



LIFE  
THROUGH  
THE LIVING ONE

*J. H. BROOKS, D.D.*

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## PREFACE.

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“Verily, verily, I say unto you, 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.”<sup>1</sup> Such is the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is the testimony of One concerning whom it is declared, “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”<sup>2</sup>

It is the testimony of One to whom a distinguished Pharisee confessed, “We know that Thou art a teacher come from God.”<sup>3</sup>

It is the testimony of One who said, “to those Jews which believed on Him, If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed ; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”<sup>4</sup>

It is the testimony of One who exclaimed on the

<sup>1</sup> John v. 24.

<sup>3</sup> John iii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> John i. 14.

<sup>4</sup> John viii. 31, 32.

earth, and still exclaims from heaven, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me."<sup>1</sup>

Surely it is testimony worthy of the most careful and respectful attention.

<sup>1</sup> John xiv. 6.

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I.

## Dead in Sins.

“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).”<sup>1</sup>

Such is the testimony of the Holy Ghost, addressed to saints who were specially favoured by the advanced and sublime revelations contained in the epistle to the Ephesians. He does not say that sin had introduced some disorder into the moral faculties of the soul. He does not say that they retained a divine spark in the breast, which, with the kindly influences of proper culture, could be kindled into a flame. He does not say that they possessed a germ which, with the appliances of religious teaching and Church nurture and good example, could be developed into salvation. He does not say that they had been injured by the fall, and were like a man with a broken limb who needs a surgeon, or like a sick man needing a physician; but they were dead, and therefore needed God. If the inspired Apostle used language with even an ordinary degree of intelligence and meaning, he plainly teaches that those to

<sup>1</sup> Eph. ii. 1-5.

whom he wrote had once been dead, actually dead, in sins ; and death implies three things : first, absence of life ; second, insensibility ; and third, helplessness.

This teaching, however humbling to the pride of the human heart, is abundantly confirmed by the testimony of the Lord Jesus and of the Holy Ghost, given elsewhere in the Sacred Scriptures. For example, scarcely have we opened the gospel of John before we find it written of the former, "In Him was life ;" and, "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 [not by natural descent], nor of the will of the flesh [not by natural desire], nor of the will of man [not by anything man can do for us], but of God."<sup>1</sup> Thus we derive life from Christ, and become the sons of God, or are born of God, by believing on His name ; and that this life is something we did not previously possess, that this birth is something more than reformation or the improvement of the nature inherited from our earthly parents, is conclusively shown in the interview between our Lord and Nicodemus.

A religious Jew who could boast of a long line of religious ancestors, and who no doubt was sincere and scrupulous in the observance of the religious duties imposed by the religious system under which he was training for heaven, "came to Jesus by night, and said unto Him, Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God : for no man can do these miracles, that Thou doest, except God be with him." He was convinced that the mighty miracle-worker was not an impostor nor a fanatic, and he wished to converse with Him about the eternal interests that engaged his attention. The Son of God at once let him know that it was not a teacher he most required, but a Saviour ; not instruction, but salvation ; not ordinances, but a new birth : "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus obviously understood the unexpected remark to signify the very beginning of life, such as he had at his first birth, for he answered in amazement, "How can a

<sup>1</sup> John i. 4, 12, 13.

man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?"

The Saviour showed him that even if he could enter his mother's womb a second time, or a hundred times, or a thousand times, and be born, it could do him no good, for he would come forth with the same sinful nature, received from all his sinful mothers back to the days of sinning Eve; and hence "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." What is meant by being born of water and of the Spirit will be seen further along; it is enough at present to notice that it broadly hints at the vileness and worthlessness of man as he is by his first birth. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." There must be the impartation of a new nature, the implantation of a new life, according to the last verse of the remarkable chapter, "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."<sup>1</sup>

Still more explicitly our Lord says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, 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."<sup>2</sup> The context shows that he refers to the spiritually dead. He had just before said, "He that heareth My word and believeth hath everlasting life," and then He exhibits the real condition of believers up to the time they receive everlasting life: they are dead in sins. Immediately afterwards 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." Here He does not say, the hour is coming, *and now is*, for He speaks of dead bodies in the grave coming forth at their resurrection, thus carefully distinguishing between them and the dead souls that *now* hear His voice and live. In the same chapter He declares, "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life;"<sup>3</sup> but the words would have no meaning, if we have life, whether we do or do not come to Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Read attentively the whole of John iii.

<sup>2</sup> John v. 25.

<sup>3</sup> John v. 40.

Again He exclaims, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you ;"<sup>1</sup> "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."<sup>2</sup> It is needless to say that our Lord did not use language carelessly, and, least of all, did He use language that can only mislead. Hence it is certain that men do not naturally possess the life to which He here alludes, nor can they gain it by any efforts of their own, however religious they may be ; but it must be received solely from Himself. The very purpose of the Holy Spirit in directing the gospel of John to be written was, "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; and that, believing, ye might have life through His name."<sup>3</sup> But if this is so, surely we do not have life except through His name, or, in other words, through Himself.

We are not surprised, therefore, to find Him speaking of the unconverted as dead, when He said to the man who would bury his father before following the Lord, "Let the dead bury their dead ;"<sup>4</sup> and when he represented the prodigal's father giving warm welcome to the wanderer in the joyful cry, "This my son was dead, and is alive again."<sup>5</sup> Nor are we surprised to learn that the whole current of Scripture in its bearing upon His redeemed people, who have slipped down into the world, is an earnest exhortation to arise from among the dead, because it is a most unseemly thing for those who have life to be seen grovelling amid the associations of the charnel house. "Wherefore He saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light ;"<sup>6</sup> or as Rotherham translates it, "Up! thou sleeping one, and rise from among the dead, and the Christ will shine upon thee."

Again, it is written, "We thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead," or literally, "the all died."<sup>7</sup> A thorough and very able Bible scholar says of the tense here employed, "It is the aorist, and refers to the state

<sup>1</sup> John vi. 53.

<sup>4</sup> Luke ix. 60.

<sup>6</sup> Eph. v. 14.

<sup>2</sup> John x. 10. .

<sup>3</sup> John xx. 31.

<sup>5</sup> Luke xv. 24.

<sup>7</sup> 2 Cor. v. 14.

Christ's death proved them to be in." But however this may be, there can be no mistake concerning the meaning of the solemn testimony, "Being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh;"<sup>1</sup> "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth;"<sup>2</sup> "He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life."<sup>3</sup> Of all the children of Adam, male and female, old and young, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, moral and immoral, religious and irreligious, it is thus plainly, positively, and repeatedly affirmed in the word of God, that apart from Christ, or until Christ is received, they have no life.

Of course it is not meant by this that we have no physical life. But there is little in such a life of which the sinner ought to boast. The beasts of the forest and of the field, the lion, the tiger, the elephant, and even the ass, have more animal life than man at his best estate; and the strongest man on the earth would be unwilling to lay a large wager upon the continuance of his life for one month. Nor is it meant that we have no mental or intellectual life. But neither is there much ground for boasting here. The devils, as shown by the entire history of the human race, have far greater sagacity and knowledge than the most gifted and the most accomplished of the sons of genius. In short, man's physical life, commencing with the utter helplessness of infancy, terminates in a vast majority of instances with the brief period of childhood and youth; and in the remainder it is protracted for a few years amid aches, and pains, and sicknesses, and all the symptoms of rapid and inevitable decay, until the grave closes the unsatisfying scene. Man's intellectual life, commencing in every generation with the utter ignorance of infancy, is slowly and laboriously cultivated, until in very rare cases it is developed into something vigorous; but just as its powers are disciplined, they are enfeebled by old age, or rudely arrested by the hand of death.

Life is a term of various import, and it is manifested in diverse forms. It is life that keeps the invisible insect

<sup>1</sup> Col. ii. 13.<sup>2</sup> 1 Tim. v. 6.<sup>3</sup> 1 John v. 12.

a float in the sunbeam, and sporting in the water drop. It is life in the unicorn, that makes man afraid to trust him "because his strength is great." It is life that gives "the goodly wings unto the peacocks," and "feathers unto the ostrich." It is life in the war-horse, that has "clothed his neck with thunder." It is life in the behemoth, that hardens "his bones like bars of iron." It is life in leviathan, that "maketh the deep to boil like a pot."<sup>1</sup> It is life that lifts its head in the tiny floweret, which the foot of a babe may crush. It is life that lodges in the gnarled oak, tossing back the storm from its giant arms. Life is everywhere about, above, beneath, within us; but how manifold are its outward expressions and evidences! It is common and proper to speak of the life of a tree, the life of a beast, and the life of a man; yet how unlike they are! Yea, how totally unlike is the animal and intellectual life of man! How unlike they both are to spiritual life, or the life of God in the soul!

The late Sir James Simpson of Edinburgh, who was not less eminent as a Christian than he was as a physician, tells in one of his excellent tracts of a man who was fatally wounded in the last duel fought near that city. A bullet struck the spine of the challenger; and when asked, some hours afterwards, how he felt, "I feel," he replied, "exactly what I am—a man with a living head and a dead body mysteriously joined together." This is precisely what every man is by nature, except that he has a living body and a dead spirit mysteriously joined together; so that it may be said of the whole world, "alienated from the life of God;"<sup>2</sup> and of him who only professes to be a Christian, "He that loveth not his brother abideth in death;"<sup>3</sup> and even of a formal Church, "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead."<sup>4</sup>

It is of a woman,—it may be a refined, highly cultivated, and beautiful woman,—it is written, "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth;" or, as Noyes translates it, "She that giveth herself up to pleasure is dead while she liveth." If pleasure is the aim and end of her ex-

<sup>1</sup> Job xxxix.-xli.

<sup>3</sup> 1 John iii. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Eph. iv. 18.

<sup>4</sup> Rev. iii. 1.

istence, as it is with thousands of fashionable young ladies, although nothing can be said against her character by the admiring world, although she may be the brightest and the fairest of the social circle, the Holy Ghost declares she is carrying about a dead heart in a living bosom, she is but a walking corpse. Many a father, yea, many a Christian father, looking with unutterable pride and yearning upon the young girl who is the joy of his home, if he could see her in the light of God's word, would exclaim in deep distress, "My daughter is even now dead."<sup>1</sup>

"O dead in sin !

Wilt thou still choose to die  
The death of deaths eternally ?  
Dost thou not feel the gloom  
Of the eternal tomb ?

"O dead to life !

Wilt thou the life from heaven  
Reject, the life so freely given ?  
Wilt thou choose sin and tears  
Through everlasting years ?

"O dead to Christ !

Wilt thou despise the love  
Of Him who stooped from joy above  
To shame on earth, for thee,  
That He might set thee free ?

"O dead to God !

Wilt thou not seek His face ?  
Wilt thou not turn and own the grace ?  
Wilt thou not take the heaven  
So freely to thee given ?"

<sup>1</sup> Matt. ix. 18.

## II.

### Death Inherited.

“OF every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat : but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it : for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”<sup>1</sup> When the Lord God addressed this warning to Adam, He was not trifling with him. It was not like the menace of a fickle and foolish father, seeking to frighten his child, but failing to inflict the threatened punishment. He meant what He said, and the penalty that had been distinctly announced was strictly and literally executed. Adam did not live, as many suppose, hundreds of years after his disobedience ; he died then and there. The moment sin entered his soul he was “alienated from the life of God ;” and the death of his body centuries later was but the comparatively trifling accident or accompaniment of the spiritual death that came upon him the very day he ate the forbidden fruit.

The appalling results of that spiritual death were seen in the curse that blighted the fair face of creation, in the expulsion of the sinner from Eden, in the shocking murder by his first-born son of a younger brother, in the banishment of Cain from the presence of the Lord, in the thorough worldliness of his posterity, in the speedy and utter corruption of the righteous seed, until “God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually ;”<sup>2</sup> and then the whole defiled and defiling scene was swept with the waters of the deluge. There is a statement, often overlooked, that explains the

<sup>1</sup> Gen. ii, 16, 17.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. vi. 5.



rapid progress of the race in iniquity. It is contained in the record that "Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image."<sup>1</sup> Very different is the record when Adam was created, for "God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness."<sup>2</sup>

The likeness to God did not consist in any physical resemblance, but it was wholly spiritual; and the spiritual resemblance having been lost, Adam begat a son in his own likeness. That is to say, he transmitted his sinful nature to his posterity, according to a law illustrated in all departments of vegetable and animal life, and recognised even by infidel science, that "like produces like." The nature thus transmitted from fallen sire to fallen son is often in the Sacred Scriptures significantly called "the flesh," after the time when "God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth."<sup>3</sup> Of this nature it is explicitly affirmed in the inspired word, "To be carnally minded [literally, the mind of the flesh] is death," and the reason it is described as death is given in the following verse, "Because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God: for it doth not submit itself to the law of God, neither indeed can it."<sup>4</sup>

Such then is the testimony of the Holy Ghost concerning the nature inherited from the first man. It is death, it is enmity against God; and as John Newton has well said, "An enemy may be reconciled, but enmity is enmity still." It doth not submit itself to the law of God, neither indeed can it. Whatever, therefore, may be done with it, however cultivated, refined, or religious it may become, it still remains in unchangeable, irreconcilable hostility to God; and indeed never is its hostility more bitter and determined than when it is highly cultivated and religious, as seen in the history of Saul of Tarsus and many others. Before Saul's conversion he had much whereof he might trust in the flesh, and among other things he could say, "touching the righteousness which is in the law, blame-

<sup>1</sup> Gen. v. 3.<sup>2</sup> Gen. i. 26.<sup>3</sup> Gen. vi. 12.<sup>4</sup> Rom. viii. 6, 7, Alford's translation.

less;"<sup>1</sup> but after he saw his nature in the light of the love that saved him, he spoke of himself as the chief of sinners,<sup>2</sup> "less than the least of all saints,"<sup>3</sup> and exclaimed in no morbid mood, and in no exaggerated terms of self-depreciation, "I know that in me (that is in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing."<sup>4</sup> He does not say that there was some little good about him, a divine spark, a germ of holiness, but he declares that in the nature received from fallen Adam there dwelleth no good thing.

