in an experience of grace is: (1) Fact; (2) Faith; (3) Feeling. (1) The fact of the gospel of Christ

and Him crucified; (2) Faith in that fact---faith in what Christ did as Saviour; (3) Feelings as the natural result of our reliance upon Christ as Saviour. We are not saved by our feelings, but if we trust Christ for salvation, we will have a sense of peace in our souls and a feeling of safety as we ponder what the Scriptures say about the power of His blood to save. And now may we consider more directly:

## **THE NATURE OF SAVING FAITH**

There are two senses in which the word "faith" is used in the Bible. Sometimes--most of the time--the word means the act of believing, and a few times it means what one believes: his creed. In Jude 3 where we are exhorted to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," the obvious meaning is that we are to contend for the body of truth given in the Scriptures. And Jesus appears to use the word in the same way when he says, "Thou believest that there is one God" (Jas. 2:19). This was the orthodox creed of the Jew according to "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:" (Deut. 6:4). But to have an orthodox creed concerning God is not the act of saving faith.

Saving faith as an act is a compound of belief and trust: belief in God's testimony about His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and trust in Christ as the Saviour. To believe God on the question of salvation is to trust His Son as Saviour. John tells us that God has testified that there is eternal life in His Son and that to refuse to trust His Son is to make God a liar. "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath

not the Son of God hath not life" (I John 5:9-12). Saving faith is accompanied by works; otherwise faith is a dead thing and has no value. We are saved by faith alone, but not by a faith which is alone. In the new birth there are three graces implanted in the human soul; faith, hope and love, and these three are inseparable. Hope presupposes faith, for we could not hope for the fulfillment of the promise if we did not believe the thing promised would be received. Faith is joined to love and works by love: "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6). Paul preached faith without works as any part of the procuring cause of justification. He also preached works as the fruit or evidence of faith. Paul and James were agreed on the nature of saving faith. James preached justification by works as evidence of real faith. He wrote about justification of profession. He insisted that a real living faith could only be shown by works. "Shew me," was the challenge of James.

## **DEFINITION AND ILLUSTRATIONS**

The eleventh chapter of Hebrews tells us what faith is and what it does. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report" (Heb. 11:1,2). Faith operates with respect to the future, things looked forward to with hope or expectation; and it also operates with respect to things which cannot be observed, things beyond scientific demonstration. Faith is the substance of things hoped for. The word for substance literally means, "That which stands under". So faith is that which stands under hope to support it, to keep it from dying while waiting for what is promised. What is hoped for is not yet possessed, but faith is the assurance that it will be possessed. The word of God is the objective ground on which hope rests; one hopes for something because God has promised it. Faith furnishes a subjective ground for hope, for faith is the inward

assurance that what is hoped for will be received. It is like this. God makes a promise in His word, hope begins to look forward to its fulfillment, and faith is the confidence or assurance that the thing promised will be forthcoming. Now saving faith is the assurance that all the blessings God has promised in Christ will be received. Some of these blessings, such as personal perfection, and a home in heaven, lie out in the future as matters of hope. If I did not believe that I would ultimately reach heaven and be conformed to the image of Christ, then I would be without hope as I face the future.

Faith is also the evidence of things not seen. Faith is the inward conviction that what God says is true, even though it is beyond reasons and scientific demonstration. This twofold definition of faith is followed by illustrations in the realm of the future and of the unseen. We have space for only two of these illustrations.

## **THE FAITH OF ABEL**

"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts" (Heb. 11:4). Abel hoped for acceptance with God, and this hope was founded upon God's promise. God had spoken to both Cain and Abel about the way of approach to Him, and acceptance by Him. Faith presupposes a divine revelation, for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). The way God prescribed indicated that men are sinners, and can only be accepted on the ground of blood, for "without the shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9:22). Both Cain and Abel were told what to bring as an offering to God. Cain, like the Pharisees of Christ's day, rejected God's counsel or verdict against himself, denied that he was a sinner, refused to bring the bloody offering God demanded and brought a mere thank-offering of the fruit of the ground. He thus acted in unbelief,



and he and his offering were rejected. Abel acted by faith and brought the kind of sacrifice prescribed. He took the place of a sinner and brought a slain lamb. Both Cain and Abel offered in hope of being accepted, but Cain's hope did not rest on faith in God's word and ended in disappointment and despair. Abel's hope was realized, and he obtained witness of acceptance with God on the ground of the gifts he brought. We have heard it said that if Cain had brought his fruit of the ground by faith, he too would have been accepted. The reply to this is that if Cain had brought an offering by faith, he would not have brought fruit, but the same kind of sacrifice brought by Abel. We are told that Abel brought a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which we are not to understand that it was a greater intrinsic worth, but it was more excellent as a confession of sin and a type of the promised bruise of the serpent's head.

## **THE FAITH OF NOAH**

"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house" (Heb. 11:7). "Faith cometh by hearing", so Noah had a revelation from God about a coming flood and how to escape destruction in it. This was something never seen and something beyond scientific proof. All that Noah had to act upon was what God said. Noah believed God. He was not interested in scientific proof of the possibilities of a flood. One never believes God as long as he tries to ascertain whether what God says is reasonable or possible. One never believes God when he puts what God says in the crucible of human reason and judgment.

## **SOME METAPHORS OF SAVING FAITH**

Saving faith is represented under a variety of metaphors, some of which we will now consider:

1. Faith is committing the soul to Christ. Paul speaks thus in II Tim. 1:12: "For I know whom I have believed (margin, trusted), and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." Paul had deposited his soul with Christ for eternal safekeeping with the assurance that it would be safely kept.

2. Faith is coming to Christ. Christ says, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). And again, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28).

3. Faith is receiving Christ. Of Christ it is written: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on his name" (John 1:11,12). Faith is the empty hand receiving Christ as the one mighty to save. Faith has nothing to give as the price of salvation. Faith says, "Nothing in my hands I bring, Simply to Thy cross I cling."

4. Faith is feeding on Christ. In the great discourse on the bread of life our Lord uses the words believing, coming, and eating interchangeably. See John 6:32-58. Believing on Christ is the same as coming to Him, and both are the same as eating His flesh and drinking His blood. How absurd it is to take the words about eating His flesh and drinking His blood in the gross and carnal sense! These are figures of speech to represent the soul as appropriating the benefits of Christ's death. Christ was offered for sin once, and nobody has His material body and blood, nor can it be manufactured by anybody. We feed upon His body and blood spiritually by faith and not with carnal mouths. There is nothing which can be put into our fleshly bodies or applied to them outwardly that will effect our salvation.

5. Faith is fleeing to Christ. Under the Old Testament economy there were cities of refuge to which the manslayer might flee for safety. "And among the cities which ye shall give unto the Levites there shall be six cities for refuge, which ye shall appoint for the manslayer, that he may flee thither: and to them ye shall add forty and two cities. So all the cities which ye shall give to the Levites shall be forty and eight cities: them shall ye give with their suburbs. And the cities which ye shall give shall be of the possession of the children of Israel: from them that have many ye shall give many; but from them that have few ye shall give few: every one shall give of his cities unto the Levites according to his inheritance which he inheriteth. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come over Jordan into the land of Canaan; Then ye shall appoint you cities to be cities of refuge for you; that the slayer may flee thither, which killeth any person at unawares. And they shall be unto you cities for refuge from the avenger; that the manslayer die not, until he stand before the congregation in judgment" (Num. 35:6-12). And so Christ is the sinner's refuge from the danger of sin. We have two immutable things: God's word and His oath so that "we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us" (Heb. 6:18).

6. Faith is looking unto Christ. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else" (Isa. 45:22). "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:2). Truly, there is life for a look at the crucified One.

7. Faith is calling upon Christ, "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. 10:12,13). Those who will not call upon Christ in this day of salvation will call

upon the mountains to fall on them and hide them from His face in the day of His wrath. But none who call now by faith shall call in vain, for Christ is a willing and able Saviour.

## **ILLUSTRATION**

All the elements in saving faith may be brought out by the use of an old illustration. The thoughts, feelings, and action of a person who stands by a boat upon a small island which is threatened by rising waters, will represent the whole of saving faith. The person first regards the boat from a purely intellectual point of view. He believes the boat actually exists, just as the sinner believes there is a God and that there is a Saviour. As the stream rises and swells, the man will look at the boat with some sense of emotion and feeling of interest. And so the sinner under conviction of sin has a feeling of concern for his safety. When the man sees the rushing tide is about to sweep him into the raging waters, he gets into the boat as the only way of escape. Getting into the boat is what actually saves him, and he cannot be said to have trusted the boat until he gets into it. And so the sinner may believe that Christ is the Saviour, but he is not saved until he gets into Him by faith --not saved until He relies upon Him for salvation. The very essence of faith is reliance or trust. Every believer gladly confesses: "I broke God's law, Christ came between; I'm depending on Him to save."

"Come, ye sinners, poor and wretched,  
Weak and wounded, sick and sore;  
Jesus ready stands to save you,  
Full of pity joined with power;  
He is able, He is willing doubt no more.

"Come ye weary heavy laden,  
Bruised and broken by the fall;  
If you tarry till you're better,

You will never come at all;  
No the righteous--sinners, Jesus came to call.

"Let not conscience make you linger,  
Nor of fitness fondly dream;  
All the fitness He requireth  
Is to feel your need of Him;  
This He gives you; 'Tis the Spirit's rising beam."

-- Joseph Hart, 1712-1768

## CHAPTER XI

### **THE SECURITY OF THE SAINTS**

In this article there are three expressions which we shall use interchangeably: The Security of the Saints, the Preservation of the Saints, and the Perseverance of the Saints. While these are not identical statements, they do affirm the same thing of saved people, namely, their eternal safety. The preserving power of God accounts for the perseverance of the saint in faith and holiness: "For the Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever" (Ps. 37:28).

There are two doctrines which are mutually exclusive, antagonistic, and destructive. There is no compromise possible between them. They neither give nor ask quarter. One is true, the other is false. One is the doctrine popularly called apostasy, which means that a saved person, a saint, one born of God, made a partaker of the Divine nature, justified by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, may through sin forfeit his saintship, become a child of the devil, and be finally and forever lost. The other is known as the perseverance of the saints, which means that one born of God, made a saint by the effectual call of the Holy Spirit, justified by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, may do that which is wrong, grieve the Holy Spirit, lose the joy of salvation, and bring upon himself the corrective chastisements of the Lord; nevertheless shall persevere in faith and shall not be lost in the end.

Apostasy is based upon salvation by works in whole or in part; security is based upon salvation by the grace of God. The one makes salvation a human project; the other makes salvation a Divine undertaking. If salvation is of man, failure is not only possible but certain; if salvation is of the Lord, it must be a success.

One of the doctrines is established by Scripture, the other is denied by Scripture. So all arguments pro and con must be based upon Scripture. Unaided human reason and human experience and observation have no place in the discussion. "What saith the Scripture?" must be our guiding star.

## **WHAT THE DOCTRINE IS**

The doctrine we subscribe to is rarely, if ever, correctly stated by those who reject and oppose it. It is dressed up in a false and ugly garb, then ridiculed and held up to scorn. The opponents build up a man of straw and then proceed to tear it to pieces. They never deal with the doctrine as it is believed and preached by its friends.

1. It is no part of the doctrine that all church members are secure and certain to go to heaven. All church members ought to be saints, but alas, many of them are not. To those who have no other ground for thinking they are saved than church membership, this doctrine offers no hope or ground of rejoicing. Security is predicated of saints, born again people, who are justified by faith in Christ. These are preserved by God and persevere in their attachment to Christ as Lord and Saviour. Persevering faith in Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes saints from superficial professors.

"We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end" (Heb. 3:14). One who

has been made a partaker of Christ by faith will persevere in faith until the end of his days.

"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him; If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed" (John 8:31). There is a faith that is temporal, where the root of the matter is not in the professor, where there has really been no experience of grace. This is the faith of the stony ground hearer. But real disciples have a Divinely given faith and continue in the word of Christ.

"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us" (I John 2:19). These were superficial professors, not real professors of the grace of God, and their departure from the fellowship of the saints made manifest their true character. John plainly says that if they had been real saints, they would have continued in the fellowship of the saints. This verse unmistakably supports our doctrine. Judas furnishes an apt illustration of the apostasy of false professors. Judas was never a real believer, although associated with real believers: "Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not who should betray him" (John 6:64).

2. It is no part of the doctrine that all who are active in religious work shall be saved forever. Many religious workers are not saved now. They are not saints. They have not been born again. They have not partaken of the Divine nature. The Saviour says, "Many will say to 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 will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:22,23). The flagellants were a religious sect in Italy in the 13th century. They were



active as long as they could parade in the streets and publicly scourge themselves. But when their public processions were prohibited the sect died out. They could not survive in obscurity. In the time of Christ there were many who did things to be seen of men for human praise. And there is every reason to believe that the race of those who love the sound of human praise has not perished from the earth. All saints should show their faith by their works, but their works should be works of love to Christ, and not works of love for human acclaim. May this truth probe the hearts of both writer and reader.

3. It is no part of the doctrine that saints may not fall. Saints have fallen and been sorely bruised by the fall. But every fall does not mean a broken neck, either physically or spiritually. Many have fallen and lived to tell the story. And so in religious life, saints have fallen into sin, and who among us dares to deny that he has never fallen into sin? Where is the sinless person? The sinner was not saved by becoming sinless, and he is not kept saved by living a sinless life. The sinner was saved by trusting Christ as Saviour, and he is kept saved by the power of God through faith. He continues as he began; a poor helpless sinner trusting a mighty Saviour. The born-again person can never be lost, because he will never renounce his faith in Christ and go about looking for another Saviour or give up in despair. Harken to the Scriptures: "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me" (Micah 7:8). "A just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again" (Prov. 24:16). "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand" (Ps. 37:23,24).

## PROOF THAT THE DOCTRINE IS TRUE

Arguments from Scripture are so abundant that one hardly knows where and how to begin in arranging them. A saint is one who has been elected by God the Father, redeemed by God the Son, and regenerated by God the Holy Spirit. And so the first reason we shall give for the security of the saint is as follows:

1. All the persons of the Godhead are for him: "If God be for us who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31).

(1) The Father is for us in election: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?," (Rom. 8:33). He is for us in Predestination: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8:29). He is for us in the effectual call. "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called" (Rom. 8:30). "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace" (Gal. 1:15). He is for us in justification: "It is God that justifieth" (Rom. 8:33b). He is for us in the gift of His Son: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all . . ." (Rom. 8:32). He is for us in His purpose to glorify us: "and whom he justified them he also glorified" (Rom. 8:30).

(2) The Son is for us In redemption "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:" (Gal. 3:13); in Intercession "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. 8:34); "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine" (John 17:9); "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); in His second coming "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3); "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28); "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (I Thess. 4:15-18).

(3) The Holy Spirit is for us: In regeneration "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:3); in intercession "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Rom. 8:26), as a seal "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30); in our resurrection "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8:11). Or to go over the same ground---the birth of the Spirit makes the saint safe. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (I John 3:9); "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith....We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten

of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not" (I John 5:4,18); "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (I Peter 1:23); the indwelling of the Spirit makes him secure: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (I Cor. 6:19); "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;" (John 14:16); and the sealing of the Spirit makes him secure. A seal is a mark of ownership; it is to secure what is sealed; and it is a guarantee of safe delivery. Haldeman describes a beautiful vase he once saw. It was almost covered with outer coverings, and had a great seal upon it, and an inscription which stated that it had been purchased by an Oriental Prince, and was to be delivered to him in his palace in his capital city. Now the saint bears a seal, a mark, a stamp, and an inscription which declares that he has been purchased by Jesus Christ. This seal of the Holy Spirit marks us as belonging to Christ as His purchased possession, guarantees our safety, and also that we shall be delivered safely to His capital city in heaven. We are still surrounded with the outer covering of sinful flesh, but in that great day the covering will be taken off and we shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of our Father.

2. The saint is secure because all the attributes of God are for him The will of God is for him: "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day" (John 6:39). The power of God is for him: Christ said, "My Father... is greater than all and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand" (John 10:29). "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (I Peter 1:5); "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is

able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (II Tim. 1:12). The love of God is for the saint. There is nothing able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38, 39); "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). God's mercy is for the saint. God is rich in mercy: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us" (Eph. 2.4). It was mercy that made us alive when we were dead, and mercy will not destroy that which he saves. The holiness of God is for the saint "Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me" (Ps. 89:35,36). God's word and His oath are given to the one who has fled to Christ for refuge, that he may have strong consolation: "For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:" (Heb. 6:16-18).

God's wisdom is for the saint. Wisdom found a ransom: "Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom" (Job 33:24). Christ is made unto us wisdom. "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:" (I Cor. 1:30). Divine wisdom took into account all contingencies in the work of salvation. God's justice is for the saint. Justice put Christ to death for the

believer's sins, and justice will not punish two persons for the same offence. If one died as a substitute for all, then it follows all died: "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead" (II Cor. 5:14). The sin Christ died to was our sin imputed to Him; therefore, His death to sin was our death to sin, and this led Paul to say, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:11).

3. The saint is secure because he is not under the moral law as the way of life. One under law would have to keep the law perfectly or be condemned. If he only broke the law one time in one point, he would be a lawbreaker, and condemned. The only possible way of escaping condemnation and judgment is to get out from under the law. And the only way to get out from under the law is to trust Christ, Who is the end of the law for every believer. "For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them" (Rom. 10:5). One cannot get out from under the law by obeying it. Obedience, if possible, would prevent condemnation, but it would not remove from under the law. And of course, one cannot get out from under law by breaking it; he only gets in the toils of it and is punished by it. Nor can one get out from under law by mourning. Mourning does not satisfy law. Neither can the law be set aside; it must be satisfied. The only way to get out from under the moral law of God is through faith in Christ Who met its penalty and satisfied its claims against the sinner by His death on the cross.

The believer is declared to be dead to the law. "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she

is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God" (Rom. 7:1-4). Paul reminds us that the law has dominion over a man as long as he liveth. To be saved he must die to the law. He illustrates the thought by the law of marriage. The law binds the wife to her husband as long as he lives. When he dies physically, she dies to the law that bound her to that particular man. She still lives as a woman, but not as a wife. So the believer, says Paul, is dead to the law by the body of Christ. The death of Christ was the believer's death to the moral law of God, and being dead to the law he is no longer under it as the way of life. Christ said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6).

The believer is "free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2). There is no law by which the one who trusts in Christ can be condemned. God would have to resort to mob violence in sending a saint to hell.

4. The saint is eternally safe from the danger of hell because he is dead to sin; "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom 6:11). This is death in the judicial sense and is on the ground of the substitutionary death of Christ. The believer is not yet dead to sin subjectively, but only objectively. He is not yet dead to sin as an experience, for he is more sensitive to sin as a saint than when he was a lost sinner. He is dead to the guilt and penalty of sin because Christ bore the penalty in His own body on the tree.

"Once I was dead in sin,  
And hope within me died;  
But now I'm dead to sin,  
With Jesus crucified.

"O height I cannot reach!  
O depth I cannot sound;  
O love, O boundless love,  
In my Redeemer found!

"O cold ungrateful heart,  
That can from Jesus turn,  
When living fires of love  
Should on His altar burn.

"I live--and yet not I,  
But Christ that lives in me,  
Who from the law of sin  
And death hath made me free."



## CHAPTER XII

### **WHICH COMES FIRST IN CONVERSION: LIFE OR FAITH?**

The subject on which I am about to write has long been a matter of controversy. It takes us into the arena where theological gladiators have fought for centuries. The keenest of intellectual swords have been wielded in the long combat. The Arminian declares in triumphant tone that faith precedes life; the Calvinist, with the same spirit of certainty, says that life must precede faith, and is logically the cause of faith.

The writer believes that the controversy over this question is due to lack of distinguishing things that differ. The Scriptures speak of life in two different senses. There is life in the subjective, experimental and biological sense; and there is life in the objective and judicial sense. In other words, there is life in the sense of regeneration or the new birth, and there is life in the sense of justification. The first is life in respect to an inward state; the second is life in respect to an outward standing before the law of God. "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life" (Rom. 5:18), speaks of "Justification of life.") The first is life biologically; the second is life legally or judicially. The first is life wrought in the sinner by the Holy Spirit; the other is life wrought for the sinner by the redemptive death of Christ. Life in one sense is from the Holy Spirit; in another sense it is from Christ. Life from the Holy

Spirit gives spiritual qualities to the heart and mind which control the will; life from Christ takes us out from under the curse of the law. It is the difference between impartation and imputation. Life from the Spirit is life imparted; life from Christ is life imputed.

The above distinction is a necessary corollary of the fact that the sinner is dead in a two--fold sense. He is dead in the sense that he is helpless and unable of himself to see or enter the kingdom of God, or to perform acceptable works in the sight of God. He is also dead in the sense that the sentence of death, culminating in the second death (the lake of fire) has been passed upon him. In one sense death is depravity of nature in which the sinner is blind to the light of the gospel; in another sense death is condemnation in which the sinner is exposed to the wrath of God. It is the difference between defilement of nature and condemnation of the person.