The conclusion he reaches from these passages is inevitable: "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."<sup>5</sup> They may run the round of the sciences, they may explore the depths of philosophy, they may become familiar with the fine arts, they may be baptized in any or all of the modes ever practised, and by any or all of the ecclesiastical dignitaries on the face of the earth, but if they are in the flesh, if they have only the nature inherited from man, if they are not born again, if they are not made spiritually alive, they cannot please God, for "without faith it is impossible to please Him."<sup>6</sup> This is true, not merely of some, but of all the race, without distinction of rank or progress. It is a race not lying loosely side by side, like gravel on the beach, but wherever found it possesses sameness of nature, and is linked to a common origin of sin and death.

"By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."<sup>7</sup> It is not enough to say that all men are doomed to death, but as the result of sin, and the sin of one man, death has already passed upon all men. They are not dead to their earthly interests and obligations and relations, but to God. Love to Him is not their governing principle even amid the most winning display of amiable traits of character, and virtuous actions, and heroic exploits; and they would be what they are if there were no God. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God,"<sup>8</sup> and that fool is as often seen among those whom the world most

<sup>1</sup> Phil. iii. 4-6.<sup>4</sup> Rom. vii. 18.<sup>7</sup> Rom. v. 12,<sup>2</sup> 1 Tim. i. 15.<sup>5</sup> Rom. viii. 8.<sup>3</sup> Eph. iii. 8.<sup>6</sup> Heb. xi. 6.<sup>8</sup> Ps. xiv. 1.

admires for culture and honour and success in life, as among the ignorant, the degraded, and the worthless. A man may stand high in the esteem of his fellow-men, and yet it may be true of him that "God is not in all his thoughts."<sup>1</sup> Hence the Holy Spirit's solemn testimony by the Apostle, "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity [love], it profiteth me nothing."<sup>2</sup>

Hence too our Saviour's solemn testimony, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh ; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye MUST be born again."<sup>3</sup> Man is born into the world with a certain nature called "the flesh." That nature, it is declared, "is death," "enmity against God," "not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." All that proceeds from that nature partakes of its characteristics, for like produces like, and the stream cannot rise higher than the source ; and hence the absolute necessity of a second birth, of a new nature from above. The first nature is like the leviathan God describes to Job: "Will he make a covenant with thee? wilt thou take him for a servant for ever? wilt thou play with him as with a bird? . . . He beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride."<sup>4</sup> Truly the flesh is a dangerous and deceitful monster, neither to be trifled with nor trusted.

"Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?"<sup>5</sup> It cannot be done by any skill or culture. They may cover their plantations with thorn-trees, and employ the most famous arborists and horticulturists and landscape gardeners, and crowds from far and near may flock to look at the beautiful effects, and exclaim in admiration, "Never were such thorn-trees seen ;" but, if cultivated a thousand years, they cannot be made to yield grapes. Thistles of every variety may be brought from every clime, and trained and trimmed until they excite astonishment by their size and gracefulness and richness of colouring ; but no amount of care can compel them to pro-

<sup>1</sup> Ps. x. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Job xli. 4, 5, 34.

<sup>2</sup> I Cor. xiii. 3.

<sup>3</sup> John iii. 6, 7.

<sup>5</sup> Matt. vii. 16.

duce figs. It is not the nature of thorn-trees to bring forth grapes, nor of thistles to bring forth figs; neither is it the nature of man to yield fruit that is acceptable to God.

From the beginning He has classified unregenerate man with unclean beasts. "Every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all the first-born of man among thy children shalt thou redeem."<sup>1</sup> A broken-necked ass, then, is the Bible symbol of the flesh, or of human nature, of whose dignity and grandeur we hear and read so much. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one."<sup>2</sup> "How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?"<sup>3</sup> "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."<sup>4</sup> This is not the extravagant statement of a gloomy fanatic or misanthrope, but the deliberate testimony of a man who spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost, showing that iniquity and sin are inwoven in the very warp and woof of our being. "The heart [not only a bad man's heart, but the human heart] is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"<sup>5</sup>

The Lord Jesus Christ knows it, "because He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man;"<sup>6</sup> and He declares, "I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts."<sup>7</sup> Let us then hear His testimony: "From within, out of the heart of man, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man."<sup>8</sup> So deep-seated and irremediable is the corruption of our nature, that even a quickened or regenerated man, looking to his own strivings for deliverance, is forced to exclaim, "The good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. . . . I find then a law,

<sup>1</sup> Ex. xiii. 13.

<sup>4</sup> Ps. li. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Rev. ii. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Job xiv. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Jer. xvii. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Job xxv. 4.

<sup>6</sup> John ii. 24, 25.

<sup>8</sup> Mark vii. 21-23.

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 ?”<sup>1</sup>

It only remains to show that this corruption is universal, including all the so-called races of men, extending through all ages, and spreading over all lands. “We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin ;”<sup>2</sup> and then the inspired Apostle cites as evidence the testimony of God, given a thousand years before. It is testimony both negative and positive concerning man, and it refers to his throat, tongue, lips, mouth, feet, ways, and eyes, closing with the announcement, “that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.” The history of the earliest times, and the observation of intelligent travellers among the nations and tribes of the earth existing at present, demonstrate the unity of mankind with regard to sin and death. “There is none righteous, no, not one : there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable ; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”

The tiger born to-day is like the tiger that was born outside of Eden ; and the man who is born to-day is like the man who was born outside of Eden, in his relations to God. If a tiger is captured and caged, it does not cease to be a tiger ; and although man may be conquered and curbed by law and education, his nature remains the same under all circumstances and in all generations. It is said of a distinguished British statesman of the last century, that he undertook the task of subduing and training a tiger cub, which had been sent to him from India. He succeeded quite well, until the animal licked with its rough tongue the cut finger of its sleeping master, and the taste of blood instantly arousing all the inherent and unchangeable propensities of its tigerish nature, nothing

<sup>1</sup> Rom. vii. 19-24.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. iii. 9-19.

could be done with it except to put it to death. So man may do very well under restraint ; but let a favourable opportunity offer to show what he really is, let a strong temptation come, and all the enmity of the flesh to God, all of its insubordination to the law of God, will most certainly be manifested. "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Prov. xxviii. 26.

### III.

## The Death of Christ.

“MOREOVER, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand.”<sup>1</sup> The importance of this verse cannot be overstated, because the inspired Apostle announces his purpose to define the gospel, the glad tidings, the joyful message, which he preached. “For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures ; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures.”<sup>2</sup> This he delivered unto them first of all, not simply in reference to time, but as the principal thing, or, in the words of Dr. Candlish, as “always in the van and forefront of all his teaching.”

Such is the gospel according to the Holy Spirit's own explanation, and the articles of the creed He presents are so few and simple a child may readily understand and remember them. Christ died for our sins ; He was buried ; He rose again. But few and simple as they are, they constitute the gospel, the good news to be proclaimed to a lost world. Without these there may be beautiful diction, impressive elocution, profound discussion ; but no gospel is preached unless the preacher makes it known that Christ died for our sins, that He was buried under their weight, that He rose again, leaving them behind Him, as it were, in His open grave. Those who substitute anything in place of this gospel are bringing upon themselves a terrible doom. “Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 1.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4.

we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."<sup>1</sup>

The reason for this stern denunciation of false preachers will become apparent, when it is seen that apart from the death of Christ for our sins, salvation is impossible. Most clearly and fully is it taught in the Sacred Scriptures that He endured the penalty of sin on the cross; and never until the sinner accepts this as true, trusting in Him as the only Saviour, does he pass out of death into life. "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man [or rather, the good man] some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us [He places it in a striking point of view], in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."<sup>2</sup> If dying *for* a righteous man and "the good one," as Rotherham renders it, means, as it obviously does, dying in their place, in their room, in their stead, so as to keep them from dying, it is equally obvious that the death of Christ was in the place, in the room, in the stead of the ungodly and sinners, to keep those who believe on Him from eternal death.

It is further said, He "gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father."<sup>3</sup> Professor Smeaton well remarks, "The expression means, that He gave Himself on account of sin; that His death stood in the same relation to sin as death uniformly does,—that is, that death was in His case, too, the wages of sin. And the consequence is as follows: If the Lord died for our sins, they whom He represented do not require to die for their own sins. If, in the moral government of God, our sins were the cause of Christ's death, there can be no second exaction of the penal consequences from us personally." Of course it was only as our substitute He could pay the wages of sin, declared to be "death,"<sup>4</sup> for it

<sup>1</sup> Gal. i. 8, 9.

<sup>3</sup> Gal. i. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. v. 6-8.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. vi. 23.



is everywhere affirmed of Him that He "knew no sin,"<sup>1</sup> that He was "without sin,"<sup>2</sup> that He "did no sin,"<sup>3</sup> that "in Him is no sin."<sup>4</sup> But it is the testimony of God's word from first to last, in type, in prophecy, in psalm, in narrative, in plain doctrinal teaching, that the Sinless One took our place, and endured the punishment of sin in our stead, leaving the happy believer to sing—

"Complete atonement Thou hast made,  
And to the utmost farthing paid,  
Whate'er Thy people owed ;  
How, then, can wrath on me take place,  
Now standing in God's righteousness,  
And sprinkled by Thy blood ?

"Since Thou hast my discharge procured,  
And freely in my place endured  
The whole of wrath divine,  
Payment God will not twice demand,  
First at my bleeding Surety's hand,  
And then again at mine."

"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 [apart from sin], unto salvation."<sup>5</sup> "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness : by whose stripes ye were healed."<sup>6</sup> "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God."<sup>7</sup> If the mind and heart are subject to the authority of the Bible, but one conclusion can be drawn from such passages as these. It is, that the sufferings of Christ were vicarious, or borne as our substitute, and that His death was atoning or sacrificial in its character. Nor must the dignity of His person be forgotten in seeking to give to this great fact its proper value. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. v. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. iv. 15.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 22.

<sup>4</sup> 1 John iii. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Heb. ix. 28.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 24.

<sup>7</sup> 1 Pet. iii. 18.

hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds ; 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.”<sup>1</sup>

We are not surprised, therefore, to find that when “holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,”<sup>2</sup> they were constant witnesses of Him, “who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God ; but made Himself of no reputation [emptied Himself], and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men : and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”<sup>3</sup> These men uttered their messages in little groups, or at intervals through a period of about sixteen hundred years, but there is the most perfect agreement in their testimony concerning the coming, the character, and the work of a divine Deliverer, as there is concerning the unity of the Godhead, although surrounded all the time by the polytheism of heathen nations, and nearly all the time by the base idolatry of their own countrymen.

From the day the seed of the woman was mentioned in the garden of Eden, redemption through His blood was announced with an unvarying uniformity, not less remarkable than it is conclusive of the superhuman origin of the Sacred Scriptures. It is seen in the first recorded act of worship, when the bloody offering of Abel was “a more excellent sacrifice” than the fragrant flowers and fruits of Cain, being presented “by faith,” and “God testifying of his gifts,” not of his person.<sup>4</sup> It is seen in the blood of the burnt-offerings that stained the altar after the deluge, and that stayed the curse from smiting the ground any more for man’s sake.<sup>5</sup> It is seen in the ransom of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage through the sprinkled blood of a lamb without blemish, God saying to His people, “When I see the blood I will pass over you, and

<sup>1</sup> Heb. i. 1-3.<sup>2</sup> 2 Pet. i. 21.<sup>3</sup> Phil. ii. 6-8.<sup>4</sup> Gen. iv. 4, 5 ; Heb. xi. 4.<sup>5</sup> Gen. viii. 21.

the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt."<sup>1</sup> He did not say, When I see the blood and something else, the blood and your feelings, the blood and your repentance, the blood and your sincere efforts, the blood and your good works ; nor did He say, When *you* see the blood, but When I see the blood ; for the blood alone in its perfect efficacy stood between them and destruction ; and the timid mother and little child were as safe, sheltered behind the blood, as were Moses and Aaron. There was not a Jewish festival, nor the beginning of a month, nor a sabbath, nor a morning, nor an evening, nor a burnt-offering, nor a peace-offering, nor a sin-offering, nor a trespass-offering, that did not remind Jehovah's redeemed nation of the absolute necessity of blood as the only way of access into His presence, and of acceptance in His sight. Especially was this essential truth deeply impressed upon their attention on the great day of atonement. Blood was taken by the high priest into the most holy place, and sprinkled upon the mercy-seat eastward, and seven times before the mercy-seat ; and then, coming forth, he laid both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confessed over him "all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat,"<sup>2</sup> so that they were borne entirely away. This significant ceremony is followed in the next chapter by the central truth of revelation, "It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."<sup>3</sup> No wonder the Psalmist exclaimed, "How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts ;" for the blood which everywhere met his eye showed that sin was put away.

It would be easy to multiply quotations from various books of the Old Testament, but this would be needless after reading the testimony of the evangelical prophet concerning the suffering Messiah. "He was wounded [margin, tormented] for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities : the chastisement of our peace was upon Him ; and with His stripes [margin, bruise] we are healed.

<sup>1</sup> Ex. xii.<sup>2</sup> Lev. xvi. 21, 22.<sup>3</sup> Lev. xvii. 11.

All we, like sheep, have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way ; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. . . . For the transgression of my people was He stricken. And He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death, [margin, deaths] ; because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him ; He hath put Him to grief : when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied : by His knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many ; for He shall bear their iniquities ;" or, as the last verse may be a little more strictly rendered, "By the knowledge of Himself shall One that is righteous, my servant, bring righteousness unto many : and their iniquities He shall bear."<sup>1</sup>

His introduction to the expectant multitude by John the Baptist on the banks of the Jordan was in strict harmony with all that had been revealed about Him by the prophets : "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away [margin, beareth] the sin of the world ;"<sup>2</sup> not of the Jew only but also of the Gentile. It will be admitted by all that He knew the design of His mission, the purpose of His death ; and we hear Him saying just before He went to the cross, "This is my blood of the new testament [or covenant] which is shed for many for the remission of sins."<sup>3</sup> The opinions of men with regard to that singular death are of little consequence, when He Himself declares it was intended to secure the remission of sins through His blood.

So the Holy Ghost declares He purchased the Church "with His own blood ;"<sup>4</sup> "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood ;"<sup>5</sup> "being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him ;"<sup>6</sup> "in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins ;"<sup>7</sup> "Now in Christ

<sup>1</sup> Isa. liii. 5-17.