## **I. JUDICIAL LIFE FOLLOWS FAITH**

With the above distinction in view, we are now prepared to state and prove that life from Christ--life in the objective and judicial sense --follows faith. Every Scripture that predicated life upon faith in Christ refers to judicial life and presents life in contrast with condemnation and punishment. We can only take a few examples. John 3:36: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Life in this passage is based upon faith in Christ, and is in contrast with the wrath or judgment of God. John 5:40: "And ye will not come to me that ye might have life." Our Lord here says that men must come to him for life, and coming to Christ is the same as having faith in Christ. John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Life in this verse is opposed to punishment, and is, therefore,

judicial life. John 5:24: "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation." Note here that life is the opposite of condemnation, and therefore, must be life in the sense of justification. "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:15); "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (I John 5:12); "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:" (Rom 5:1). All these passages are fatal to Hardshellism--the position that preaching the Gospel is not essential to salvation. Everlasting life is based upon faith in Christ, and men cannot believe in Him of Whom they have not heard. "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?...So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:14,17).

## **II. SPIRITUAL LIFE PRECEDES FAITH**

We ask our readers to keep our distinction in mind while we prove from the Scriptures that life from the Holy Spirit--life in the subjective and biological sense--precedes faith, and is logically the cause of faith.

And let it be understood that we are not contending that life precedes faith in point of time. We are not saying that one may be born of the Spirit one day or week and believe on the following day or week. The order we are contending for is that which is seen in the relation between cause and effect. We are saying that faith in Christ is the effect or evidence of the new birth. We do not leave room for the question-- "Can there be a regenerate unbeliever?" The effect of a thing may co - exist with the thing itself. To illustrate: I shoot a bullet through a wall; the bullet and the hole were there at the same time, but the bullet caused the hole and not the hole the bullet. The new

birth and faith may be simultaneous, but the faith did not cause the new birth, the new birth caused the faith.

That the birth of the Spirit precedes faith as cause precedes effect, we will now prove from analogy of Scriptures. We will compare three verses of Scripture. In I John 2:29 we read "that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him." The verb here is in the perfect tense in the Greek and should read, "Has been born of Him." The question to settle is this: Is doing righteousness the cause or the effect of the new birth? Does practical righteousness logically follow or precede the birth of the spirit? The rankest Armenian among the Baptists will be compelled to say that the new birth precedes and is the cause of practical righteousness. Now, in I John 4:7 we read: ". . . every one that loveth is born of God." The same perfect tense is used here and it should read, "has been born of God." Is spiritual love the cause or the effect of the new birth? Does spiritual love logically follow or precede the new birth? And again the rankest Arminian among us will say that love is the effect or evidence of the birth of the Spirit. Now, take I John 5:1: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." The same perfect tense of the verb is used here as in the preceding examples, and should read, "Whosoever believeth.. has been born of God." Now what will the Arminian say? Will he dare to say that faith is the cause of the new birth? If he does then, to be consistent, he must also say that spiritual love and practical righteousness are also causes of the new birth.

The only passage that seems to militate against our distinction and position is Gal. 3:26; "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." But the word translated children should be translated sons. The Greek is "huiioi" and not "tekna". We are sons of God by faith, but we are children of God through the new birth. Sonship is through adoption and adoption is a legal term--it means "placing as a son." And we have already

shown that the legal or judicial aspect of salvation is through faith in Christ. In this connection the words of J. M. Pendleton (Christian Doctrine, page 257) are most interesting:

"As to regeneration and faith, a plausible argument may be made in favor of the priority of either. For example, if we turn to "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" (John 1:12,13), it seems natural to suppose that those who believed in Christ were those who had been born of God. So also according to the correct rendering of I John 5:1, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is (has been) born of God." Some use this passage as it reads in the Common Version, "is born of God," to prove that faith is prior to regeneration, because the means of it; but the argument fails in view of the fact that not the present, but the perfect tense is used in the original-- "has been born of God." But if we turn to Gal. 3:26, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," the obvious view is that we become God's children by faith, or, in other words, that faith is instrumental in effecting regeneration. We see, therefore, that there may be a plausible argument on either side of the question."

We can only express surprise that Dr. Pendleton failed to see that the Greek in Gal. 3:26 reads "sons" rather than "children". The reader will please note that Gal. 3:26 is the only passage that Dr. Pendleton quotes as seeming to teach that faith is instrumental in effecting regeneration.

## **VALUE OF THIS DISTINCTION**

The theological value of the distinction we have made is far-reaching. It is a two-edged sword, cutting to pieces Arminianism on one side and Hardshellism on the other side.

The Calvinist can accept the distinction and position helpfully but for the Arminian or Anti missionary to do so will spell the doom of his theology.

Moreover, what we have written is in full harmony with the New Hampshire Confession of faith. Article eight says that repentance and faith are sacred duties and inseparable graces wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God. This clearly makes regeneration the cause of repentance and faith. Article seven says that "Regeneration consists of giving a holy disposition to the mind; . . . so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith and newness of life." If the writer is able to understand the meaning of language, then those articles state that faith is the effect or evidence of the new birth. Much of the confusion among Baptist today is the result of many of our prominent ministers subscribing to and recommending the New Hampshire Confession and at the same time repudiating it in their preaching.

The practical value of our position is that it honors the Holy Spirit by making Him the author of that life which is essential to seeing and receiving the Gospel. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (I Cor. 12:3). Our position is in perfect harmony with other Scriptural truths, such as, the effectual call, total depravity, human responsibility, and the sovereignty of God.

The distinction we have made was first made by our Lord in His conversation with Nicodemus. He first proclaimed life by the Spirit as essential to spiritual sight and activity. He declared that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. This is life in the biological sense. Later in the same message, He preached life through faith in Christ and this life was opposed to perishing. He did not say that sinners were born again by

faith as many are saying today. Let us keep regeneration and justification distinct in our thinking and preaching.

## CHAPTER XIII

# RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR THE UNRIGHTEOUS

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" (Romans 1:16-18).

If I had but one sermon to preach and the whole world for an audience, this is the message I would bring. I would not allow a false modesty to keep me from saying that the truth in this sermon is most vital to every man.

Paul says that he is not ashamed of the gospel because it is what God uses in saving sinners. Then he tells how it saves, namely, by revealing "the righteousness of God," or how an unrighteous man may become righteous before God. Here is the touch & tone of the true gospel: it reveals how a sinner can become right with a holy and just God.

### **SOME NECESSARY OBSERVATIONS**

I. Salvation is a dire necessity because men are UNRIGHTEOUS, both by inheritance and practice. God is a Lawgiver and the failure of moral beings to obey His law



makes them unrighteous in His sight. And this unrighteousness merits and must receive penal punishment from God. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" (Rom 1:18).

II. Unrighteousness is universal among men. "As it is written, There is none righteous, no not one" (Rom. 3:10). This means that no man is righteous by his own record, on his own account, in his own right. In himself considered, every man is ruined by the fall and cursed by the Law. "For it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. 3:10b). "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 be come guilty before God" (Rom. 3:19).

III. Every man out of Christ is under the moral law of God as the way of life "For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them" (Rom. 10:5). Many think that all were under the law before the coming of Christ, and that since His coming all are under grace. If this were true, all before Christ were lost and all since are saved. This would mean universal damnation in one period of time and universal salvation in another period. It is the function of law to punish the disobedient; it is the part of grace to save the disobedient. All men have been saved alike by grace through faith, whether in Old Testament times or since the coming of Christ. All sinners have the same Saviour regardless of the age in which they lived. The Old Testament believers looked forward to the coming Saviour; New Testament believers look back to the Saviour who has already come. "What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God,

and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were" (Rom. 4:1-17); "Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that

the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. (Gal. 3:21-24). The only way to be saved is to get out from under the moral law of God, and the only way to do this is to trust Jesus Christ, who is "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10:4).

IV. To be saved a man must have a righteousness that conforms to all that the law of God demands. Otherwise the sinner would be saved at the expense of justice. No attribute of God suffers in the salvation of sinners. The principle of justice operates in salvation as truly as in damnation, the difference being that in salvation the Divine attributes of mercy, grace, and love come in to satisfy justice by giving up Christ to be punished as the Surety of His people. Christ died for my sins in the sense that He was punished for them, and if He was punished for them then a just God will not punish me for them. "Free from the law, O happy condition, Jesus has died, and there is remission." The righteousness of the believer is called "The righteousness of God." This phrase occurs frequently and is one of the most important expressions in all the Bible. To be saved the sinner must have the righteousness of God, and this is what is revealed in the Gospel of Christ.

## **MEANING OF THE EXPRESSION**

The righteousness of God does not mean the justice of God. God is righteous in the sense that He is just, but the Gospel does not save by telling us that God is just and will give us what we deserve. It is not good news to tell the criminal that the law will give him justice, neither is it good news to tell a sinner that God will give him justice--that would be bad news.

Nor can the expression refer to a righteousness God requires from the sinner. To tell a sinner that God will save him if he will perform all the righteous acts called for in the law is to mock him in his helplessness and leave him forever hopeless.

The expression we have before us refers to the righteousness God has provided for sinners. This is good news indeed! Men need a righteousness (right standing before God), and without it are eternally doomed, and to be told that God has provided through the cross the righteousness demanded by His justice is the best news ever to fall on human ears. And so the Gospel reveals a righteousness provided and not a righteousness demanded; a righteousness imputed and not a righteousness imparted; a righteousness imported from heaven and not a righteousness exported from earth. The righteousness of God is a garment divinely woven and not one of human manufacture. When the fig-leaf aprons of Adam and Eve would avail not, "The Lord God made coats of skins, and clothed them" (Gen. 3:21). Striking type of the failure of human works in salvation, and of the Lamb of God Who put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

The righteousness of God comes to the sinner through faith. "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested. . . even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe" (Rom 3:21,22). "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom 10:4). "Him who knew no sin He made to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (II Cor. 5:21 R.V.).

My dear reader, if you are lost, let me urge you to acknowledge before God and men that you have no righteousness of your own, and then trust Jesus Christ for the righteousness He provided by His obedience unto death--even the death on the cross. Then you can say with Isaiah, "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 hath covered me with the robe of righteousness" (Isa. 61:10).

"Jesus, thy robe of righteousness  
My beauty is, my glorious dress;  
Mid flaming worlds, in this arrayed,  
With joy shall I lift up my head."

## **THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD DESCRIBED**

I. AS TO ITS AUTHOR. As already noted, Jesus Christ is the Author of this righteousness. He Worked it out by His death on the cross. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Rom. 5:19). This verse unmistakably teaches that we are guilty by the disobedience of Adam and righteous by the obedience of Christ. To be justified--by God one must either be righteous in person or by proxy. Theoretically, there are two ways to be righteous before God: one is by personal obedience "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD" (Lev. 18:5); "For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them" (Rom. 10:5), the other is by the obedience of a substitute and Surety. Practically and actually, there is but one way and this is through Faith in Jesus Christ, the Surety of the better covenant "By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament" (Heb. 7: 22); "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises" (Heb. 8: 6).

II. IN ITS EXTENT. The righteousness Christ wrought for sinners reaches to every born again believer. "And by him all

that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:39); "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10:4); "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:" (Rom. 3:22); "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (I Cor. 1:30); "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:" (Rom. 5:1). The righteousness Christ provided was not needed for Himself, for He was God. Officially, back in eternity, Jesus Christ was in the form or place of God, and His righteousness was that of the Lawgiver. To be righteous as a lawgiver, the law must be enforced and the disobedient punished. To be righteous as a lawkeeper the law must be obeyed. And so Christ kept the law for us, and also paid the penalty we had incurred by violating the law. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:" (Gal. 3:13). Here is an irrefutable argument for the Deity of Jesus Christ. If He were only a man He would have had His own obligations to the law of God, and although a perfect man He could not have rendered account before God for other men. We sometimes hear people say that they would trust Jesus as Saviour without being convinced of His Deity. But the writer makes bold to say that he would not trust Him if He were only a man, however good and glorious. The Bible says, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils" (Isa. 2:22). No created being can save sinners. The Godhood of the Lord Jesus is absolutely necessary to His Saviourhood. The eternal Word became a man to represent other men before the court of heaven. "And if any man sin, we (the believers) have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (I John 2:1). Our Redeemer at Calvary is now our advocate in heaven.

## THE FIRST AND LAST ADAM

In I Cor. 15:45,47 "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.....The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven", Jesus is called the second man and the last Adam. Here He is considered not personally but representatively. Considered as an individual, Jesus was not the second man nor the last Adam. There were many men between the Adam of Eden and the Adam of Calvary, and there have been many men since Jesus. He is called the second man and the last Adam because there are but two representative men. God deals with all men through two men, and our eternal destiny depends upon which of these two men we have our standing in before God. Believers are accepted in the Beloved "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Eph. 1:6), and are complete in Him: "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:" (Col. 2:10). So believers, considered as moral beings, have obeyed the law in the person of their representative and substitute, and are therefore righteous before God. Jesus Christ is "The Lord our Righteousness" (Jer. 23:6).

"When from the dust of death I rise  
To claim my mansion in the skies,  
Even then shall this be all my plea--  
Jesus hath lived and died for me,"

III. IN ITS DURATION. How long will the righteousness Christ provided last? It hardly needs to be argued that it will last forever. "Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness" (Ps. 119:142). "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10:14).

"The righteousness of Adam or angels could only exist while they were in a state of obedience. The law was binding on them in every moment of their existence. The moment they disobeyed the advantage derived from all their previous obedience ceased" (Robt. Haldane). In contrast Jesus Christ was the God-man, and all that He did partook of His personal excellencies; therefore, in a limited period of time, He could work out a righteousness of infinite value in every respect. "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke and the earth shall wax old like a garment . . . But my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished" (Isa. 51:6).

The paradise in which Adam was placed at his creation was here on earth. This paradise was lost through disobedience. But the paradise which we have promised us will be ours by virtue of the obedience of the last Adam, and is an inheritance which is incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God through faith. "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (I Peter 1:4,5). It is on the ground of this righteousness that God justifies the believer from all things, and delivers him from going down into the pit of everlasting destruction.

"Alas and did my Saviour Bleed?  
And did my Sovereign die?  
Would He devote that sacred head  
For such a worm as I?"

Was it for crimes that I have done,  
He groaned upon the tree?  
Amazing pity! grace unknown!



And love beyond degree!

Well might the sun in darkness hide,  
And shut his glories in,  
When Christ, the might Maker died  
For man the creature's sin.

But drops of grief can neer repay  
The debt of love I owe'  
Here Lord, I give myself away,  
"Tis all that I can do"

--Isaac Watts

## CHAPTER XIV

# **PREDESTINATION - PROPHECY - PROVIDENCE**

"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated, according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (Eph. 1:11).

The three Bible words in the above caption express closely related doctrine, which find support in the above text. Since knowledge begins with definition, I shall begin with a definition of terms. Predestination may be defined as the purpose of God from eternity respecting future events. Prophecy is a declaration or revelation of future events and human actions. Providence is the work of God bringing to pass in history what is predestinated in eternity and prophesied in time. These three doctrines are based upon the will of God. And so we read that He "worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."

We might put it like this: Predestination is the eternal determination or purpose of the Divine will; Prophecy is the revelation of the Divine will; and Providence is the execution of the Divine will.

This raises the question as to who or what is running this world. In answer to this question, there are four schools of thought. One school says that all things come to pass by a fixed law-the law of nature. According to this view, the Creator made the world, as a man might make a clock and wind it up,

leaving it to run by itself without outside interference. The only part God has in world affairs is to allow it to run by natural and moral laws He Himself gave. This view rejects all miracles and believes only what can be accounted for on so-called scientific grounds. The second school says that things happen by a sort of chance; that nothing is fixed or determined, and that one thing is as likely to happen as another. The third school believes that everything comes to pass by a cold, impersonal force called fate. And finally there is the Bible and Christian view that all things come to pass by a Divine will called Providence; that is, by the administration of wise, loving, and almighty God. The God who created, sustains and rules to the praise of His own glory, and for the good of His people.

In our English Bible the word "providence" occurs only once: Acts 24:2. Here it refers to the government or administration of Felix the Roman governor of Judea. The apostle Paul is on trial before Felix, charged by the Jews with the crime of insurrection, and as being a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. Ananias, chief priest, and the elders bring with them a lawyer Tertullus, who prosecutes the case against Paul. But before pressing his case, Tertullus flatters the governor by saying, "Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence, we accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness" (Acts 24:2,3). What flattery and lying! During the administration of Felix, revolts in the nation were common and continuous, culminating in the final revolt that ended in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

While the word "providence" here refers to the rule of Felix over Judea, the word is much more applicable to the sovereign rule of God Whose kingdom is over all and from everlasting to everlasting.

## **SOME GENERAL OBSERVATIONS**

I. While the Divine decrees and prophecies make a thing certain, there is no external force used in bringing it to pass. When an evil deed is predicted of someone, providence is not an external force that compels the act. We can never truthfully say that man had to sin as far as external force is concerned. God never forces anyone to sin; on the other hand He gives commandments and warnings and inducements not to sin. Nor can any man or group of men force another man to sin. If you should take me by physical force, place a gun in my hand, and by force compel me to pull the trigger, resulting in the death of someone, I would not be guilty of murder, or even a misdemeanor.

II. Let it be remembered and understood once for all that sin resides in the human heart--sin must be in the heart before it can be in the hand. "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornication, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (Matt. 15:19). And let us also remember that God never put sin in the human heart. How it got there is a profound mystery. God made man in His own image and likeness and pronounced him good. In the mystery of the Divine administration, the first man sinned and lost the image of God in holiness. And the whole human race fell in the fall of the first Adam: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned,

so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Rom. 5:12-19). ". . . God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions" (Eccl. 7:29). God is never the Author or cause of sin.

III. In bringing sinful deeds to pass all God does is to leave men to themselves to do what is already in their hearts. "Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways" (Acts 14:16). It is frightening to think that God may again abandon whole nations to their own ways. In Romans, chapter one Paul describes the moral degeneration of the Gentile (heathen) nations. First, men held down or suppressed the truth about God in the book of nature. Pretending to be wise they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into various images as objects of worship. There was the Apollo of the Greeks, the eagle of the Romans, the sacred bull of the Egyptians, and the serpent of the Assyrians. And God gave them up to degenerate from bad to worse. And the chapter closes with a long list of sins that are prevalent in our day, even here in so-called Christian American. It makes one shudder to scan the prophetic horizon. In "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence" (Genesis 6:11), we read that the earth was filled with violence in the days of Noah just preceding the flood and in "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:37), we are told that these same conditions shall prevail just before our Lord returns in judgment. The

masses will be so occupied with temporal and material matters that the judgment will take them unawares. Now back to our main thought, namely, that the eternal purposes and Scriptural prophecies make the predicted evils certain without imposing any necessity to do wrong upon anyone. God's sovereignty and man's responsibility are both true, although we may not be able to reconcile them.

## **SOME ILLUSTRATIONS AND EXAMPLES OF OUR MAIN THEME**

I. Take the case of Judas Iscariot who was to betray Jesus. This was first predicted in "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me" (Psalm 41:9), and quoted by Jesus in John 13:18: "I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me." Our Lord is here saying that He knew what He was doing when He chose Judas to be an apostle; He did it to make certain the fulfillment of Scripture. When Peter made his confession for the twelve, saying, ". . . we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus corrected him by saying unto the twelve, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" And John tells us that he was speaking of Judas Iscariot who should betray him. "And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve" (John 6:69-71). At the feast of the Passover, Jesus identified His betrayer by giving him the sop: "Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon" (John 13:26). If Judas had not betrayed Jesus, both the Psalmist and the Saviour would have been found liars.

And yet nobody made Judas do that awful deed; he did it of his own free will and accord. He was simply giving expression to what was already in his heart. Our Lord chose Judas because nobody but a devil would do what he did.

II. Consider a few of the many prophecies concerning the death of Christ certain in many and minute details. The very first prophecy was in Gen. 3:15 "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel", where the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head, and have his heel bruised. In "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." (Gal. 3:13). Paul quotes Deut. 21:23 "His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance" to indicate that Christ would die by crucifixion, the Roman method of captial punishment. This necessitated a change of government, for if Jesus had been put to death by Jewish law, he would have been stoned. In Psalm 22 we have the cry of anguish (v. 1); the cruelty of the crowds (vv. 12,17); and the parting of His garments and gambling for His vesture (v. 18). And all these predictions were fulfilled at the place called Calvary. Isaiah 53 we see the Messiah as despised and rejected of men, as being smitten of God, as making His grave with the wicked and with the rich in His death, as being satisfied with the result of His sufferings, and as praying for His enemies. Behold the mystery of Divine Providence in the fulfillment of all these predictions some 700 years later at Calvary. In John 12:32,33 Jesus Himself predicted the manner and result of His death: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto me. This He said, signifying what death he should die." In John, chapter ten, He speaks of Himself as the Good Shepherd giving His life for His sheep,

and predicting that His sheep would hear His voice and follow Him and receive everlasting life. In His prayer as High Priest, recorded in John 17, Jesus acknowledges that the Father had given Him authority over all flesh so that He might give eternal life to all the Father gave Him, and that while He was on earth He had kept those given to Him so that not one of them was lost. And then He says that the son of perdition was lost that the Scripture might be fulfilled. Now in the gospel accounts of the death of Christ we see all these Scriptures fulfilled, everything coming to pass by Divine Providence.