<sup>4</sup> Acts xx. 28.

<sup>6</sup> Rom. v. 9.

<sup>2</sup> John i. 29.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xxvi. 28.

<sup>5</sup> Rom. ñi. 25.

<sup>7</sup> Eph. i. 7.

Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ ;”<sup>1</sup> “having made peace through the blood of His cross ;”<sup>2</sup> “neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption ;”<sup>3</sup> “without shedding of blood is no remission ;”<sup>4</sup> “having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus ;”<sup>5</sup> “the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel ;”<sup>6</sup> “ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot ;”<sup>7</sup> “God is light, . . . and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin ;”<sup>8</sup> “this is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ, not by water only, but by water and blood ;”<sup>9</sup> “unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.”<sup>10</sup>

Surely those who are in heaven know how they got there, and through the opened door which John saw there floats down to us the echo of the song, “Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.”<sup>11</sup> There is no voice in the glory that does not join in that song ; and although redemption by blood has been stigmatized with profane and impious jest as “the theology of the shambles,” it will be found that the rejected cross of Christ is the heaviest burden the lost soul shall carry in hell for ever. Of all who escape the clutches of the devil, never a more dangerous devil than when transformed into an angel of light, it will be said, “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb.”<sup>12</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Eph. ii. 13.<sup>4</sup> Heb. ix. 22.<sup>7</sup> 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.<sup>10</sup> Rev. i. 5.<sup>2</sup> Col. i. 20.<sup>5</sup> Heb. x. 19.<sup>8</sup> 1 John i. 5-7.<sup>11</sup> Rev. v. 9.<sup>3</sup> Heb. ix. 12.<sup>6</sup> Heb. xii. 24.<sup>9</sup> 1 John v. 6.<sup>12</sup> Rev. xii. 11.

#### IV.

### The Spirit of Life.

“THERE is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus ; [the remainder of the verse, as it appears in our English Bibles, should be left out]. 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.”<sup>1</sup>

It seems to be generally taken for granted that by “the law of the Spirit of life” is meant the gospel. But while this is true as far as it goes, it is not the whole truth. It is through the gospel we are saved, and the Spirit is the Author of the gospel, and He is also the Spirit of life, or the Spirit who gives life to souls dead in trespasses and sins ; but it is here said that He acts with all the regularity, stability, and uniformity of immutable law in the mighty work of deliverance from the law of sin and death, mentioned in the preceding chapter. The Apostle has described the distressing conflict of a regenerated man in the grasp of the law of God ; for if he had not possessed spiritual life, there would have been insensibility to the evil of sin, and none but a quickened soul can say, “I delight in the law of God after the inward man.”<sup>2</sup> Yet after all, it is a soul occupied with self, looking to its own efforts and sincere strivings for freedom from the law of

<sup>1</sup> Rom. viii. 1-4.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. vii. 22.

sin and from the loathsome flesh, or corrupt nature, which he calls "this body of death." In the compass of a few verses, the little but pretentious personal pronouns, "I," "me," "myself," occur forty-nine times, and Christ is not named even once, until the very close of the passage, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."<sup>1</sup>

But the moment the thoughts are turned to Him, the shout of victory is heard, "There is, therefore, NOW no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." If the abiding presence of the flesh had acted with all the fixity of law, leading him to exclaim, "I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me,"<sup>2</sup> and if he had made the humiliating discovery that "the mind of the flesh is death," he found at last to his joy that the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus also acts with the fixity of law, in the deliverance He gives from the dominion of our sinful nature, and from the agony of our own fruitless struggles against its power. The deliverance is obtained, not by feeling but by faith, not by trying but by trusting, not by resolving but by resting upon the truth of the gospel concerning the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ for sinners.

"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." There is nothing wrong about the law of God, for "the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good."<sup>3</sup> But it could not deliver, nor justify, nor save the sinner, on account of the badness of the material with which it had to deal, the corrupt and ruined nature of man. It was weak for the accomplishment of God's purpose of love toward a lost world, because it found nothing in the human heart on which it could build righteousness. It was a plumb-line let down from heaven, showing that the intentions of the heart are not upright, according to God's demands. It was a rule or square laid upon the affections of the heart, proving that they are all uneven and irregular. It was light shining into the recesses of

† Rom. vii. 25,

2 Rom. vii. 21.

3 Rom. vii. 12.

the heart only to discover its defilement and impurity. It was an Ithuriel spear detecting the lurking evils of the heart, and exposing their ugliness.

"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law."<sup>1</sup> "By the law is the knowledge of sin."<sup>2</sup> "Moreover, the law entered, that the offence might abound."<sup>3</sup> "It was added because of transgressions."<sup>4</sup> The law, therefore, was never so much as designed to bring life or salvation to a sinner, but only to reveal to his view his terrible condition as spiritually dead. Hence it is called "the ministration of death," and "the ministration of condemnation,"<sup>5</sup> because, having detected the presence of death in man's sinful nature, it can only utter the voice of a stern and righteous condemnation, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them;"<sup>6</sup> and "whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."<sup>7</sup> Consequently, unless it can be shown that a man has never failed to be conformed to the requirement of the law in thought, word, or deed, it is simply impossible for him to be saved by the law, or by any thought, word, or deed of his own.

But what the law could not do, God did when, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh. The work of Christ in our behalf did not stop with offering a sacrifice for the outward manifestations of evil seen in our conduct; it extended to the hidden root of evil in our depraved nature, making complete atonement for iniquity, both in its external and visible forms and in its internal and invisible principle, out of which all actual transgressions proceed. The sin-hating God met His sin-bearing Son in the darkness that gathered around the cross, and "over all the earth," and there entered into a full and final settlement of the tremendous question of sin, condemning it, and executing the sentence of condemnation, as it exists even

<sup>1</sup> Rom. vii. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. iii. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. v. 20.

<sup>4</sup> Gal. iii. 19.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 7, 9.

<sup>6</sup> Gal. iii. 10.

<sup>7</sup> James ii. 10.



in the flesh ; that the requirement of the law might be fulfilled in those who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

It is not strange, therefore, that the Holy Spirit is here and elsewhere called the Spirit of life, for the Spirit through the gospel imparts life to dead souls, and maintains it until the day of Jesus Christ, who says, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth ; the flesh profiteth nothing : the words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life."<sup>1</sup> Again it is written, "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life ;"<sup>2</sup> the two passages presenting the law of sin and death in contrast with the law of the Spirit of life. Nor must the importance which the Saviour attaches to His words, in connection with the Spirit and with life, be overlooked, when He says, "The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life ;" because they explain His remark to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

There are many who think our Lord here refers to baptism as the means by which we are regenerated, or born again, or by which we receive everlasting life ; and hence they are worrying themselves with childish questions about the proper mode of baptism, or about the particular religious body amid the wretched divisions of Christendom that constitutes the true Church, or about the succession of ecclesiastics that have a right to administer ordinances. It seems to be forgotten that He was conversing with a ruler of the Jews, who was familiar with the Old Testament Scriptures, and who ought at least to have known the frequent allusion in these Scriptures to water, as an appropriate symbol of the word of God when accompanied by the quickening energy of the Holy Ghost.

For example, the Pharisee had surely read the promise of Jehovah, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground ; I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring ;"<sup>3</sup> "for as the rain cometh down, and the snow, from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh

<sup>1</sup> John vi. 63.<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 6.<sup>3</sup> Isa. xlv. 3.

it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth."<sup>1</sup> He had surely read the glowing prophecy that reached on to the time when the kingdom of God shall be established on the earth, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them."<sup>2</sup> There are many similar passages, and Nicodemus should have known that to be born again is to be born or begotten of the word of God, applied to the conscience and heart in the life-giving power of the Spirit.

That the Lord Jesus did not teach the doctrine of regeneration, or the reception of life, by baptism, is conclusively shown by the following facts. (1) He never preached about baptism, nor even alluded to it, until after His death and resurrection. Think of the Saviour Himself preserving a studied silence with regard to that without which no one can enter the kingdom of God! (2) It is said, "Jesus Himself baptized not."<sup>3</sup> Think of the Saviour withholding His hand from the work of regeneration! (3) If He taught that regeneration or life is communicated by baptism, He flatly contradicted His own testimony, for He afterwards said to the unbaptized robber on the cross, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise."<sup>4</sup> (4) If baptism is regeneration, no unbaptized person is saved, for there is no exception to the rule laid down in the conversation with Nicodemus. "Except a man," or as Dr. Young properly translates it, "Except *any one*, be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Then the immense number of godly Friends or Quakers, and all who on a dying bed have believed, like the dying thief, without baptism, and the countless millions of dead

<sup>1</sup> Isa. lv. 10, 11.

<sup>3</sup> John iv. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Ezek. xxxvi. 25-27.

<sup>4</sup> Luke xxiii. 43.

unbaptized infants, must have perished, although Jesus declares, "It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish."<sup>1</sup>

But if this is not enough to show that our Lord taught no such doctrine as regeneration by baptism, additional facts may be mentioned. (5) He said to Nicodemus in the language of rebuke, "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?"<sup>2</sup> The latter could not have known Christian baptism, for it was not then instituted, although he ought to have known the quickening efficacy so often ascribed to the word of God in the Old Testament. (6) Baptism is seldom mentioned after the Acts of the Apostles, and at that time, so far as the record goes, it was administered in the name of Jesus alone. The following passages, in few of which is baptism by water even in view, are all that contain any reference to the ordinance: Rom. vi. 3, 4; 1 Cor. i. 13-17; x. 2; xii. 13; xv. 29; Gal. iii. 27; Eph. iv. 5; Col. ii. 12; Heb. vi. 2; 1 Pet. iii. 21. In fifteen of the Epistles there is not the slightest allusion to baptism. Could this be possible, if by it the sinner obtains regeneration or eternal life? (7) Paul writes to a large Church, "I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel."<sup>3</sup> Think of the Apostle exclaiming, "I thank God that I was not the means of regenerating any of you, for Christ sent me not to be used for the regeneration of men."

But surely it is needless to go further in the statement of objections, when we have the positive testimony of the Holy Ghost that it is by the word of God we are born or begotten again. "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth."<sup>4</sup> "Seeing ye have purified your hearts in obeying the truth through the Spirit, [this answers precisely to the water and the Spirit] unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another with a pure heart fer-

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xviii. 14.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. i. 14-16.

<sup>2</sup> John iii. 10.

<sup>4</sup> James i. 18.

vently : being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."<sup>1</sup> "In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel."<sup>2</sup> "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."<sup>3</sup> "Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."<sup>4</sup>

It is perfectly clear, therefore, that we are born or begotten by the word of God, which the Spirit employs as the means of imparting spiritual life; and there is the most striking analogy between the relation the Spirit sustains to the sinless human nature of Christ and the relation He sustains to the new-born soul, that is made partaker of the divine nature. (1) Christ as a man was born of the Spirit.<sup>5</sup> (2) He was anointed and sealed with the Spirit.<sup>6</sup> (3) He was led by the Spirit.<sup>7</sup> (4) He acted in the power of the Spirit.<sup>8</sup> (5) He was justified by the Spirit.<sup>9</sup> (6) He offered Himself by the Spirit.<sup>10</sup> (7) He was raised up by the Spirit.<sup>11</sup> In like manner the new nature which is imparted to believers is (1) born of the Spirit, as already shown. (2) Those thus born are anointed and sealed with the Spirit.<sup>12</sup> (3) They are led by the Spirit.<sup>13</sup> (4) They act in the power of the Spirit.<sup>14</sup> (5) They are justified by the Spirit.<sup>15</sup> (6) They offer themselves unto God by the Spirit.<sup>16</sup> (7) They are raised up by the Spirit.<sup>17</sup>

Well, then, may the Holy Ghost be called "the Spirit of life," and well may those who want to be saved rejoice that in the same chapter He is called "the Spirit of Christ;" exhibiting the very patience, kindness, tenderness, and yearning for the lost, that caused Jesus to be known as the "friend of publicans and sinners." Well

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. i. 22, 23.

<sup>3</sup> John xv. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Luke i. 35.

<sup>7</sup> Luke iv. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Rom. i. 4; 1 Tim. iii. 16.

<sup>11</sup> Rom. viii. 11; 1 Pet. iii. 18.

<sup>13</sup> Rom. viii. 14; Gal. v. 18.

<sup>15</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 11.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. iv. 15.

<sup>4</sup> Eph. v. 25-27.

<sup>6</sup> Acts x. 38; John vi. 27.

<sup>8</sup> Luke iv. 14-19.

<sup>10</sup> Heb. ix. 14.

<sup>12</sup> 2 Cor. i. 22; 1 John ii. 27.

<sup>14</sup> John vii. 38, 39; Acts i. 8.

<sup>16</sup> Rom. xv. 16; 1 Pet. i. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Rom. viii. 11.

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too may they be glad that they are not summoned to a wearisome and baffling investigation "of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands," but that the Spirit of life in imparting life uses the living word of the living God, so simple a child may understand it, so plain that he that runneth may read. If they will bow to the testimony of that word, apart from the control of man's teaching, they need not continue in darkness one hour, nor remain in doubt of their salvation any longer time than is required to read, that the bosom of the Father is ready to shelter them, the arms of Christ are extended to welcome them, and the Spirit is beseeching them to receive eternal life.

V.

Life Received.

“AS Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. 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. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believeth on Him is not condemned, [or rather, judged]: but he that believeth not is condemned [or judged] already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”<sup>1</sup>

Truly these are great and precious words, surpassing far in value all the words of all the philosophers and poets and statesmen who have ever lived. They assure the troubled sinner, if, like Nicodemus, he is perplexed by the doctrine of the new birth, that his difficulties may come to a speedy end. He that hath everlasting life enters of course into the kingdom of God; but he that believeth hath everlasting life; therefore he that believeth enters into the kingdom of God, and hence he that believeth is born again, or born from above. The inquirer, then, need not harass his mind with questions about regeneration, but turn his thoughts singly and entirely to the Lord Jesus Christ. When Moses at God's command lifted up the serpent of brass in the wilderness, God's promise was, “that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it,

<sup>1</sup> John iii. 14-18.

shall live.”<sup>1</sup> The bitten Israelites were not told to look upon the wounds made by the fiery serpents, nor to look upon Moses, the representative of the law, nor to reason about the connection between looking and living, but to look upon the uplifted serpent, made in the likeness of that which had inflicted the deadly stroke, even as God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. If they looked, they showed that they believed God’s word and trusted God’s promise.