And in the book of Acts, Luke the historian, confirms the fulfillment of these prophecies. In Acts 2:23 he says this: "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel (will) and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Here we have God's will or purpose in the death of Christ being carried out by wicked hands. Nobody was forced to crucify Christ, men acted on their own free will and revealed the fact that the carnal mind is enmity against God. And the Lord Jesus was God wrapped in human flesh. In Acts 4:27,28 we have a quotation from the second Psalm, with this comment: "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." Here we have predestination (the determination or purpose of the Divine will), and providence (the execution of the Divine will) in the crucifixion of Christ. Politicians and religionists were doing God's will, but their motive was not to carry out His will. They were simply acting out what was in their heart. God did not put the evil in their heart, but He did control and direct everything they did for the accomplishment of His eternal purpose in Christ. The human motive was bad, but God overruled it all for the salvation of sinners and to the praise of His grace. Here is one of many places where God makes the wrath of man to



praise Him, and preventing that which would not: "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain" (Ps. 76:10).

Because of the overruling providence of God, what Joseph's brethren did in selling him into slavery was attributed to God Himself. When Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and they realized what they had done, they began to weep and be afraid. He confronts them by telling them that the hand of God was in it all for the salvation of human lives. "So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God" (Gen. 45:8). And in Genesis 50:20 we learn that what made the difference in the Divine will and the human deed was in the motive. Joseph says to his brothers, "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." And so what came to pass at Calvary was overruled to save many sinners from eternal punishment in hell.

To God be the glory! Great things He hath done:  
So loved He the world that He gave us His Son;  
Who yielded His life an atonement for sin,  
And opened the Life-gate that all may go in.

O perfect redemption, the purchase of Blood,  
To every believer the promise of God;  
The vilest offender who truly believes,  
That moment from Jesus a pardon receives.

Great things He hath taught us, Great things He hath done,  
And great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;  
But purer, and higher, and greater will be  
Our wonder, Our transport, when Jesus we see.

## CHAPTER XV

### WHOSOEVER WILL

"Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17b).

There is virtue in fairness. We ought to be fair with everybody. I expect most people have at one time or other been the victim of unfairness. We are unfair with a person when we misrepresent him, and will not let him speak for himself. We are unfair with the Bible when we will not let it say what it does say. We must not make the Bible fit our opinions; we must make our opinions fit the Bible. The Bible can be misrepresented in at least two ways: by ignoring portions of it, and by misinterpreting texts that are not ignored. I believe the Bible is misrepresented in both ways. Verses are misrepresented by having the wrong meaning given them, and subjects are misrepresented when all the truth on the subject is not considered.

"Whosoever will" is a much misunderstood doctrine because all the truth is not brought into use in dealing with it. I heard a preacher once say that John 5:40 does not say "Ye cannot come to me, but that ye will not come." Now, he was not guilty of misquoting a verse, but he was guilty of misrepresenting a subject, because he ignored John 6:44 which does say that "No man can come unto me except the Father... draw him." "Whosoever will" is made to teach that every man is able to come to Christ: whereas, the very opposite is the truth, for the literal rendering of John 6:44

says, "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him."

## **I. WHOSOEVER WILL MAY COME TO CHRIST AND BE SAVED.**

Nobody is turned away in this day of grace. God is no respecter of persons. God draws no color line: black or white or any other color may come to Christ and be saved. God draws no social line: rich or poor, bond or free, banker or bootblack, learned or ignorant, society queen or harlot of the brothel--any and all may come to Christ with the assurance that they will be received, "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). This blessed truth has been amply demonstrated. Look at some who have come and found salvation:--the dying thief, the fallen woman of Sychar, the persecuting Saul of Tarsus, the hard-hearted jailor: Jno. B. Gough, a sot drunkard, Jerry McCauley the river pirate John Newton the slave trader, John Bunyan the swearing tinker, and others too numerous to mention. If any despairing sinner reads these lines, let me urge him to come to Jesus Christ--trust in Him--look to Him--depend upon Him--and he will surely be saved.

## **II. NO MAN CAN COME TO JESUS CHRIST OF HIMSELF**

Only those drawn by the Father come to Him. Here is a good place to distinguish between CAN and MAY. CAN speaks of ability; MAY means permission. If a young man should say to a girl friend; "CAN I walk home with you from church?", If she knows her English she is apt to say, "Well, you look strong enough to walk that far." But if he should say "MAY I walk home with you?" she would understand that he was asking her permission, and if she liked him she would say, "Yes, you may." "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him

that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17) is an invitation to come to Christ and speaks of permission; "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day....And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father" (John 6:44,65), speaks of ability and says no one is able to come to or believe on Christ without being drawn. This drawing by the Father is not external force, nor is the coming a physical approach. The drawing that brings men to Christ is an inward and gracious work of God in the soul, and the coming is the exercise of mind and heart in which a person takes the place of a sinner and puts his faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour. When Jesus said, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life" (John 5:40), those to whom He spake were already in His physical presence. He was saying, "You will not trust me for salvation." The clear implication is that had they trusted Him they would have received life. This verse speaks of responsibility to believe on Christ. Every man ought to come to Christ, for "he that believeth not shall be damned" ( Mark 16:16).

This brings us to a rather difficult question: Can there be responsibility where there is no ability? That depends upon the nature of the inability. If the inability is constitutional or created then there is no responsibility. Man, considered as a creature made in the image and likeness of God, has the ability to trust and love and obey His Maker. But inability caused by sin does not cancel responsibility. It is not because the sinner is a man that he cannot come to Christ for salvation: it is because he is a fallen man. He cannot come because of the state of his mind and heart--he does not have the disposition or will to come. It is not that he wants to come and can't. The sinner is dead in trespasses and sins and must be made alive by the Holy Spirit before he can do anything to

please God. "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3); "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Romans 8:7, 8): "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye 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: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:1-10).

Whosoever will implies the free agency of man. A free agent is one who acts of his own mind or accord without external force or compulsion from without. The unregenerate are free in rejecting Christ; nobody forces them to reject Him. And the regenerate freely come to Him, even though drawn to Him. In coming to Christ there is free expression of the new heart and sound mind--the new nature created by God in amazing grace. The ability to believe on Christ as Saviour is a grace given ability. This truth is acknowledged when we pray for the conversion of the lost. Repentance and faith are inseparable graces wrought in man by the Holy Spirit. Both are said to be

the gift of God. "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31); "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18); "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;" (II Tim. 2:25), "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase" (1 Cor. 3:5-7).

### **III. ALL THE FATHER GAVE TO THE SON WILL SURELY COME TO HIM**

ANOTHER PLAINLY REVEALED TRUTH OF SCRIPTURE IS THAT ALL THE FATHER GAVE TO THE SON WILL SURELY COME TO HIM. Christ says "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me" (John 6:37). This makes their coming certain, and to say it is not certain is to dispute what incarnate Truth says. The veriest tyro in English knows that the verb SHALL in the third person denotes certainty. "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isa. 40:31); "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36); "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd..And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (John 10:16,28). And so our Lord says that all those given Him by the Father will surely come to Him. We cannot pry into the

secrets of the eternal council to find out who were given, but they can be identified after they come to Christ. "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost" (I Thess. 1:4-6). And we can be sure that every one who comes was given to Christ. In praying to His Father He says, "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him" (John 17:2). Here we have universal dominion for a specific purpose. "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word" (JOH 17:6). I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine" (JOH 17:9). And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled" (JOH 17:11-12). Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;" (John 17:20). These verses speak of some given by the Father to the Son "out of the world." Here is limitation whether we like it or not. Christ gave His life for the sheep "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (John 10:11), and the sheep hear His voice and follow Him on a universal redemption. Let us ponder Rev. 5:9,10: "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of (ek) every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on (epi) the earth."

## **PARTICULAR REDEMPTION**

We will conclude this chapter by giving a lengthy quotation from Spurgeon on "Particular Redemption." "Now, you are aware that there are different theories of redemption. All Christians hold that Christ died to redeem, but all Christians do not teach the same redemption. We differ as to the nature of atonement, and as to the design of redemption. For instance, the Arminian holds that Christ, when He died, did not die with an intent to save any particular person;....that Christ's death does not....secure the salvation of any man living....Christ died, according to them, as much for Judas in hell as for Peter who mounted to heaven. They believe that for those who are consigned to eternal fire, there was as true and real a redemption made as for those who now stand before the throne of the Most High. Now, we believe no such thing. We hold that Christ, when He died, had an object in view, and that object will, most assuredly and beyond doubt, be accomplished. We measure the design of Christ's death by the effect of it... . We do not believe that Christ made any effectual atonement for those who are forever damned; we dare not think that the blood of Christ was ever shed with the intention of saving those whom God foreknew never could be saved, and some of whom were even in hell when Christ,....died to save them.... We are often told...that we limit the atonement of Christ, because we say that Christ has not made satisfaction for all men, or all men would be saved. Now our reply to this is that, on the other hand, our opponents limit it: we do not. The Arminians say, Christ died for all men. Ask them what they mean by it: Did Christ die so as to secure the salvation of all men? They say, 'No, certainly not.' Now, who is it that limits the death of Christ? .... We beg your pardon when you say we limit Christ's death....it is you that do it. We say



that Christ so died that He infallibly secured the salvation of a multitude that no man can number. You are welcome to your atonement; you may keep it. We will never renounce ours for the sake of it. I am told that it is my duty to say that all men have been redeemed, and I am told that there is a Scripture...for it 'Who gave Himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time.' Now, that looks like a very great argument indeed on the other side of the question. For instance, look here. 'The whole world is gone after Him.' Did all the world go after Christ? 'Then went all Judea, and were baptized of him in Jordan.' Was all Judea or all Jerusalem, baptized in Jordan? 'Ye are of God, little children, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one.' Does the whole world there mean everybody? The words 'world' and 'all' are used in some seven or eight senses in Scripture, and it is very rarely that 'all' means all persons, taken individually. The words are generally used to signify that Christ has redeemed some of all sorts---some Jews, some Gentiles, some rich, some poor, and has not restricted His redemption to either Jew or Gentile" -- Unquote.