“Even so must the Son of man be lifted up.” Jesus had just exclaimed, “Ye **MUST** be born again,” and now He adds, “Even so **MUST** the Son of man be lifted up.” The one *must* makes the other *must* a necessity, and both are necessary to regeneration, or the reception of eternal life. But, blessed be His name for ever and ever, although He purchased salvation at such an immense cost to Himself, to us it is absolutely free, “without money and without price.”<sup>2</sup> The way by which it is received is so simple, so easy, so nigh at hand, the believer wonders his heart does not break with penitence and love, every time it is presented to his mind. There may have been many an idiot in the widely-extended encampment of the Israelites, struck by the fangs of the fiery serpents, but if he had sense enough to look, he lived. There may have been many a little child, moaning in its mother’s lap from the poisonous bite, but if it was old enough to follow the mother’s glance, to notice the mother’s pointed finger, to heed the mother’s voice bidding it look, it lived. To this day it is only, Look and live ; Believe and live ; for it is a sweet truth we are accustomed to sing in the sweet hymn—

“ There is life for a look at the Crucified One ;  
 There is life at this moment for thee ;  
 Then, look, sinner, look unto Him and be saved,  
 Unto Him who was nailed to the tree.”

Matt, the idiot boy, on the coast of England had learned enough to know that he owed a debt to God which he

<sup>1</sup> Num. xxi. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. lv. 1.

could not pay, and he was weeping for fear God would shut him up in prison. A Christian lady took his trembling hand in hers, and gently said, "No, Matt, you need not be shut up in prison, for Jesus has paid your debt." Down into his darkened mind glanced the soft light of the gospel, and when He saw the wondrous truth that Jesus died on the cross in his stead, he lifted his streaming eyes to heaven with the joyful cry, "Man that paid, Matt says, Thank you, thank you." Then and there he was born again; then and there he received eternal life, for he had looked upon the Son of man lifted up; and if he had possessed sufficient intelligence he might have walked down the beach, singing in the gladness of exulting faith,—

"Jesus paid it all ;  
All to Him I owe ;  
Sin had left a crimson stain ;  
He washed it white as snow."

But these mighty words of Jesus tell us why the Son of man was lifted up : "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." It is a mistake to suppose that Christ came down from heaven in order that God might love us ; He came down because God did love us, and so love us, with a love so deep, so amazing, so unchangeable, so unutterable, He "spared not His own Son"<sup>1</sup> the shame, and humiliation, and rejection, and agony that attended upon every step of His lonely and sorrowful path from the manger of Bethlehem to the cross of Calvary. It is needless to add that "Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour."<sup>2</sup> His too was a love most ardent, self-sacrificing, boundless, eternal, and "which passeth knowledge."<sup>3</sup> The redemption of poor sinners was more to Him than the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, for He emptied Himself of it ; more to Him than the joys of heaven, for He left them all ; more to Him than life, for

<sup>1</sup> Rom. viii. 32.<sup>2</sup> Eph. v. 2.<sup>3</sup> Eph. iii. 19.



He says, "I lay it down of Myself;"<sup>1</sup> more to Him than the shining of God's countenance, for when God "made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin,"<sup>2</sup> He willingly leaped into the awful abyss of wrath and gloom, out of which arose such a wail of distress as never shook the earth before, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"<sup>3</sup>

The offering and the sacrifice thus presented on the cross, God has accepted as a sweet smelling savour; and the proof of its acceptance is furnished to angels, men, and devils, in the fact that God has raised Him from the dead. Nothing can be added to the efficacy of that atoning sacrifice; nothing can be added to the completeness of that finished work; nothing can be added to the value of that precious blood. Any attempt to add something of our own, in the way of feelings, repentance, good resolutions, charitable deeds, or ecclesiastical ordinances, that salvation may be rendered more certain and secure, is an insult to God, a dishonour to the Lord Jesus Christ, and a grief to the Holy Spirit. "Can you tell me," said an unhappy sceptic to a happy old saint, "just what is the gospel you believe, and how you believe it?" She quietly replied, "God is satisfied with the work of His Son—this is the gospel I believe; and I am satisfied with it—this is how I believe it." Said another lady to another unhappy man, "There is a great difference between your religion and mine; yours consists of two letters, D-O, and mine consists of four, D-O-N-E."

In the nature of the case, since the work which Christ accomplished to bring life to dead souls, is finished, life can be received only by accepting it, by believing in Christ, by trusting in Christ, by coming to Christ, which all mean one and the same thing. Hence, when the religious Jews asked Him the question, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me HATH everlasting life."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John x. 18.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. v. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xxvii. 46.

<sup>4</sup> John vi. 28, 29, 47.

Hence too His tender and comforting invitation to those who are toiling to be saved, and are burdened with cares and fears and troubles, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."<sup>1</sup> If any imagine that He will not receive them in all their labour, and with all their load of sin, let them think of the woman "which was a sinner," who fell at His feet without a prayer, without a word, to whom He said, "Thy faith hath saved thee : go in peace."<sup>2</sup>

So it was always when the Lord Jesus was here on the earth. He never refused healing nor salvation to any who believed in His power and willingness to restore health or to forgive sin. He never turned any away disappointed, no matter who they were. There were many who thought themselves too good for Him, and with these He had nothing to do except to rebuke their pride and self-righteousness and fatal delusion ; but oh, how gracious He was to all who came to Him as needy and sinful. "The Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them ;"<sup>3</sup> and He proceeded to vindicate His reception of them, simply, and only on the ground of the joy it gave Him to seek the lost, and to bestow life upon the dead. "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost,"<sup>4</sup> was His word of defence ; and trust in His love found a way at once to His bosom, and to the infinite resources of His power. It might be a wasted finger reaching no further than the hem of His garment, as when the poor sick woman came timidly through the crowd, after she had suffered many things of many physicians for twelve wearisome years, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse ; yet the feeblest touch of faith thrilled His heart, and immediately brought forth the assurance, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole [saved thee]."<sup>5</sup>

So it is still, for look where we will throughout the New Testament, the salvation of men is made to turn upon their faith in Jesus Christ. Peter was preaching to the

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xi. 28.  
Luke xix. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Luke vii. 50.

<sup>3</sup> Luke xv. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Mark v. 34.

Roman centurion Cornelius and his household, and having told the story of the death and resurrection of the Son of God, he said, "To him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word,"<sup>1</sup> showing that it was testimony which the Spirit of life approves. Paul was preaching to the Jews, and, having told the story of the death and resurrection of the Son of God, he said, "By Him all that believe ARE justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."<sup>2</sup> Paul and Silas were preaching to the Philippian jailor at midnight, who cried out in his distress, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."<sup>3</sup>

Precisely the same testimony is found all through the inspired Epistles. "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ : for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth."<sup>4</sup> Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood ; . . . that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. . . . Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."<sup>5</sup> "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the UNGODLY, his faith is counted for righteousness."<sup>6</sup> "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>7</sup> "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above :) or, who shall descend into the deep? (that is to bring up Christ again from the dead). But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and

<sup>1</sup> Acts x. 43, 44.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xiii. 39.

<sup>3</sup> Acts xvi. 30, 31.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. i. 16.

<sup>5</sup> Rom. iii. 25-28.

<sup>6</sup> Rom. iv. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Rom. v. 1.

in thy heart : that is, the word of faith, which we preach ; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”<sup>1</sup>

These texts are taken from a single Epistle ; and it may show the prominence attached to the truth that life is received through faith alone, when it is stated that the words translated *believe*, *believing*, and *faith* occur about five hundred and sixty times in the New Testament. It is not faith and something beside, it is faith by itself which receives life, as it is written, “Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus ;”<sup>2</sup> “whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God ;”<sup>3</sup> “By grace are ye saved through faith ; and that not of ourselves ; it is the gift of God : not of works, lest any man should boast ;”<sup>4</sup> “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law : for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”<sup>5</sup>

The sinner who wants to be saved is not asked to lift his hand, to move a foot, to wait a moment, to be saved, but just as he is, with all his sins upon him, and his hard and unhappy heart within him, he is permitted, and implored, and commanded to believe that Christ is able and willing to save him, and that God for Christ’s sake will pardon him straightway ; for “this is His commandment, That we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ.”<sup>6</sup> Nothing can be gained by delay, for sooner or later, the troubled inquirer must take God at His word, and, without the least shred of righteousness of his own, trust in Christ to give him everlasting life. “Neither is there salvation in any other ; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”<sup>7</sup>

Since the death of Christ on the cross, since He suffered the penalty of sin, since He met the demands of

<sup>1</sup> Rom. x. 4-9.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. iii. 26.

<sup>3</sup> 1 John v. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Eph. ii. 8, 9.

<sup>5</sup> Gal. ii. 16.

<sup>6</sup> 1 John iii. 23.

<sup>7</sup> Acts iv. 12.

God's law, since He paid our debt to the last farthing, it is no longer the sin question but the Son question with a lost world. "He that believeth is not judged: but he that believeth not is judged already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." There is no sin so dark and deep the precious blood of Jesus cannot wash it away; and the chief of sinners who believes ought to be as sure that all of his sins are blotted out, as if he had been guilty of none, and that he too may say with other blood-washed sinners in the confidence of a simple and unquestioning faith, "Herein is love with us made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world."<sup>1</sup>

Listen to His loving assurance, which sounds out in His word, as if the very tones of His voice could be heard, as if He stood personally and visibly revealed in the presence of the troubled soul, as if the kindly glance of His eye were piercing the gloom and the sorrow, "Verily, verily, I say unto YOU, He that believeth on Me HATH everlasting life."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1 John iv. 17.

<sup>2</sup> John vi. 47.

## VI.

### Life Nourished.

“KNOWING this, that our old man is [Greek, *was*] crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed [margin, justified] from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him ; knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more ; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once : but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin ; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you ; for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”<sup>1</sup>

It is most important that the young believer should see what the word of God says concerning the sinful nature which he has inherited from fallen Adam, and which has distressed him by the discovery of its vileness. It no longer exists in God's view. It was crucified when Christ died upon the cross. The sentence of condemnation was executed against it, when our sinless Substitute was made to be sin for us, and His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree. The Apostle says, “ I am crucified [Greek, I have been crucified, or more literally,

<sup>1</sup> Rom. vi. 6-14.

I have been co-crucified] with Christ ; nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me : and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”<sup>1</sup>

So then, the old man, or the flesh, is dead judicially, and “he that is dead is justified from sin,” or, as Alford, Young, and Noyes translate it, “set free from sin,” or, as Rotherham renders it, “He who died has been righteously acquitted from sin.” No accusation nor condemnation can be brought against a dead man. He may have been the most brutal murderer ; but if the law has executed its penalty in swinging him from the gallows, it comes to an end so far as he is concerned, or as men sometimes say, “the end of the rope is the end of the law.” This is true of the believer, for, as already quoted, “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” The law may pursue a sinner until he reaches the cross of Calvary, but there it stops and says, I am satisfied, I ask no more. Its penalty has been inflicted, and all the claims of the highest and strictest righteousness answered in the person of the believer’s representative.

The very instant the sinner is united to Christ by the Spirit of Life through faith, his relation to the first Adam terminates in God’s sight. The old nature, or the old man, or the flesh, is completely set aside, “for ye are dead [literally, ye died], and your life is hid with Christ in God.”<sup>2</sup> “Dead with Christ”<sup>3</sup> is the verdict brought into court concerning the believing sinner, and not only dead but “buried with Him.”<sup>4</sup> Hence, the claims of justice, not having been ignored but thoroughly met, the demands of righteousness, not having been compromised but fulfilled in every jot and tittle, the holiness and truth and grace of Jehovah, in His hatred of sin and love of the sinner, not having been tarnished but vindicated, magnified, glorified at the Cross, “it is God that justifieth,” and well may it be asked, “Who is he that condemneth?”<sup>5</sup> There is no appeal from that court of last resort, and when God rises up from His throne, and

<sup>1</sup> Gal. ii. 20.

<sup>4</sup> Col. ii. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Col. iii. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Col. ii. 20.

<sup>5</sup> Rom. viii. 33, 34.

announces that the law has no charge to bring against the believer, who will dare condemn? Satan, the adversary, who stood before the angel of the Lord to resist Joshua, the high priest,<sup>1</sup> now that Jesus has died, shrinks back from Calvary, while all heaven sings to the justified sinner, "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord; and their righteousness is of me," saith the Lord."<sup>2</sup>

The former standing of the believer, then, described as being in the flesh because he had only the nature received by birth from fallen Adam, is gone for ever, for it is written, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you."<sup>3</sup> The flesh, or sinful nature, with its inborn enmity to God and unchanging insubordination to the law of God, has been judged and the sentence of judgment carried out, so that those who are linked by faith to the crucified but risen Christ pass over out of death into life. In the eye of the law their connection with "the first man of the earth, earthy," is instantly severed, and from the moment they believe they are looked upon as *in* "the second man, the Lord from heaven."<sup>4</sup> Whatever He did they are regarded as having done, whatever He endured they suffered, whatever He is they are, in the presence of God. Hence it is said that they were not only crucified and buried with Him, but they have been already quickened together with Him, raised up together with Him, seated together with Him in the heavenly places; as they are heirs together with Him, and sufferers together with Him; and shall surely be glorified together with Him.<sup>5</sup>

"The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam a quickening [or life-giving] spirit."<sup>6</sup> The entire human race stands at this day in the one or the other of these, justifying the profound remark of Professor Smeaton of Edinburgh, in his masterly book on

<sup>1</sup> Zech. iii. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. viii. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Eph. ii. 4-6; Rom. viii. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. liv. 17.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 47.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 45.



the Atonement, "So fully are all the individuals represented by that one man, that we may say there have been but two persons in the world, and but two great facts in human history." The facts are, utter ruin for both soul and body by the first Adam; complete redemption for soul and body by the second Adam. In the first Adam man gets sin,<sup>1</sup> condemnation,<sup>2</sup> banishment from God's presence,<sup>3</sup> the curse,<sup>4</sup> the loss of kingly power,<sup>5</sup> bodily death,<sup>6</sup> eternal death.<sup>7</sup> In the second Adam the believer gets righteousness,<sup>8</sup> justification,<sup>9</sup> restoration to God's presence,<sup>10</sup> the removal of the curse,<sup>11</sup> royal dignity,<sup>12</sup> resurrection,<sup>13</sup> eternal life.<sup>14</sup>

But it must not be forgotten that when we are made "partakers of the divine nature,"<sup>15</sup> we do not cease to have human nature. When we become the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, we do not cease to be the children of our sinful earthly parents. When it can be said "Ye are not in the flesh," it must be remembered that the flesh is still in us, and that it is no better in a believer than in an unbeliever, no better in a Christian than in an infidel. Ignorance of this truth has caused the greatest distress and perplexity to souls that are thoroughly in earnest with regard to their salvation. In the joy and freshness of their first love, they imagined perhaps that not only the power of sin to destroy, but the presence of sin to annoy, was gone. With their thoughts stayed on Jesus, they had perfect peace, and entered into the meaning of the old hymn—

"Oh, the rapturous height  
Of that holy delight,  
Which I had in the life-giving blood!  
Of my Saviour possessed,  
I was perfectly blessed,  
As if filled with the fulness of God."