Our heart can only say, "Amen" to these words from Spurgeon, than whom no greater preacher has lived since Paul. And we might add, that Spurgeon has done more to shape our theology than any other uninspired man.

The human race was lost in the mass when the first Adam sinned. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Rom. 5:19). Man was not redeemed in the mass, but as particular individuals. Nor are sinners regenerated in the mass, but as individuals one by one. Repentance and faith are not exercised by the masses, but as individuals one by one. And we say again, "whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

"Come, ye sinners, poor and needy,  
Weak and wounded, sick and sore;  
Jesus ready stands to save you,  
Full of pity, love and power.

Come, ye thirsty, come and welcome,  
God's free bounty glorify;  
True belief and true repentance,  
Every grace that brings you nigh.

Come, ye weary, heavy-laden,  
Lost and ruined by the fall;  
If you tarry till your'e better,  
You will never come at all.

Let not conscience make you linger,  
Nor of fitness fondly dream;  
All the fitness He requireth  
Is to feel your need of Him"

---J.Hart-

# PART III - THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF SERVICE

# CHAPTER I

## GOOD WORKS

The Scriptures have much to say about good works. We "are created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Eph. 2:10). Believers must "be careful to maintain good works" (Titus 3:8). The rich in this world must be rich in good works, ready to share their good things with the needy "That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate" (I Tim. 6:18).

Our Lord testified that the works of the world are evil "The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil" (John 7:7). He also testified concerning the Pharisees, that all their works were done for human praise: "But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments" (Matt. 23:5). We also read of dead works, works of the flesh, and works of the devil. And so we need to discriminate in dealing with the subject of good works.

### I. QUALIFICATIONS FOR GOOD WORKS.

Who can perform a good work in the sight of God? The Scriptures make it plain that none but the saved can engage in good works. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10); So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:8); "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must

believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6).

Good works are the fruit of the Spirit, and none but the saved have the Spirit. Good works are the result of salvation and not the cause of it. The Divine order is salvation, then service. We are saved to serve God and others. In every realm except mechanics, there must be life before activity. Every man by nature is dead in sins and alienates from the life of God. The belief that a sinner may work towards salvation is a heresy of the deepest dye. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;" (Titus 3:5); "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" (II Tim. 1:9); "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8,9). All the work that the lost man does to ingratiate himself into the favor of God is a dead work and needs to be repented of. There is no way into the favor of God except through His Son. "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph. 2:13).

## **II. THE NATURE OF GOOD WORKS.**

A good work in the Scriptural sense, the only true sense, is a work that pleases God, and brings upon the doer God's approbation and blessing. A man may perform an act that will meet the human conception of a good deed, but God may judge otherwise. What men might pronounce good, God might reject as evil. Men may reward for that which God will censure.

How may one know when he is engaged in doing good? This is a very important question. Multitudes are in a whirl of so-called Christian activity, nervously executing man-made programs, only to reap in the end a terrible awakening and a sore disappointment. "Many will say to 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 will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:22,23).

It is not our aim to enumerate the good deeds a Christian may do, but rather to show the necessary elements in any work to make it a good work in the sight of God. As individuals, particular deeds may vary according to our relation to society and to our opportunities. Observe,

1. A WORK OF FAITH IS A GOOD WORK. To do that which God commands, just because He commands it, is a good work. A work of faith is possible only to those who have faith. Works of faith are often opposed to human reason. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews is filled with works of faith. Human reason did not dictate the acts of Noah, Abraham, and others mentioned in this chapter. The only reason behind a work of faith is that God says do it. And this is to become a fool in the eyes of the world. It was only because Noah believed God that he built the ark.

2. A LABOR OF LOVE IS A GOOD WORK. Christ said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." I Corinthians 13 emphasizes the necessity of love as an element in good works. Faith works by love. "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" Gal. 5:6. Faith and love are twin graces God wrought, and where these are good works will surely follow.

The unregenerate, so far as the external act is concerned, may do a good deed; however, the inward motive as well as the outward act is essential to a good work in the sight of God. A cup of cold water, given in the name of a disciple of Christ, is a good work, while the gift of a million dollars to a good cause may fall short of a good work. Here is the acid test for every good deed: is it done for the glory of God, and from love to Christ? if so---

(1) It will not be done for human rewards. This was the motive of the Pharisees in almsgiving. And it is to be feared that many professing Christians want their rewards here and now, and therefore, their motive is to please men rather than God. And the writer must confess that his greatest temptation has been to preach to please men-something he has had to confess before God. He dares not claim a holy motive in all he has done. A good work is done for the glory of God and will be rewarded by Him in the day of judgment. It is not wrong to please men if they are pleased by our seeking to please God.

(2) A labor of love is not done out of envy and strife. "Love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil" (I Cor. 13:4,5).

(3) It will not be done for prizes, banners, etc. All sorts of means are being resorted in today to keep church members active in some form of Christian activity. What is needed today is the faithful preaching of the Word, speaking the truth in love, and in utter dependence upon the Holy Spirit for results.

(4) Acceptable service must flow from fellowship with Christ. If we have not learned to worship in secret, we cannot worship in the public assembly. If Christ is not real to us; if we are not walking and communing with Him, it is but mockery to speak of Him to others. It is only when He is precious to us that we can sincerely recommend Him to others.

Paul said that Christianity in the last days would be characterized by people having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (II Tim. 3:5). And this is the certain result of too much public service apart from much secret prayer.

## **ILLUSTRATION**

The story is told that when Handley Page was making an Eastern flight, he and his companions descended at Khobar in Arabia. While there a large rat attracted by the smell of food managed to get into the plane. When the flight was resumed Mr. Page discovered the presence of the rat by the sickening sound of gnawing behind him. He thought with horror of the damage those pitiless teeth might do to some vital part of the plane. What could he do? It suddenly occurred to him that a rat cannot stand a high altitude; it is made to live on the surface or burrow beneath the soil. So he decided to soar. He turned the nose of the plane upward and rose higher and higher until he himself found it difficult to breathe. He listened--and to his delight the rat was found to be dead. Now, there are moral pests in the nature of fleshly lusts that war against the soul: worldly amusements in various forms. Our only safety is to soar. These things cannot stand heaven's air. They die in the presence of Christ Who died for us. Prayer and Bible study--lift us into an altitude that is too high for sinful amusements.

## **IMPORTANCE OF GOOD WORKS**

Good works are important as necessary evidences of salvation. They do not procure salvation but manifest it. They are not the cause but the effect of the new birth--created in Christ Jesus unto good works.



The works of the Christian come before him in judgment to be rejected or rewarded. This is not true of the believer's sins; they were laid upon Christ and He bore them in His own body on the tree. In respect to salvation, the believer's sins were put upon Christ and judged in Him. In respect to chastisement, they are dealt with in this life. "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore 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 own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Heb. 12:5-11). The believer will be rewarded for his good works when Christ comes. "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God" (I Cor. 4:5).

Is thy cruse of comfort failing?  
Rise and share it with a friend!  
And through all the years of famine  
It shall serve thee to the end.

Love divine will fill thy storehouse,  
Or thy handful still renew;

Scanty fare for one will often  
Make royal feast for two.

For the heart grows rich in giving:  
All its wealth is living grain;  
Seeds-which mildew in the garner  
Scattered, fill with gold the plain.

Is thy burden hard and heavy?  
Do thy steps drag wearily?  
Help to lift thy brother's burden  
God will bear both it and thee.

Lost and weary on the mountains,  
Would'st thou sleep amidst the snow?  
Chafe that frozen form beside thee,  
And together both shall glow.

Art thou wounded in life's battle?  
Many stricken round thee moan;  
Give to them thy precious ointment,  
And that balm shall heal thine own.

Is thy heart a well left empty?  
None but God its void can fill;  
Nothing but a ceaseless fountain  
Can its ceaseless longings still.

Is thy heart a living power?  
Self-entwined, its strength sinks low;  
It can only live by loving,  
And by serving love will grow.

--Author Unknown

## CHAPTER II

# A MANUAL FOR GODLY LIVING

(Exposition of Romans Chapter 12)

If one should select a portion of Scripture as a manual or guide to Christian living, surely he could do no better than to turn to the closing chapters of Romans. Here we have the Christian's duty in various relations of life. In this chapter we shall attempt an exposition of Romans 12.

We now enter what is called the practical part of Paul's letter to the Romans. If the doctrinal portion of Romans is distasteful, the practical portion will be even more so. He who despises the mercies of God will rebel at the commands of God. Practical Christianity must rest upon doctrinal Christianity. You cannot divorce doctrine from life. As G. Campbell Morgan puts it: "You cannot grow the tulips of the kingdom of God unless you get the bulbs from heaven." A man's conduct is the fruit of what he believes. The flower of a godly life has its roots deep in the soil of experienced grace.

Paul, after giving us the greatest of all expositions of the grace and mercy of God; gives vent to his feeling of adoring wonder at the ways of God: and follows with an exhortation to becoming conduct on the part of those who can follow him in the gracious experiences of the mercies of God.

## **I. PAUL'S GREAT APPEAL (1, 2). Observe,**

1. HE BESEECHES. He does not command like Moses who gave the law. The Christian minister cannot give orders nor compel; he can only get things done by beseeching. A Christian hierarchy, whether in the form of a Baptist Board, or a Methodist Bishop, or a Roman Catholic Pope is contrary to the very norm of New Testament Christianity.

2. HE BESEECHES BY THE MERCIES OF GOD. This is the greatest argument for a consecrated life. Paul wants the mercies of God to be realized and bear fruit to the glory of God. The highest and purest of all human motives is to act out of appreciation for the mercies of God.

3. PAUL BESEECHES THE BRETHREN. Exhortation is ministry to the saints. He is not appealing to the sinner, but to those who have an experience of grace and mercy.

4. HE BESEECHES THEM TO PRESENT THEIR BODIES TO GOD. The believer's body is to be a living sacrifice in contrast to dead animals offered under the law. It is not to obtain but to acknowledge the blessing of salvation. It is a sacrifice of praise. The body is to be a holy sacrifice. Under the law the animals offered in sacrifice had to be ceremonially clean and physically sound; under grace the human body must be morally clean. A whiskey-soaked body is a filthy sacrifice. The sacrifice must be pleasing to God. It is not man nor even the church that we must please but God. Consecration is primarily to God and not to a cause or a work. One may be consecrated to a good work and yet scarcely ever think of God. Everything is to be done as unto the Lord. The sacrifice of the believer constitutes his "reasonable service." The Greek word for reasonable is *logikos*, and is variously translated reasonable, intelligent, rational, spiritual, etc. The word is found in one other place in the Greek New

Testament. "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (I Peter 2:2) and is translated by the phrase "of the word." It comes from the same root as logos, which means word. The believer's service to God must be regulated by the word of God. This is most important, for one may be busy in doing what God has not commanded, and in the way God has not commanded; yea, one may be doing what God has forbidden.