But after awhile a sudden temptation presented itself, and they found to their amazement and horror the up-

<sup>1</sup> Rom. v. 12.<sup>4</sup> Gal. iii. 10.<sup>7</sup> 2 Thess. i. 9.<sup>10</sup> Eph. ii. 13.<sup>13</sup> John xi. 25.<sup>2</sup> Rom. v. 16, 18.<sup>5</sup> Eph. ii. 1-3.<sup>8</sup> 1 Cor. i. 30.<sup>11</sup> Gal. iii. 13.<sup>14</sup> 1 John v. 11.<sup>3</sup> Gal. iii. 23, 24.<sup>6</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 22.<sup>9</sup> Acts xiii. 39.<sup>12</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 9.<sup>15</sup> 2 Pet. i. 4.

rising of the same natural dispositions which had ruled them before their conversion. The discovery was followed by the most painful and humbling sense of their vileness and helplessness, sometimes leading to despair, and to an abandonment of their Christian profession, and to a terrible relapse from which it requires years of sore discipline to restore them. They might have been spared much sorrow, if they had been taught the truth, distinctly revealed in the Scriptures, that in every regenerated person there are two things, not only totally unlike, but directly opposed to each other all along the pathway of our earthly journey, even to the end.

These two things are sometimes called the flesh and the Spirit, sometimes the old man and the new man, or the law in the members and the law of the mind. They are never changed, nor modified by each other, "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 [or rather, may not] do the things that ye would."<sup>1</sup> This is true of believers, who are not told to cultivate, civilize, or christianize the old man, but to "put off the old man," and to "put on the new man."<sup>2</sup> The direction has reference to their practical walk; but viewed in Christ, they "HAVE put off the old man with his deeds, and HAVE put on the new man."<sup>3</sup> In either case the old man, or Adam nature, or the flesh, is not sanctified, nor transformed into the new man, the divine nature, the Spirit, but remains in its inherent corruption until the body is dropped at the grave, or changed in a moment at the coming of the Lord.

It is only in the light of this great truth the sad failures and falls of so many Old and New Testament saints, and so many aged believers now, can be at all understood. According to the unscriptural theory that the Adam nature or the flesh is improved and gradually made holy, all capacity for sin ought to die out in the course of years. But that it is still there is too plainly proved by the humiliating exhibitions of irritability, peevishness, censoriousness, self-conceit, envy, unbelief, and other forms

<sup>1</sup> Gal. v. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Eph. iv. 22, 24.

<sup>3</sup> Col. iii. 9, 10.

of evil, in those who no doubt have long been the children of God. Nay, every intelligent and conscientious Christian can give but one answer to the question, "Do you find the same appetites, impulses, tendencies in your heart, that were there before your regeneration, and that need a mightier power than your own to keep them down?" To say that we have no sin, is to contradict the plain testimony of the word of God, for "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."<sup>1</sup> To say that we must sin, is to destroy the whole work of Christ, and to utter a gross libel upon the indwelling Spirit. To say that we need not sin, is to state a blessed Christian privilege.

But how is the victory to be obtained hour by hour and moment by moment? The answer is, by looking away from self unto Jesus, "the Princely Leader and Completer of faith."<sup>2</sup> "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind [margin, *thought*, or *imagination*] is stayed on Thee; because he trusteth in Thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength [margin, the rock of ages]."<sup>3</sup> It is only by keeping the eye fixed upon Him, to the exclusion of other objects, we can follow Him along the straight and narrow way; and He offers to be our Saviour, not merely from the punishment of sin, but from the power of sin, and from all worry and care and darkness. He takes the place of the law wholly, and hence it is said, "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. . . . Now we are delivered from the law, being dead to that wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter."<sup>4</sup> Sin is not dead, and therefore it is written, "RECKON ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead: "For sin shall not have dominion

<sup>1</sup> 1 John i. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. xii. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Isa. xxvi. 3, 4.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. vii. 4, 6.

over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."

The life, received not by the law but by faith, is nourished, not by the law, but by faith, "for by faith ye stand;"<sup>1</sup> "for we walk by faith."<sup>2</sup> Every step of our pilgrim way through an unfriendly world must be taken with unfaltering confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ as our sympathizing High Priest, who knows all about us, and the worst about us, and loves us still, as our ascended Lord who has sent the Holy Spirit, not as a vague and mysterious influence but a divine person, not to visit us at irregular intervals, but to be our abiding Comforter and indwelling Helper.<sup>3</sup> "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."<sup>4</sup> "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you."<sup>5</sup> The life, then, which He communicates will be nourished and strengthened by heeding His own injunction, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. . . . But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under law."<sup>6</sup> "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."<sup>7</sup>

This last passage shows why the life of so many Christians is weak and sickly. They make provision for the flesh, the old sinful nature, in the books they read, in the amusements and pleasures they seek, in the indulgence of their former tastes and appetites and habits, not remembering what is said of those who were on the cross when Jesus was there, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."<sup>8</sup> The New Testament is a book of principles, rather than rules and regulations; and a very simple principle will answer a thousand questions, which meet believers in their social and business relations. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him."<sup>9</sup> "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. i. 24.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. viii. 9.

<sup>7</sup> Rom. xiii. 14.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. v. 7.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 19.

<sup>8</sup> Gal. v. 24.

<sup>3</sup> John xiv. 16, 17.

<sup>6</sup> Gal. v. 16, 18.

<sup>9</sup> Col. iii. 17.

of God.”<sup>1</sup> Standing on the heavenward side of His cross and grave, they will nourish and strengthen their new life by a prompt confession of His name ;<sup>2</sup> by remembering Him at His table ;<sup>3</sup> by the diligent and devout study of His word ;<sup>4</sup> by a fixed purpose, passing into an established habit, to live for Him with a personal love and loyalty ;<sup>5</sup> by engaging systematically in good works that will commend Him to the acceptance of others ;<sup>6</sup> by “continuing instant in prayer ;”<sup>7</sup> by faithful attendance upon the meetings of the church with which they are identified ;<sup>8</sup> by lifting high their banner with this device written upon it, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is [Greek, has been] crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”<sup>9</sup> Never, never let the young Christian be content with any attainments in study or in service, but continually “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory, both now and for ever. Amen.”<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. x. 31.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Rom. xii. 12.

<sup>9</sup> Gal. vi. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xii. 8, 9.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Cor. v. 15.

<sup>3</sup> Luke xxii. 19.

<sup>6</sup> Tit. iii. 8.

<sup>8</sup> Heb. x. 25.

<sup>10</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 18.

## VII.

### Life Known and Enjoyed.

“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 [or witness] that God gave of His Son. And this is the record [or witness], 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. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life.”<sup>1</sup>

It is a serious thing to make God a liar, but this is what the man does who believes not the witness that God gave of His Son. Instead therefore of spending time in weeping over his general badness, he ought to see the dreadful character of his particular sin of unbelief, the sin of sins, and immediately turn from it with hearty acceptance of God's testimony. The sum and substance of that testimony from the first of Genesis to the last of Revelation is, that God hath given to us eternal life, not sold it but given it, not exchanged it for something we had or did, but given it, and this life is in His Son. It is nowhere else, not in feeling, not in repentance, not in faith, not in culture, not in what the world calls an honourable career, not in doing the best we can, not in baptism, not in the Church, but in Christ. He that hath the Son by believing on Him, hath life. He is not trying to have it, nor hoping to have it when he comes to die, or to stand in the judgment, but he HATH it now. He

<sup>1</sup> 1 John v. 10-13.

that hath not the Son of God, hath not life, whatever he may have in the way of rank, power, influence, intellect, wealth, or religion.

Moreover the believer may know that he has life, for "these things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life." The very purpose of the writing was that we might know it, and we know it by what is written, or in other words, by the testimony of God in the inspired scriptures. Most of the knowledge we have is due to testimony, and yet it is properly called knowledge. Our knowledge of all the facts that have occurred in the history of the race, except the few that have fallen within the limited range of our personal observation, we owe to testimony. Our knowledge of the geography of the world, except the small portion we may have visited, we owe to testimony. Our knowledge of the distance and size of the heavenly bodies, of the strata that form the crust of the earth, and of other scientific discoveries, rests entirely upon testimony, except with one here and there out of many thousands, who has made the discoveries and conducted the investigations for himself. Not a person now living ever saw Alexander the Great, or Julius Cæsar, or Luther, or Cromwell, yet no intelligent person would hesitate to say, I know that these men really existed.

"If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater,"<sup>1</sup> for all human witnesses may be mistaken, or may testify falsely; but God knows of what He affirms, and tells the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, undimmed by the faintest shadow of ignorance, or error, or deception. "The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies;"<sup>2</sup> and yet through necessity, the business of the world is carried forward upon the principle of faith in the testimony of men; the wheels of commerce turn upon faith in the testimony of men; the courts of law are established upon faith in the testimony of men. Let it once be conceded that nothing is to be believed except

<sup>1</sup> 1 John v. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. lviii. 3.

what we see or feel, and there will be an end of all enterprise and social order and administration of justice. But if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater, and this is the great truth to which God has witnessed in the Bible, that He hath given unto us eternal life, that this life is in His Son, that whosoever has the Son by faith, has life, and that whosoever has not the Son of God, has not life.

How, then, does the believer know he has life? The answer is, by what is written, which is just the same as if God spoke to him with His own voice, and in audible tones. When Jesus said to the disciples, "Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven,"<sup>1</sup> how did they know their names were written there? They did not see nor feel that they were, but they knew it in a surer and better way, by the testimony of the Son of God. When the inspired Apostle wrote, "Help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life,"<sup>2</sup> how did these persons know that their names were in the book of life? Only in one way, by the testimony of the Holy Ghost. When he wrote again, "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus,"<sup>3</sup> could they doubt that they were indeed the children of God? Surely not. But how did they know it? Not by looking within, but by looking without, accepting as true the written testimony.

The epistles of the New Testament were not addressed, as sermons are now generally addressed, to the converted and unconverted alike, but to the "beloved of God, called to be saints,"<sup>4</sup> who were gathered by the Holy Ghost unto the name of Jesus in Rome and Corinth, and Galatia, and Ephesus, and Philippi, and Colosse, and Thessalonica. Besides these seven Gentile Churches, certain epistles were sent principally to believers of the Jewish race, as the epistle to the Hebrews, and the epistles of James and Peter. Besides these, we have general epistles as I John and Jude, and then some addressed to individuals, as

<sup>1</sup> Luke x. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Gal. iii. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Phil. iv. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. i. 7.



Timothy and Titus, and Philemon, and Second and Third John. In not one of these epistles is salvation presented in the form of doubt or uncertainty ; but those to whom they were sent must have known by what was written, that they had passed out of death into life.

For example, we turn to the epistle to the Corinthians, who were sharply rebuked for the divisions and other evils that had crept among them, and some of whom had been the vilest of sinners, and we read, "Such were some of you : but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."<sup>1</sup> Could any believer present at the meeting when the epistle was read doubt whether he was saved ? Would he not know upon the written testimony of the Holy Ghost, that, whatever he had been in the past, he was washed, sanctified, and justified ? Or when the precious words were read in the hearing of the Galatians, "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father,"<sup>2</sup> would they not know that they were sons ? Or when the Ephesians read, "NOW, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ,"<sup>3</sup> would they not know that they were made as nigh to the heart of God as the blood of Christ could make them ? Or when the Philippians read, "Rejoice in the Lord always : and again I say, Rejoice,"<sup>4</sup> did not their rejoicing spring from the knowledge of their acceptance in the Beloved ? Or when the Colossians read, "Giving thanks unto the Father, which HATH made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light : who HATH delivered us from the power of darkness, and HATH translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son ; in whom we HAVE redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins,"<sup>5</sup> did they not know by what was written that they were already saved ? Or when the Thessalonians read, "Ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God ; and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 9-11.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. iv. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Eph. ii. 13.

<sup>4</sup> Phil. iv. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Col. i. 12-14.

from the wrath to come,"<sup>1</sup> they surely knew, if they believed the written testimony, that no wrath could come upon them in the future world.

Thus it is in all of the epistles, and hence the experience of the early Christians differed widely from the experience of most modern Christians. Then it was an experience of joy ; but there can be no joy where there is no certainty of salvation ; and there can be no certainty, where there is no personal acceptance of the written testimony of God's word as true, concerning the finished work of Christ in behalf of sinners, without seeking to add to it any feeling or obedience of our own. There is a little clause in the brief epistle to Philemon, which shows clearly the ground on which the first Christians stood, and which explains fully the secret of their joy. The Apostle writes about Onesimus, whom he sent back to his master, " If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee aught, put that on mine account."<sup>2</sup> The last five words, " put that on mine account," are used to translate only one Greek word, which is elsewhere rendered *impute*: " Sin is not imputed when there is no law."<sup>3</sup> As the Apostle says concerning Onesimus, if he hath wronged thee I will be answerable for it, if he oweth thee aught I will see that the debt is paid ; so the Lord Jesus has made Himself answerable for all the wrong the believer has done God, and has paid to the last farthing the debt he owed God. All the sins of the believer, outward and inward, of heart, thought, word, and act, of omission and commission, are imputed to Christ, or put on His account ; and all the value of Christ's precious blood, according to God's estimate of its worth, is imputed to the believer, or put on his account.