5. HE BESEECHES BELIEVERS TO BE DIFFERENT. "And be not conformed to this world." World here means the inhabitants of the world morally considered. The world is bad; it lies in the lap of the Wicked One. "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness" (I John 5:19). The devil is its god. He has dominion over it. The world is self-centered and Satan--controlled. The believer is not to agree with it, or be like it. He must not fall in with the world in its thinking and doing. He must think and do according to the Word of God.

6. "BUT BE YE TRANSFORMED." The Greek is "metamorphoo," and means a change in appearance. It is the word used for the transfiguration of Christ. In our text it denotes a moral change, to be effected by the renewal of the mind. A change of mind--new thoughts and new ideals--is wrought in regeneration, and this change must be renewed and deepened. Outward transformation must begin in the mind and heart. If a man's conduct is to be right his thinking must be right. In this way the believer will know "what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God," and be able to demonstrate it in his every day life. Believers are God's demonstrators, we are to demonstrate the fact and worth of God in human life. The commercial world uses this method in making sales. The car salesman will put you into his car and behind the wheel to demonstrate its speed and riding comfort. The refrigerator man will put a refrigerator in your home on

trial to let you see its freezing qualities. In this day of keen competition many things are sold in trial. It is a solemn and pertinent question the believer should put to himself; what kind of a demonstrator am I for Jesus Christ Whom I profess to trust and love and obey? What impression does my life make on others?

## **II. SPECIAL DUTIES BASED ON SPECIFIC GIFTS (3-8).**

1. Have a just estimate of your gift. There are different measures of faith--do not think you know it all--do not act as if you are the "whole cheese". Think soberly about yourself and your abilities. Do not be intoxicated with conceit. Recognize the gifts of others. Be humble.

2. We are many members in one body. Every church (local assembly) is a body of Christ likened to the human body. Each member has his own gift and place in the body, and what he does affects the whole body. Each member of the church ought to be dear to every other member.

3. Each member must exercise his own gift. It is not a natural talent, but a gift sovereignly bestowed by the Holy Spirit. There are seven of these gifts here enumerated:

(1) PROPHECY. The Spirit given ability to utter Divine truth. It strictly signifies the foretelling of future events, but seems to have a wider sense in the New Testament, including the gift of explaining the Scriptures. It is forthtelling as well as foretelling. There are no foretellers since the New Testament was completed. We have in the Bible all the truth we need for our spiritual good.

(2) MINISTRY. The Greek word means service, and is used in a wide sense. It is used of Christ in Rom. 15:8 "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of

God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:" , of Phoebe in Rom. 16:1 "I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:"; of the office of deacon in "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:" (Phil. 1:1), "Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre" (I Tim. 3:8). In our text it does not seem to refer to an office, but to practical service in the church without naming the particular service. Every member is to render some service.

(3) TEACHING. The ability to teach God's word is a gift of the Spirit. It is a gift the pastor or bishop must have "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach" (I Tim. 3:2). A mere exhorter should never be made a bishop, that is, a pastor.

(4) EXHORTATION. This means to excite to duty and dissuade from sin and requires a peculiar talent--a gift of the Spirit. It is not an office. We need laymen in our churches with the gift of exhortation --men who can arouse the brethren to greater activity; to be more than seat warmers. The exhortation of a Godly layman seems to have more effect than that of the pastor. (5) GIVING. Giving is both a duty and a grace "Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia" (II Cor. 8:1). Giving is the duty of all and a gift of grace bestowed upon some. Where this grace is exercised there will be large gifts for the work of the church. Let large givers give without fanfare or ostentation.

(6) RULING. The Greek word means "to go before", or "to take the lead". It is used of the bishop (pastor) in "One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection

with all gravity;" (I Tim. 3:4): "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine" (I Tim 5:17). As a leader the pastor must be zealous and diligent. The pastorate is no place for a lazy man.

(7) SHOWING MERCY. The gift of aiding the needy and of forgiving an enemy. And this must be done cheerfully and eagerly and sincerely. Gill thinks the last three gifts: giving, ruling, and showing mercy, relate to different branches of the deacon's office. Perhaps so.

### **III. GENERAL DUTIES BASED UPON SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIPS (9-16).**

Verse 9. Love is to be sincere--without hypocrisy. Feigned love is disguised hate. "Abhorring evil." It is not enough to cease from doing wrong; sin must be hated. "Cleaving to the good." The Christian is not a mere negation; there is a positive side to his character. While hating evil he must love and hold fast to that which is good.

Verse 10. We are to love one another as members of the same family. And where honor or preference is involved we should want another brother to have it. While the worldly vie with one another in receiving honor; the saints should compete with one another in giving honor.

Verse 11. "Not slothful in business." This has no reference to secular work, but to service for the Lord. We are to be on fire for the Lord. Stifler renders the verse this way: "In zeal (the outward) not slothful; in spirit (the inward human spirit) fervent; serving the Lord."

Verse 12. "Hope. . . tribulation. . . prayer": the bulk of many a life. We may not be able to rejoice in present conditions but



we can rejoice in hope of a better day. And this hope will give patience and steadfastness in the day of affliction, for hope sees an end to them. And while hoping and suffering we can keep on praying.

Verse 13. We are to relieve the necessities of the saints, and practice hospitality. This implies private ownership of goods and is far removed from Socialism and Communism. Some will be better off than others. Let those who have, voluntarily share with those who have not. But indolence must not be encouraged or even tolerated. "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies" (II Thess. 3:10,11) for a balancing truth. Every Christian home should be an inn where strangers of the household of faith might find entertainment: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Heb. 13:2).

Verse 14. Bless your persecutors. The saint must never answer in kind, must not fight the devil with fire; he knows more about that weapon than we do. We are to render blessing for cursing; not railing for railing.

Verse 15. Share the experiences of others. Rejoice with the rejoicing ones and weep with the weeping. Here is Christian wisdom. Christ did not weep at Cana, nor laugh at the grave of Lazarus.

Verse 16. "Be of the same mind one toward another." Be easy to live with. Regard one another mutually, and let this attitude reach the lowly. Don't be snobbish and exclusive. The world neglects and rejects the lowly, but Christ died for such people, and we should have fellowship with them in the body of Christ. And do not have a too high estimate of yourself.

#### **IV. CHRISTIAN GRACES TOWARD THE WORLD (17-21).**

Verse 17. Do not return evil for evil, but meet evil with good. And be honest. Watch your step for the eyes of the world are upon you. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

Verse 18. Do your best to live at peace with all men. Be sure you are not at fault when peace is destroyed. If men hate you let them hate you for the truth's sake and not for the evil you do.

Verse 19. Do not seek revenge. Vengeance belongs to God. A Christian seeks revenge when he tries to get even with an enemy--he takes himself out of the hands of his Heavenly Father. It is a way of saying that you can handle your enemy better than He can. Do not usurp His place in judgment; wait for Him to act. He will set things right in His own time.

Verse 20. Befriend your enemy. Help him in time of need. In this way you are heaping coals of fire on his head. This is the only punishment you may inflict--and take care you do not do it literally. A woman who complained of the ill treatment of her husband was asked if she had ever tried heaping coals of fire on his head replied by saying, "No, but I did dash a bucket of scalding water on him."

Verse 21. Be a conqueror. "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Fight your foe with the weapon of good deeds. You conquer when you befriend an enemy, and leave vengeance with God to Whom it belongs. May grace be given to both writer and reader to heed these flesh-rebuking admonitions!

## CHAPTER III

# ADORNING THE DOCTRINE OF GOD OUR SAVIOUR

The emphasis of Paul's letter to Titus is "Good Works." In 1:16 he writes of those who profess a knowledge of God, but are unto "every good work" reprobates. In 2:7 he exhorts Titus to be a pattern or example of good works. In 2:14 he says that Christ redeemed us that He might have a people of His own "zealous of good works." In 3:1 the exhortation is to obey civil rulers and be "ready to every good work." However, in 3:7 he makes it plain and positive that we are not saved by works of righteousness, but according to His mercy. In 3:8 believers are to "be careful to maintain good works." And in 3:14 we are enjoined to "maintain good works for necessary uses."

Titus, a young Greek, was one of Paul's aides, and was given some hard assignments. He appears to have been stronger than Timothy, both in health and courage. The Gospel of Christ must have first been preached on Island of Crete by the Jews who were at Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. Paul and Titus had evidently gone there to develop the work, and when Paul left, Titus remained to "set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city" (1:5). In other words. Titus was assigned the task of organizing the believers into churches with elders or bishops as leaders and overseers. The date of the letter was about 65 A.D., some thirty years after the death of Christ.

In this epistle Titus is given the message for various ages and groups: the old, the young, and the slaves. And the motive for all the good works is that the word of God be not blasphemed (2:5), and that the doctrine of God our Saviour might be adorned (2:10).

It is a wonderful hope to hold up before Christians, that they may adorn the Gospel of Christ. And this hope was first held up to slaves on the corrupt Island of Crete. It was not the hope of gaining their political and social and economic freedom, but of adorning the doctrine of our Saviour. This is a good place to say that with the Christian it is "Pie in the sky bye and bye." What the believer hope for is laid up for him in heaven "For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;" (Col. 1:5). Our inheritance is reserved for us in heaven "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (I Peter 1:4). Christ did not die to guarantee an easy time down here, but to assure us of a glorious time throughout eternity. This is not to say that Christians should not be interested in human rights and social justice for all people without respect to color, race, or culture. The true believer is conscious of his obligations to do good to all men.

## **I. THE POSSIBILITY OF ADORNING THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST.**

The world judges the church by the way it's members live. Every Christian is a working model of what the church teaches. If you have money to invest, and a promoter comes to you with a fine invention on paper and urges you to help him put it on the market; if you are wise, you will ask for a working model of it. If you had a cancer and someone recommends a certain remedy, you would want to know if there are actual cases of cure. So when a Christian professes

he has something that will make a man better-something that will fill a man with new desires, new hopes, and new joys--something that will make one different from his former self, it is quite fair for the world to ask: "Is this so? Has it changed your life? Is your life a working model of Christianity?" The greatest motive any believer can have is to so live that the world will have to admit that there is something to the religion of Jesus Christ.

The thought is this: The doctrine of God our Saviour is more beautiful when embodied in a life. Practice must match profession. The best illustrated Bible is the good works of those who profess to take it as their guide and way of life.

## **II. THE SOLEMN ALTERNATIVE.**

We either adorn the doctrine of God or we give occasion for others to blaspheme it. We are living for Christ or we are against Him. We are a credit to the gospel, or we are a reproach to it. There is no neutral corner, we are either fighting the good fight of faith, or we have surrendered to the devil, the flesh, and the world. There is no sitting on the fence; we are either in the field of GRACE, or in the devil's field of DISGRACE. On the Lord's Day we are in God's house with God's people, or where we should not be; that is, unless providentially hindered.

At a meeting of the Alcoholic Anonymous in Louisville several years ago, the leader went from man to man, and asked, "Why are you here?" And every man gave the same answer: "If I were not here, I would be somewhere drunk. It is my only protection against getting drunk."

What pastor has not been embarrassed by charges brought against his church because of the way members live? Living a godly life may not help you in the eyes of the world, but it will

help the church, and keep the doctrine from being blasphemed.

### **III. THE KIND OF LIFE THAT ADORNS THE DOCTRINE OF GOD.**

It must be a life that is uniformly and consistently guided by the Word of God. A life is basically different from the ways of the world. A life that is so conspicuous that a microscope is not needed in order to find Christian principles in it. Too many of us appear to be Christians on certain occasions and something else at other times. Like the Galatians, who did run well, but were soon slowed down. Or like Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, as unstable as water: "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch" (Gen. 49:4), no dependence to be put in him. It has been well said that the best ability is dependability. Suppose everybody who has ever joined our church had been faithful to the end--what a church we would have. Nearly everybody, at some time or other, has dabbled in religion, but so many are superficial and do not persevere. Christ said to some Jews who believed on Him. "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." John 8:31. Persevering attachment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour is the grand mark of a born again believer.

Living the Christian life is somewhat like saving money: look after the pennies, nickels, and dimes, and the dollars will take care of themselves. Look after the homely virtues, such as sound speech, honesty in money matters, keeping one's word, dependability in church attendance, constancy in prayer and Bible reading--and the great things will fall in line.

Look how these slaves on the island of Crete were to adorn the doctrine of God. They were to be obedient to their own masters, doing what they were told without any back talk.

They were not to steal from their masters, but show fidelity- and in this way they would adorn the doctrine. Christian slaves, and there were many of them in the early church, were different from other slaves. Whatever our relation in society is, we must be different from the outside world, and thus adorn- beautify the Gospel of Christ.

And now in conclusion.

#### **IV. HOW IS ONE ABLE TO ATTAIN SUCH A LIFE?**

How will one get the moral and spiritual strength for such a life? Let it be remembered that no one is able of himself for a life that will adorn the doctrine. Christ said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: For without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). There must be secret communion with Christ, if we are to beautify the Gospel. He must first beautify us before we can beautify Him. We must be on the mountain like Moses in fellowship with Him if we are to come down and walk among men so as to radiate the principles of true religion and adorn the doctrine of God.

The story is told of a 51 year old widow in Oklahoma City who was told by her doctor that because of a heart ailment she had only one year to live. She had worked hard and had saved some money. When she learned of her fate she set aside \$10,000 to spend on herself in search of happiness. She asked for advice on how she might spend the money. She was told to travel but she did not like to travel. She was told to buy a new house and a new car, but she said the ones she had were good enough. She was told to go in for night life and "live it up." But she said that when she gambled she always won. Poor deluded woman! And how typical of multitudes who have much to live ON, but nothing to live FOR: no worthy motive and objective in life. Oh, that Grace may be

given to both writer and reader, that we might live so as to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour!

"Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,  
Pilgrim through this barren land;  
I am weak, but Thou are mighty;  
Hold me with Thy powerful hand;  
Bread of heaven,  
Feed me till I want no more".



# APPENDIX

## "GOD IS FOR US"

D. F. Sebastian, Pastor  
First Baptist Church  
Plant City, Florida

"If God be for us, who can be against us?" Romans 8:31

### INTRODUCTION

This text declares the most glorious fact that ever broke upon the consciousness of my soul. "God is for us" --The "if" could be and should be "since." The text is not expressing a doubtful hope but a settled certainty. "Since God is for us, who can be against us?" It marks the beginning of a glorious climactic conclusion of the first eight chapters of Romans. Paul has shown that all are hopeless, inexcusable, and condemned sinners (chapter 1-3:20). Then he shows that God has provided a sufficient righteousness for sinners in Christ which is received by faith and not by works (3:21-5:11). Then he demonstrates the personal experience of one who receives this righteousness (Chapters 6-7). This eighth chapter begins with "no condemnation" and ends with "No separation" to those in Christ Jesus. Our text is the climax of the glorious doctrine of salvation by grace set forth in the passage: "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us who can be against us?"

## I. FIRST OF ALL I WISH TO DRIVE HOME TO OUR HEARTS THE MAIN THOUGHT OF THE TEXT: "GOD IS FOR US."

In the heavens above us, as we gaze upon the universe of worlds and planets, we are reminded that God is above us. In nature we see that God is around us. In His law we feel that God is against us for we stand guilty before His just and holy law, but in Grace we are assured that "God is for us". God is our defender, our justifier, our shield, our champion. God for us means that every attribute of His being, and every ounce of His inexhaustible power are engaged in our behalf and for our eternal security His immutability guarantees that God will forever be for us. He does not change. He is not fickle in His purposes and He does not leave a task unfinished. "The eternal God is our Refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms." "I change not" is His own reassuring declaration. "Therefore the sons of Jacob are not consumed" (Mal. 3 :6). The security of the saint is not predicated upon the saint's steadfastness but upon the unchangeableness of God.

### WHO CAN BE AGAINST US?

If God be for us, let hell and earth, darkness and damnation, men and devils do their worst. All their efforts to destroy shall come to nought and our God shall bring them to everlasting confusion. If God is for us why should we fear the face of man? Why should we cower before puny man's insults? Why should we go about with a defeatist complex? God is for US-- God is for US! Hallelujah!

### II. WHEN AND HOW IS GOD FOR US?

#### 1. God is for us in eternity past:

(1) For us in His foreknowledge: "Whom He did foreknow." "Foreknow" means more than a knowledge about us, for He

knew about the devil and about all people. It is equal to foreordain, or chosen, or elected. It means that He foreknew with a purpose; foreknew effectually. I Peter 1:2 says, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God." "According" means "measured by" or "in harmony with", or "in accord with." His choice of us was according to or measured by or equal to His foreknowledge of us. God knew what He would do for us and He knew what He would do with us. He is for us in foreknowledge. Before we were ever born or did good or evil God was for us in His purposes of Grace.

(2) For us in predestination. God predetermined the destiny and character of everyone of us in eternity past--determined and decreed our destiny. Not merely, decreed our going to heaven, but He also decreed our "conformity to the image of Christ." "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (I John 3:2).

## 2. God is for us in Time Present.

(1) In Effectual Calling. "Whom He also called" "called according to His purpose" called just as He purposed in eternity past, and called to accomplish His purpose in eternity future. Sinners are not called by chance nor by good luck but according to the purpose of God. There is a vast difference between a call and an invitation. Preachers give invitation to sinners but God calls sinners from death unto life. There is a general call in the Gospel to every man but there is a particular and effectual call of God to the "Foreknown" and "predestinated"-- "Them He also called."

He calls by the Holy Spirit and the word. He calls to life (regeneration) by the spirit and to justification by the Word. The one is vital, the other is legal and they both take place in the experiences of the sinner when he is saved.

(2) In Justification. "Them he also justified." Justified means declared just or acquitted before His law. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." When God justifies or declares just His elect no charge shall ever be sustained against them. They may be accused by Satan and maligned by men, but heaven's declaration shall never be reversed and they shall never be brought into jeopardy for their sins again. "Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1).

(3) For us in Providence. "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" (Romans 8:28). God is for us through all the experiences of this life. In sickness and health, at home and abroad, in prosperity and adversity, on the land and on the sea. His providence is working all things together for our good--nothing can be against us ultimately. At present the clouds may be dark, or the burden heavy, or the road dreary, but it is all in His plan and purpose working for our good. Who can be against us? "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord . . . though he fall he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand" (Psalms 37:23, 24). In all these things we are more than conquerors.

### 3. God is for us in Eternity Future.

(1) In Glorification. "Them he also glorified." Glorification is in the future. Then we shall be like Him. Then our vile body shall be fashioned like unto His own glorious body. Glorification is the consummation of all the previous purpose and work of Grace. All the threads of foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, sanctification, and providence shall find their place in the divine pattern and be unfolded in the image of Jesus Christ. We shall be like Him, and God the Father shall look upon us as the ultimate product of His eternal redemption.

#### 4. God is for us in one Eternal Present.

All of this is spoken in the past tense as if it had already taken place. God's purposes are so certain of fulfillment that He expresses them as already accomplished. There can be no shadow of doubt as to our security since God Who cannot lie has already declared the end from the beginning.

Dr. A. C. Dixon says that this passage portrays God's plan of Eternal Salvation as a great suspension bridge which spans a deep river chasm. The large cables are anchored in the mountain bed rocks on either side and are stretched over the top of great pillars and swung above the river. Large and strong arms of steel hang from these cables and support the bridge structure as constant streams of traffic go across. Foreknowledge and Predestination take their anchor back in the Eternal Counsels of the Triune God before time was--Glorification anchors the cables of Divine Grace in the Eternity yet future-while Calling and Justification take hold of the elect in actual experience here in time as we are carried safely over the turbulent currents of life. God is for us all the way.

### III. THE PRACTICAL EFFECT OF THIS DOCTRINE IN OUR LIVES

1. Gives Us a Sense of Security. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" We are no more doubting and fearing saints but shouting and confident people--at rest upon His power and promises.

2. Produces Loyalty and Faithfulness. "For thy sake we are killed all the day long." Persecution, distress, famine, nakedness, peril or sword do not drive us from our Lord but bring us close to Him. All that Satan may do against us brings us closer to our God--we die rather than be unfaithful to Him.

3. Produces Conquerors. "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." This doctrine has been opposed upon the ground that it produces carelessness, indulgence, and laziness on the part of those who believe it. This is Satan's slander of the saints. No doctrine has ever produced as many martyrs as has this glorious doctrine. Call the roll of martyrs and few Arminians are in the number. Paul, the writer of our text, sealed his testimony with his blood.

4. The Greatest Anchor for the Soul. The greatest source of peace for the mind and the most glorious ground for shouting that my heart has ever experienced is the text: "What shall we say then to these things? If God be for us who can be against us?" Amen and amen!