Hence we read of his sins, that they are removed from him as far as the east is from the west ;<sup>4</sup> that they are cast behind God's back ;<sup>5</sup> cast into the depths of the sea ;<sup>6</sup> all forgiven ;<sup>7</sup> even remembered no more.<sup>8</sup> It is the purpose of the gospel, which means the good news, the

<sup>1</sup> 1 Thess. i. 9, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Phil. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. v. 13.

<sup>4</sup> Ps. ciii. 12.

<sup>5</sup> Isa. xxxviii. 17.

<sup>6</sup> Mic. vii. 19.

<sup>7</sup> Col. ii. 13.

<sup>8</sup> Heb. x. 17.

glad tidings, the joyful message, to make known as an accomplished fact that Christ has died upon the cross for sinners, and that the sins of believing sinners can never be brought into judgment against them, until they can be brought into judgment against the risen and glorified Christ. We are not to have fear, but boldness in the day of judgment, because as He is now, in all the acceptableness of His person and in all the merit of His accepted work in our behalf, so are we, though still in this world.<sup>1</sup>

We are not surprised, therefore, at the language of certainty and confidence that rings like a trumpet-call to victory throughout the New Testament. "We KNOW, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."<sup>2</sup> "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."<sup>3</sup> "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us."<sup>4</sup> "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true: and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life."<sup>5</sup> Forty-two times the Greek words, translated *know* are found in the first epistle of John, showing the earnest desire of the Holy Ghost to lead the believer out of the cold and dark region of doubt and dread into the liberty of the children of God. "Behold [know, or see], what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God [and we are, add all the ancient MSS.]; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. 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. And every man that hath this hope in [on] Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure."<sup>6</sup>

With such an assurance and such a hope, it is not

<sup>1</sup> 1 John iv. 17.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Tim. i. 12.

1 John v. 20.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. v. 1.

<sup>4</sup> 1 John iv. 16.

<sup>6</sup> 1 John iii. 1-3.

strange that the words *joy* and *rejoice* shine like bright and beautiful stars in the four gospels, in the Acts of the Apostles, in the various Epistles, and even in the book of Revelation. They occur eighteen times in the short epistle to the Philippians, and are used to define a Christian in contrast with those under the law. "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."<sup>1</sup> "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace," and other graces that lodge in the heart, and adorn the hidden man, and may be called underground fruit, very precious to our Lord.<sup>2</sup> "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink ; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."<sup>3</sup> He does not wish His children to be gloomy, but happy, happy as the day is long, happy in the night of affliction, hearing His word, "Casting all your care upon Him ; for He careth for you."<sup>4</sup>

It is obvious, then, that the chilling mist of uncertainty, which hangs about many professed Christians in these days, does not arise from the word of God. It comes rather from false teaching that has accustomed them to look into their own hearts, in a vain search for something that deserves heaven, instead of looking simply and singly to Christ, as all our salvation, and all our desire. They have been taught that it is presumption to believe they are saved without any righteousness of their own, and without any ecclesiastical ordinances, and consequently as they have no real joy in their thoughts of God and eternity, and the heart craves happiness, they answer the description given of religion at the close of the present dispensation, when men shall be "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God ; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."

But, turning away from their formality and worldliness and discontent, let the intelligent believer catch the happy strain of true Christian experience, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively

<sup>1</sup> Phil. iii. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. xiv. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. v. 22, 23.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Pet. v. 7.

hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 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. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations : that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ : whom having not seen, ye love : in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory : receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. i. 3-9.



**STUMBLING BLOCKS REMOVED.**





# Stumbling Blocks Removed.

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## 1.—“*I do not Feel that I am a Sinner.*”

WELL, you *are* a sinner, whether you feel it or not, and you are called to deal, not with a question of feeling, but of fact. Many a man has been fatally ill, without feeling his danger, but his lack of feeling did not arrest for one moment the progress of disease and death. It is the most terrible count in the indictment brought against those who were “alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness [or hardness] of their heart,” that they were “past feeling.”<sup>1</sup> Your insensibility, therefore, is no excuse for continued indifference to the peril of your soul, but an aggravation of your guilt.

“Sin is the transgression of the law,”<sup>2</sup> or, as Rotherham, Young, and Darby properly render it in their new translations, “sin is lawlessness.” It is the spirit of insubordination to the law of God, as that law is summed up in the words of our Saviour, “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.”<sup>3</sup> Judged by this law, you have sinned every second of your existence, so that if you have lived thirty years, you are already charged with more than nine hundred millions of sins. But as shown in the preceding pages, your very nature is sinful, and if

<sup>1</sup> Eph. iv. 18, 19.

<sup>2</sup> 1 John iii. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xxii. 37-39.

you could see yourself in the light of God's presence, you would exclaim as Job did, "Behold, I am vile;"<sup>1</sup> you would cry out as Isaiah did, "Woe is me! for I am undone."<sup>2</sup> In addition to the unnumbered sins committed against God's law, and flowing from a corrupt source, you are justly answerable for the crowning and damning sin of unbelief. The Lord Jesus Christ says, "He that believeth not is condemned [or judged] already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God;"<sup>3</sup> and again He says, the Holy Spirit will reprove "of sin, because they believe not on Me."<sup>4</sup> While, therefore, you continue in unbelief, you are guilty of the sin of sins.

## 2.—"I do not Feel that I am Saved."

Here again, it is not a question of feeling, but of fact. Of course if you know upon the sure testimony of God's word that you are saved, you will feel glad and grateful; but you are not saved on account of your feeling, nor by feeling, nor as the result of feeling. The word *feeling* occurs but twice in the entire Bible, and in neither place is it used in the sense in which it is now constantly employed. Once it is said of the Lord Jesus, "We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities;"<sup>5</sup> and the other passage, "past feeling," has just been quoted. Those who are troubled about feeling do not perceive that they have fallen into two very serious mistakes.

The first is, that they are unconsciously seeking to find a Saviour in their feelings, instead of finding Him in Christ; and the second is, that they are exactly reversing the process and order of salvation and feeling, as laid down in the Bible. To use a common expression, they are putting the cart before the horse. You do not first feel good, and then believe; you first believe, and then feel good. If you receive sorrowful tidings by letter, or by

<sup>1</sup> Job xl. 4.

<sup>4</sup> John xvi. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. vi. 5.

<sup>3</sup> John iii. 18.

<sup>5</sup> Heb. iv. 15.

telegram, or by word of mouth, the first act of the mind is to believe the announcement, and the second act of the mind and the heart is grief. If you hear good news, you do not first feel joyful, or wait to scrutinize and analyse your emotions ; you first believe, without thinking of your feeling, and let feeling take care of itself. So when you hear the gospel, do not think of feeling ; think only of Christ, and if you accept as true the testimony that He has put away your sin by the sacrifice of Himself, the feeling will follow.

Suppose the Lord Jesus should appear to you personally and visibly, while you are reading this page, and say in gentle tones, "Thy sins are forgiven thee"<sup>1</sup>—would this satisfy you? Would you believe Him, without waiting for feeling? But if you want to be saved, He is saying it as truly and sincerely as if you could hear His voice ; and why not believe Him? To the sinful woman at His feet, who did not even pray, He said, "Thy faith hath saved thee ; go in peace ;"<sup>2</sup> and she knew that she was saved, not by her feeling, but by the word of the Saviour. He did not say, thy faith and thy feeling, thy faith and thy tears, but thy faith alone HATH saved thee ; and believing what He said, she went away comforted and glad.

### 3.—*"I have not Repented Enough."*

If you mean by this that you must repent in order to incline God to be merciful to you, the sooner you give over such repentance the better. God is already merciful, as fully shown at the cross of Calvary, and it is a grievous dishonour to His heart of love if you think that your tears and anguish will move Him, "not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance."<sup>3</sup> It is not your badness, therefore, but His goodness, that leads to repentance ; and hence the true way to repent is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, "who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Luke v. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. ii. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Luke vii. 50.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. iv. 25.

Calvin well says : " It must be reckoned a settled point that repentance not only immediately follows upon faith, but springs out of it. . . . They who think that repentance goes before faith, instead of flowing from or being produced by it, as fruit from a tree, have never understood its nature."

The word *repent* or *repentance* does not once occur in the gospel of John, where the way of salvation is so clearly set forth by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, nor once, with the exception just mentioned, in the epistle to the Romans, nor once in the epistle to the Galatians, nor once in the epistle to the Philippians, nor once in the epistle to the Colossians, nor once in the epistles to the Thessalonians, nor once in the epistle of James, nor once in the epistles of John, and but once in the epistles of Peter. Repentance, strictly speaking, means " a change of mind or purpose," and consequently it is the judgment which the sinner pronounces upon himself in view of the love of God displayed in the death of Christ, connected with the abandonment of all confidence in himself, and with trust in the only Saviour of sinners. Saving repentance and saving faith always go together, and you need not be worried about repentance, if you will believe.

If a person, acquainted only with the Greek language, should read the words translated *repent* and *repentance*, he would not infer that it necessarily implies emotion of any kind, or at most that the emotion follows the change which has taken place in the views and convictions. Hence when you are told by those who are ignorant of the gospel that you must " exercise a true and genuine repentance " before you can be saved, you may know that they are " blind leaders of the blind." They might as well tell you to take a true and genuine dose of medicine, without prescribing the kind or the quantity.

#### 4.—*"I fear that my Faith is not the Right Kind."*

Here, too, it is obvious that there is an unconscious attempt to make a Saviour out of faith, in place of seeing a loving Saviour in Christ. A minister of the gospel was

once introduced to a dear old saint, whose beautiful life was living evidence of the reality and power and blessedness of God's grace. "Are you the woman of strong faith, of whom I have heard so much?" he asked. "No," she quietly replied, "I am the woman of weak faith in a strong Saviour." It is not faith that saves, except as the empty hand stretched forth to receive the gift of eternal life, but it is Christ; and there is no wisdom in chafing the mind and heart by wondering whether the hand has been stretched out just in the right way, or not.

The faith of the leper was most imperfect in his thought of the Saviour's kindness when he said to Jesus, "If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean,"<sup>1</sup> but Jesus immediately healed him. The faith of the sick woman was most imperfect in knowledge when she said, "If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be whole;"<sup>2</sup> yet Jesus immediately responded in love and power to the feeble touch of her wasted and trembling finger. The faith of the distressed father was most imperfect in his conception of the Saviour's omnipotence, when he exclaimed, "If Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us;"<sup>3</sup> but Jesus immediately granted his request. The Lord does not say, he that heareth My word, and believeth with the right kind of faith, but, he that heareth and believeth hath everlasting life; and out of the hundreds of texts in the Bible that mention faith, there is not one which speaks of the right kind of faith, except that it must be of the heart, that is, not hypocritical. Oh, He is so good and gracious, He will accept the very weakest faith.

A little girl was once locked up in a room by an insane mother, and for three days of intensely hot weather she did not taste a morsel of bread, nor a drop of water. When she was found by a servant of the Lord, her first cry was for water; and when it was brought to her, she raised it to her lips with a very weak and trembling hand, but it refreshed her as much as though she had grasped it with the hand of a giant. It is not the strength of our faith, but the strength of Christ, that saves. It is not the

<sup>1</sup> Mark i. 40.<sup>2</sup> Mark v. 28.<sup>3</sup> Mark ix. 22.

intelligence with which we believe, but the person in whom we believe, the Holy Ghost sets before us in the Gospel.

5.—*"I fear I have not Come in the Right Way."*

Where do you find a word in the four Gospels, in the Acts of the Apostles, or in the inspired Epistles, about coming in the right way? Do you not see that you are suffering your attention to be diverted from the source of eternal life to the stream, from the cause to the consequences, from the origin to the effects and results, manifested in Christian experience and service? Do you not perceive that with a persistent effort to find some reason for your salvation in your own heart and life, with a strange and ungenerous unbelief, you are looking away from Christ to self? If this were not so, surely you would not be anxious about the way of your coming, but you would be quite content to come, to believe, to trust, in any way.

The blind beggar did not come in a very graceful and dignified way, when, in answer to the call of Christ, "he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus."<sup>1</sup> He looked odd enough without his outer robe, and he may have stumbled and fallen as he hurried forward in the blackness of a night that had no star; but "Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole," or, as the Greek is, "hath saved thee." Zacchæus, the chief of publicans and therefore the chief of sinners in popular estimation, did not come in a very graceful and dignified way, when he clambered down the sycamore tree in obedience to the summons of Christ; but he was straightway saved, for the Lord of life and of glory said to him, "This day is salvation come to this house."<sup>2</sup> The question is not concerning the manner, but the fact, of your coming; and One who is both able and willing to make good every promise of His word is still saying, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mark x. 50.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xix. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xi. 28.

The word translated *come* in this sweet invitation really means "Hither! Here! This way!" as if our Lord anticipated the difficulty of so many about the manner of coming, and would say, you do not need to come at all; only look and live, only believe and be saved. Turn your thoughts to Jesus, not to your coming, for it is not the latter, no matter how you come, that saves you, but Christ. If you can't come, look; if you can't look, believe; if you can't believe, trust; if you can't trust, quit thinking about yourself, and let your mind be occupied with the death and resurrection, the invitations and promises of the Son of God, until the knowledge of His love steals into your heart.

6.—*"I fear I cannot Hold Out."*

Well you may fear it, and not only fear, but know it. If your final salvation depends on your holding out or holding on, you will most certainly be lost. Two ministers were conducting a meeting together, and at its close one of them said, "I picked up a Dublin tract on a railroad train the other day, and read it with great interest and profit, although it teaches a doctrine I don't believe." "What is the doctrine?" asked his friend. "The doctrine of the perseverance of the saints," he answered. "Neither do I believe it," was the reply. "Is it possible?" exclaimed the first; "I thought you were decided in your belief of it." "No, I am not. I once believed it, but since I have come to know more about the saints, and especially about myself, I believe all of us would go to the devil, if left to ourselves; but I believe very firmly in the perseverance of the Lord;" and they shook hands to show their fellowship in this truth.

A servant of Christ was walking down the aisle of a crowded meeting-house, and said to a pleasant-looking man, sitting at the end of a pew, "Are you a Christian?" "Yes," he answered, "thank God, I have a hold on Christ." "Thank God, I have something better than that," was the reply. "What have you better than that?" inquired the gentleman. "Thank God, Christ

has a hold on me," was the response. "All that the Father giveth Me," He says, "shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out."<sup>1</sup> This does not merely mean that He will not repel the sinner who comes to Him, but once in Him, that sinner can never be cast out.

We "are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time."<sup>2</sup> We do not keep ourselves, but we are kept, and kept by the power of God. Is that power sufficient to keep us? "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 pluck them out of My hand."<sup>3</sup> It is a poor witticism to say that we may slip through His fingers. If no one on earth or in hell can pluck us out of His hand, is He so careless that He will suffer us to slip through His fingers? We are graven upon the palms of His hands, we are in the hand, and the hand itself, "members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones."<sup>4</sup> If the feeblest believer could be lost, there would be a mutilated Christ for ever in heaven, and a dissatisfied Christ.

### 7.—*"I cannot Pray as I ought."*

There again you show that you are trying to frame a Saviour out of your prayers, and that you are not trusting in Christ as the only Saviour. Is not your inability to pray one of your sins, and does not the blood of Jesus Christ cleanse from all sin, that sin among the rest? If you could pray with the fixedness of mind, the adoration, the reverence, the gratitude, the submission you ought to feel, you would conclude that your excellent prayers had saved you; and hence an intelligent Christian likes to hear a troubled sinner say, "I can't pray, as I ought." Neither the Lord Jesus, nor the Holy Ghost by the inspired Apostles, ever told those who were dead in trespasses and sins to pray in order to be saved, but every-

<sup>1</sup> John vi. 37.

<sup>3</sup> John x. 27, 28.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Pet. i. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Eph. v. 30.



where the word is, Believe, and live, and then "pray without ceasing."<sup>1</sup>

Prayer, if it means anything, or amounts to anything, is the utterance of a living soul, the breathing of a child's desires to our heavenly Father; but we "are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," not by faith and prayer, by faith alone. Even the children say, "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;"<sup>2</sup> and it is sweet to learn that, although sometimes the burdened heart of a child can only groan, yet the groan is prayer when dictated by the Holy Spirit. Not only so, but in answering these groans God is but answering the desires of His own heart, for "He that searcheth the hearts [that is, the Lord Jesus Christ] knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to God."<sup>3</sup>

A lady complained bitterly to a servant of the Lord that she could not pray. Without telling her his purpose, he gradually led her mind away from herself to the infinite grace and finished work of Christ in behalf of prayerless sinners. Her thoughts were at last fixed upon Him to the exclusion of every other object, and suddenly she cried out, while her face beamed with joy, "Oh! I can't pray, but I know that Jesus loves me." She had been trying for twenty years to be saved by praying; and she found at last that Christ saves and not prayer. "Without faith it is impossible to please Him;"<sup>4</sup> and "whatsoever is not of faith is sin."<sup>5</sup> No one who tells you that you must pray to make God merciful, can tell you how long you must pray.

8.—"*I cannot Believe, though willing to be Saved.*"

This is not only to deny flatly every assurance and promise of God's word, and the whole work of Christ, but it is a flat contradiction of yourself. What is it to be

<sup>1</sup> 1 Thess. v. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. viii. 26.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. viii. 27.

<sup>4</sup> Heb. xi. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Rom. xiv. 23.

saved, except to be willing to be saved in God's way? "Whosoever will [is willing], let him take the water of life freely."<sup>1</sup> What was the reason men were not saved, when they heard the sweet invitations and urgent beseechings of His love? The Saviour Himself tells us, "Ye will not [ye are not willing to] come to Me, that ye might have life."<sup>2</sup> You are mistaken, dear friend. You are not willing to be saved just now, and just as you are, or you are trusting in your supposed willingness, and not in Christ.

There is a solemn truth brought out in His discourses, which is not expressed in our English Bibles. The Greek language has two classes of negatives. According to Winer, the acknowledged authority, "the former is the *objective*, the latter the *subjective* negation." In other words, the former merely announces a fact, but the latter exhibits a certain state of mind. For example, Jesus says, "He that believeth on Him is not (*hou*) condemned: but he that believeth not (*mee*), is condemned already, because he hath not (*mee*) believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."<sup>3</sup> The first *not* is a simple negative, but the last two *nots* express refusal. So it is all through the Bible, and the two little particles are never interchanged, one of ten thousand proofs, by the way, of the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures.

"If any man hear My words, and believe not (*mee*), I judge him not (*hou*); for I came not (*hou*) to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not (*mee*) My words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."<sup>4</sup> That word which shall judge you, dear sinner, will expose the deceitfulness of your heart, when you say that you are willing to be saved, but cannot believe. You are probably willing to be saved, but you are not willing to be saved in God's way, who says all the doing is DONE. The Lord Jesus who declares "I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts,"<sup>5</sup> also declares that your *cannot* is a *will not*; and so you must confess sooner or later. If you cannot believe in the right way,

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xxii. 17.<sup>4</sup> John xii. 47, 48.<sup>2</sup> John v. 40.<sup>3</sup> John iii. 18.<sup>5</sup> Rev. ii. 23.

then go to Him just as you are, and He will give you faith. "Lord, I believe ; help Thou mine unbelief."<sup>1</sup>

9.—*"I cannot Keep the Commandments."*

Of course you cannot, for if you could, you would not need Christ to save you. You mean, no doubt, the ten commandments, and have you ever noticed that there are ten *nots* in these ten commandments : Thou shalt *not* do this, that, and the other? If, therefore, you could keep them, you would still fail to attain a positive righteousness, and at best have only a negative goodness. A young ruler came to our Lord with the question, "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" As he proposed to *do* something, Jesus met him on the ground of his own choosing, and told him to keep the commandments, mentioning six out of the ten. "All these," said the young man, "have I observed from my youth," but still he was not saved nor satisfied, for if he had been, he would not have come to Christ to know what else he must do.<sup>2</sup>

But take the first two commandments here mentioned, and look at the deceitfulness of human nature, when men talk about keeping them. "Do not commit adultery." Follow up the command with the comment of Jesus, "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."<sup>3</sup> The next is, "Do not kill." Follow up the command with the comment of the Holy Ghost, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer : and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."<sup>4</sup> Multitudes are glibly repeating the ten commandments every Lord's-day, who would be appalled if the light of their far-reaching demand were flashed into the conscience. "The Lord seeth not as man seeth ; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."<sup>5</sup> He knows your vileness and helplessness, "and this is His commandment," uttered, not amid the thunders of Sinai, but

<sup>1</sup> Mark ix. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Mark x. 17-22.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. v. 28.

<sup>4</sup> 1 John iii. 15.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Sam. xvi. 7.

from the cross of Calvary, "That we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ."<sup>1</sup>

The old commandment under the law was, "Love God;" the new commandment under grace is, "Believe in God's love for you;" and surely we may add with the inspired Apostle, "His commandments are not grievous."<sup>2</sup> You are not only invited and entreated and authorized to believe on Christ, but you are commanded to believe. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent;"<sup>3</sup> and until this work is done, it is folly to talk about keeping the commandments.

10.—*"I do not Love Christ as I ought."*

No, and you never will. If you receive Him as your Saviour, you will love Him more and more, and He will become more and more the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last, in your experience. You will care less for hell than the fear of grieving Him, and less for heaven than the hope of being with Him. Personal love for a personal Saviour will become the governing principle of your conduct, and according to the measure of your faith and faithfulness, you will enter into the significance of the Apostle's language, "To me to live is Christ."<sup>4</sup> You will desire no joy apart from Him, you will feel no sorrow into which He cannot enter, and if Christ were blotted out, you would have no use for life; it would come to an abrupt and cheerless end.

But at every advance you make in likeness to His character, in conformity with His will, or in consecration to His person, you will have an increasing conviction that you do not love Him as you ought. Nay, in heaven itself, when you have been there millions of ages, as you may be walking the shining streets hand in hand with some dear saint, you will doubtless gaze upon the Saviour, and exclaim, not in humiliation and grief, but with an ever-expanding heart, and with an ever-enlarging capacity for

<sup>1</sup> 1 John iii. 23.

<sup>3</sup> John vi. 29.

<sup>2</sup> 1 John v. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Phil. i. 21.

devotion, "Oh, I ought to love Him more!" You certainly cannot love Him by trying to love Him, but by dwelling upon His love for you. "As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you : continue ye in My love"<sup>1</sup>—not in your love, but in *My* love! "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love ; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is love with us made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment : because as He is, so are we in this world."<sup>2</sup>

As Christ is to-day up in heaven, in all the acceptableness of His beloved person, and in all the value of His precious blood, so is the weakest believer, though still in this world. The measure of His nearness to the Father's heart is the measure of our nearness, and it is not a question of our love to Him that ought to engage our attention, but of His love for us. If we would have our love increase, we must have much to do with Him, and if we would have delightful seasons in prayer, let us, instead of begging all the time, tell the Father everything we know about Jesus. This is communion.

11.—"*I do not know that He will save Me personally.*"

He says, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that WHOSOEVER believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."<sup>3</sup> Does not this "whosoever" include you, and is it not far better than the mention of your name? There may be some other person in the world who has precisely the same name, and therefore if your name had been uttered by the Lord Jesus, you could not have been certain that you were the one in view. But *whosoever* certainly embraces you within the limits of its generous and gracious offer. Suppose that in the recent frightful famine in China, a great store-house had been filled with provisions, and over the entrance the words had been written, "Whosoever will may be freely supplied ;"—would it not have been mad-

<sup>1</sup> John xv. 9.

<sup>2</sup> 1 John iv. 16, 17.

<sup>3</sup> John iii. 16.

ness, if the starving wretches had refused to apply for relief, because their names were not publicly announced? Suppose you were in the State's prison for crime with a thousand other convicts, and the proclamation were issued, "Whosoever will confess his guilt" shall be pardoned; would you argue that forgiveness could not be intended for you?

Come, dear, dying sinner, this is a very simple thing. The Lord Jesus offers to save *you*, even if you are the chief of sinners; and why not believe Him, why not trust Him, why not take Him at His word, without waiting to turn over a new leaf in the same old book of your life, without waiting to turn over another leaf of this book, without waiting one moment? "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name **WHOSOEVER** believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins;"<sup>1</sup> and then comes the next promise, "**WHATSOEVER** ye shall ask in My name, that will I do."<sup>2</sup> *Whosoever* is on the outside of the door; *whatsoever* on the inside. "*Whosoever*" shows that salvation is *free*; "*whatsoever*" that it is *full*.

If you are afraid that you are not one of the elect, just remember that you have nothing whatever to do with election, until you are saved. It is the children's bread. Over the door of the entrance into life is written for the sinner, "**WHOSOEVER** will, let him take the water of life freely;"<sup>3</sup> but once the entrance is made by faith, you find written above the wall over the table for the saint, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee."<sup>4</sup>

### 12.—"*Well, I will keep on Trying.*"

Keep on trying to do what? To make God merciful? The believer can say, "God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us [not for our great love wherewith we loved Him], even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace

<sup>1</sup> Acts x. 43.

<sup>3</sup> Rev. xxii. 17.

<sup>2</sup> John xiv. 13.

<sup>4</sup> Jer. xxxi. 3.

ye are saved)."<sup>1</sup> To make yourself better, and thus commend yourself to His favour? Of the Jews who were very zealous it is said, that "they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."<sup>2</sup> Suppose you were in urgent need of money to save your property, or your reputation, or your very life, and some one should tell you to go to the bank, and keep on trying, and that you would get it, if you were earnest enough, could all your trying obtain relief? The more you tried, and the more earnest you were, the more certainly the president or cashier would have the police remove you from the bank, until you brought a cheque signed with the name of a person entitled to receive the money.

Suppose such a person should come to you with the cheque, and offer it to you without money and without price, and press it upon your acceptance, would you still stay in distress, wringing your hands, and exclaiming, I am trying to get it? You would just take it, and that would be the end of your anxiety, unless indeed you did not believe that your friend had any money in the bank. The Lord Jesus is offering you a free salvation this very moment, and it will not do you a bit of good to keep on trying, until you go to God in His name, believing that He is both able and willing to save you, according to the promise of His word. "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be SURE to all the seed."<sup>3</sup> Do not keep on trying any more, but keep on trusting for ever.

There is a vast amount of ignorance in those who tell inquiring sinners to keep on trying, and there is a vast amount of self-righteousness in inquiring sinners who propose to keep on trying until they get forgiveness. The first thing the dead soul needs is life, and it has already been shown in the foregoing pages that "He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life." All trying, therefore, before believing, is

<sup>1</sup> Eph. ii. 4, 5.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. x. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. iv. 16.

like the spasmodic action of a corpse under a galvanic battery.

13.—“*But must I not Strive to enter into Heaven?*”

Jesus says, “Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”<sup>1</sup> But why is it called a strait gate? Simply because there is not room enough for Christ and your own righteousness too. Hence He adds, “Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple.”<sup>2</sup> The Greek is, “that forsaketh not the things of himself;” and Dr. Young properly translates it, “Every one of you who doth not take leave of all that he himself hath, is not able to be My disciple.” In another place the Saviour says, “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself [abjure, renounce, disown, set aside self], and take up his cross, and follow Me.”<sup>3</sup> It is easy enough to get through the strait gate, if you will let the good Shepherd lay you on His shoulders, and carry you home, rejoicing as a trophy of His redeeming love.

Observe, He does not say that many will seek to enter in *at the strait gate*, and shall not be able; but many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able, because they do not enter at the strait gate; and the time they will not be able to enter in is when the Master is risen up, and shut to the door. “I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved;”<sup>4</sup> but the fact that Christ is the door implies the forsaking or leaving of self, in order to trust Him alone for salvation. “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”<sup>5</sup> What is there about a little child that makes it a proper symbol of those who enter the kingdom of heaven? It does not think of self; it just rests upon the bosom that shelters it, without doubt or fear or questioning.

A girl of fourteen years of age was dying with consumption. One day an officer of the church which she had

<sup>1</sup> Luke xiii. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xiv. 33.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xvi. 24.

<sup>4</sup> John x. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Matt. xviii. 3.



attended was trying to comfort her, and said, "You will be an angel soon." "No," she replied, "I shall never be an angel. I used to sing the Sunday-school hymn, 'I want to be an angel,' but I will never sing it again, for the Holy Spirit has taught me better. I shall be far, far above the angels, seated with Christ on His throne." The Christian, surprised, asked, "When did you come to Jesus, Katie?" "I did not come at all," she answered; "He came all the way to me, and took me up in His loving arms." Deeply affected, he said, "Well, I am sure He will save you." "No, no," she instantly responded, "He *has* saved me."

14.—*"Must I not Work Out my salvation with fear and trembling?"*

You certainly must, but you cannot work it *out*, until God has worked it *in* you; and this is the very reason given for working it out: "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."<sup>1</sup> To whom was this Epistle sent? "To all the saints in Christ Jesus [the saved and separated ones *in* Him] which are at Philippi."<sup>2</sup> Among these was the Philippian jailer, who was convicted at midnight, and the same hour of the night was baptized, he and all his, straightway, "and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house."<sup>3</sup> To all of them it was said, "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ;"<sup>4</sup> "My God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory, by Christ Jesus;"<sup>5</sup> and some of them, at least, knew positively that their names were "in the book of life."<sup>6</sup>

The working out of their salvation, therefore, was not inconsistent with the knowledge of their certain salvation, nor was the working it out with fear and trembling inconsistent with the enjoyment of that knowledge. "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord." "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again, I say, Rejoice." "Be careful for

<sup>1</sup> Phil. ii. 12, 13.

<sup>4</sup> Phil. i. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Phil. i. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Phil. iv. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Acts xvi. 25-33.

<sup>6</sup> Phil. iv. 3.

nothing ; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep [garrison] your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Such is the tenor of the whole Epistle, which may be called the epistle of joy. Again and again for nearly a score of times do the words *joy* and *rejoice* ring through it, while it does not contain the word *sin* once.

Salvation in this Epistle is looked at as not yet completed, until the redemption of the body at the coming of the Lord ; and it was the joy arising from the certainty of the promised and full salvation, that stimulated them to work it out with filial fear and earnest solicitude, remembering that they were still on the battle-field, and still on their pilgrim journey. But they also knew that their citizenship was in heaven, from whence they looked with eager anticipation for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. "Your own salvation" is in contrast, not with God's working in them, but with the Apostle's absence, more than supplied by God's abiding presence, which according to His promise and oath would be with them always.

15.—"*Does not the Bible tell of some who Turn Back?*"

The Bible tells of some professed Christians of whom it is said, "It is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again ; and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire."<sup>1</sup> But you will observe that the dog was never anything but a dog, and the sow had never ceased to be a sow. You may wash a sow, but the washing does not any more impart a new nature, than baptism imparts a new nature to a sinner ; and if a sow is only washed, of course she will go back to her wallowing in the mire at the first opportunity. Nay, the temporary cleanness does not sit gracefully on her, and she is restive until she can return to her wallowing, because she loves the mire.

But if you could communicate a lamb nature, just so

<sup>1</sup> 2 Pet. ii, 22.

long as the new nature is in the ascendancy, it is certain she will not return to her wallowing. A lamb may fall into the mire, but it will bleat piteously and struggle earnestly until it gets out, and move more cautiously lest it slip again into the place of its humiliation and suffering. It is nowhere asserted in the Bible that the real children of God may or can finally fall away, and be lost; but they are faithfully warned against a careless and worldly walk, which will prove to them that they have never been made partakers of the divine nature. Even the warnings are uniformly prefaced with an *if*; but there are no *ifs* in the clear and explicit assurances of a present and a certain salvation to the sincere believer. No passage that presents in the form of an admonition the possibility of his relapse can be set over against the numerous and unequivocal declarations of his eternal safety in the hand of the living Christ.

Yet you must not forget the truth already stated in these pages concerning the "old man" and the "new man," the "flesh" and the "spirit" in the believer. If you indulge the flesh, you will get very far away from God, and, like the prodigal, may fain fill your belly with the husks that the swine do eat; but your safety is found in heeding the injunction of the Holy Ghost, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."<sup>1</sup> There will be no danger of turning back so long as you keep your eye upon Him in the exercise of the same faith that led you to look to Him for pardon, and so long as you do not minister to the gratification of your fleshly nature.

16.—*"May I not be among those who Fall Away?"*

Yes, if you are only a professing Christian; no, if you are a possessing Christian, that is, possessing Christ by real faith in Him as your Saviour. Study carefully the chapter which contains the startling words, "if they shall fall away."<sup>2</sup> There is not space to quote it here, but you

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xiii. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. vi.

will notice that it was addressed to Hebrews claiming to be Christians, who had made no progress in the divine life. They remained babes, and had need that one should teach them again the first principles of the oracles of God. The Holy Ghost, therefore, urges them to leave the elementary principles, with which they were familiar as Jews, and press on unto perfection. He then enumerates certain experiences which stop short of regeneration, for he does not describe those of whom he speaks as born again, or as having believed in Christ. "It is impossible, . . . IF they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance." They relapse into Judaism by a deliberate and wilful rejection of Christ, whom they crucify to themselves afresh, and put to an open shame.

"But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak." This is followed by one of the plainest statements of the safety of the believer, found in all the Scriptures. "That by two immutable things [the promise and the oath of Jehovah], 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 : which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil ; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus," going before as a herald to announce our coming. The chapter does not teach that true Christians may fall away ; it does teach that if those mentioned fall away, it is impossible to restore them.

Christians are described as those "who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time."<sup>1</sup> They do not keep themselves, but they are kept, and kept by the power of God through faith. All the resources that are at God's command are pledged to their preservation, and "He that keepeth thee will not slumber."<sup>2</sup> But they are kept by thinking of Him. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee ; because he trusteth in Thee."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. i. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. cxxi. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Isa. xxvi. 3.

17.—“*Does not James teach that we are Justified by Works?*”

James writes, “What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? . . . Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.”<sup>1</sup> Upon these two little words, *say* and *see*, the meaning of the whole passage turns. Paul and James teach precisely the same doctrine, only one shows how we are justified before God, and the other tells how we are justified before men. Paul over and over declares that we are justified before God by faith alone, without works; James asks, what doth it profit, though a man *say* he hath faith? Paul shows that God sees we are justified only by faith, James adds, *YE* see, or men see, that we are justified by works, and not by faith only. Of course men see that we are justified by works, for there is no other way by which it can be seen by men.

Paul and James, or to speak correctly, the Holy Ghost by Paul and James, must bear the same testimony. Abraham and Rahab are cited as illustrations of the way we are justified, in the inspired writings of both Apostles, but the former is declared to have been justified by faith before God, long previous to the birth of Isaac.<sup>2</sup> Many years afterward he is said to have been justified before men, when Isaac was offered upon the altar.<sup>3</sup> So it was with Rahab. In the epistle to the Hebrews, only her faith is mentioned, when, believing the testimony of the spies, she received them with peace.<sup>4</sup> But in James her works are mentioned, when she sent them out another way, from the pursuit of the king of Jericho. So there is not the slightest contradiction or conflict between these two witnesses for the gospel, “as the truth is in Jesus.” God alone can see the principle of faith, lodged by the Holy Spirit in the human breast, but men see its outward manifestations in its working by love.

The place which works occupy in the redemption of God's people is plainly set forth where the Holy Ghost

<sup>1</sup> Jas. ii. 14-26.<sup>2</sup> Gen. xv. 1-6; Rom. iv. 1-5.<sup>3</sup> Gen. xxii. ; Jas. ii. 21.<sup>4</sup> Heb. xi. 31.

says, "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men."<sup>1</sup> He does not say that these things are good and profitable unto God, but unto men; and they which have *believed*, and therefore are justified by grace, as in the preceding verse, must be careful to maintain good works.

18.—*"Must I not engage in Good Works?"*

Undoubtedly. Not, however, that you may be saved, but because you are saved; not that you may obtain life but as the manifestation of the life received by faith alone. There are three kinds of works mentioned in the Bible: wicked works, that need no description; dead works, that however amiable and attractive in themselves, do not spring from the living principle of faith; and good works, that are acceptable to God, because the person has already been accepted through the offered and accepted sacrifice of the Son of God. Hence in the gracious acceptance of any little service for His name, God is giving proof of His acceptance of Christ, who says, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."<sup>2</sup>

Elsewhere He says, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life;"<sup>3</sup> and therefore we are just to let Christ shine in our life. He does not tell *us* to see our good works, but to keep our eye singly fixed on Him, so that we may reflect His likeness, and show to the praise of His grace that we are "created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained [margin, prepared] that we should walk in them."<sup>4</sup> He "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tit. iii. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. v. 16.

<sup>3</sup> John viii. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Eph. ii. 10.

<sup>5</sup> Tit. ii. 14.

It is said that just before the civil war in this country, a wealthy gentleman, who was walking the streets of a southern city, had his attention called to a group of negro slaves about to be sold. One of them was weeping bitterly, and when he asked her why she was crying, she replied that she did not know what kind of master was going to buy her, nor where she was going. He said nothing more, but when she was placed upon the block for sale, he bid a higher price for her than any one in the crowd, and she was knocked down to him, as his property. She was still weeping, because she did not know him, nor where she was going, until he gently said: "I have not bought you to make a slave of you; I have bought you to set you free; go where you please." She instantly turned to him with the glad cry, "Let me go with you; I will serve you all my life." But she served him, not to be redeemed; she served him with a free and happy heart because she *was* redeemed.

19.—*"I do not know what Church to Join."*

It is to be regretted that any such phrase has been invented as "joining the Church," or "members of the Church." We are members of Christ, when we believe on Him as our Saviour, and "by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body;"<sup>1</sup> and therefore as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office, "so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."<sup>2</sup> This is a relationship established by the great Head of the Church, and we are bound to exhibit it in practical fellowship with all Christians of every name and sect. We do not make, nor can we destroy, the unity He has formed, but we are responsible "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."<sup>3</sup>

Unite then with that Church which most faithfully adheres to His word, which most loyally maintains the honour of His person, which most clearly presents His grace as the only source of salvation, which most highly

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. xii. 4, 5.

<sup>3</sup> Eph. iv. 3.

exalts the merits of His precious blood, which most generously treats His believing people of all denominations. Avoid as you would a plague-spot the bigotry and sectarianism and Phariseism of those who claim that they constitute the only true church, and esteem it your privilege to recognise as brethren in the Lord all who have obtained like precious faith with yourself in our common Saviour. Do not permit family and social considerations to determine your choice in the selection of your place of public worship and service, but go where your soul can be fed "with the finest of the wheat,"<sup>1</sup> where you can best work for the Master who has redeemed you, and where the conditions are most favourable for your growth "in grace, and the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."<sup>2</sup>

One of the saddest signs of the times is the tenacity with which men and women, claiming to be Christians, cling to their denominations and names, even when their pastors are dishonouring the Lord Jesus Christ, preaching clap-trap sermons, aiming at popularity, receiving unconverted people into the church, and never giving their hearers a morsel of pure gospel. Sectarian or ecclesiastical names are very little things, and are all to be dropped at the grave, and at the coming of Christ; but there is one name which is above every name, and you will deeply grieve the Holy Spirit of God, unless you go where Jesus alone is exalted "Lord of all."

20.—*"How shall I Live as a Christian?"*

"I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world."<sup>3</sup> "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The Spirit that He placed in us jealously desireth

Ps. lxxxi. 16.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. xii. 1, 2.



us?"<sup>1</sup> "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."<sup>2</sup> "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? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."<sup>3</sup>

These passages settle at once and for ever a thousand questions that arise in the mind of a conscientious Christian concerning his unavoidable relations to the world. Shall I do this, that, and the other thing? May I go here and there? Is there any harm in certain books, amusements, business associations? Be answered in the words of the Holy Ghost, "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."<sup>4</sup> "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him."<sup>5</sup> "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."<sup>6</sup> "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not Himself."<sup>7</sup> "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."<sup>8</sup> "Lord, what wilt THOU have me to do?"<sup>9</sup> Let this be your daily cry.

If you can go to the theatre solely to please the Lord Jesus Christ, go. If you can dance solely to honour the Lord Jesus Christ, dance your heels off. If you can spend your time in reading novels solely to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, read them. Take Him with you, whatever you do, wherever you go, and let Him so enter into every joy and every sorrow, every purpose and every plan, you can always say in unswerving loyalty to His person, "To me to live is Christ."<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jas. iv. 4, 5, Alford's translation.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. x. 31.

<sup>6</sup> Rom. xiv. 8.

<sup>7</sup> Rom. xv. 1-3.

<sup>9</sup> Acts ix. 6.

<sup>2</sup> 1 John ii. 15.

<sup>5</sup> Col. iii. 17.

<sup>8</sup> Gal. i. 10.

<sup>10</sup> Phil. i. 21.

21.—*“What is to be my Aim in Life?”*

“Wherefore, also, we are ambitious, whether at home or away from home, to be well-pleasing to Him.”<sup>1</sup> “He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.”<sup>2</sup> “No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.”<sup>3</sup> “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.”<sup>4</sup> “Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we wrought, but that we receive a full reward.”<sup>5</sup>

It is the ambition of one who knows something at least of what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for him, and something of what the Lord Jesus Christ is for him, so to live that he may please such a Saviour. It is not a question of escaping hell, it is not a question of entering heaven at last, but he aims to think and speak and act in a manner that will receive the approval of his Master at the second advent. He is looking for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, and he would rather in that day see the smile of the Lord flashing glory upon him, and hear the plaudit of the Lord, “Well done, good and faithful servant,”<sup>6</sup> than to own all the riches and kingdoms of the world.

Hence the Apostle could say, “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every one that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means,

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. v. 9, Rotherham's translation.<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. v. 15.<sup>3</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 4.<sup>4</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 9.<sup>5</sup> 2 John 8.<sup>6</sup> Matt. xxv. 23.

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when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway,"<sup>1</sup> or disapproved, as Rotherham and Young properly translate it. Paul never expressed a doubt of his salvation after his eventful journey to Damascus, but he wanted to be approved at the coming of the Lord; and this should be the aim of every believer.

"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. ix. 24-27.

<sup>2</sup> Jude 24, 25.

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