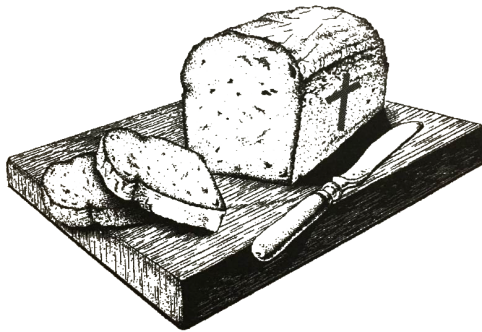

Give Us This Day Our . . .

Daily Good News

VOLUME I



*Three Months of Spiritual Food
for Daily Reading from*
A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner

Glad Tidings Publishers
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Give Us This Day Our Daily Good News, Volume I

Alonzo T. Jones and Ellet J. Waggoner

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The original material has been condensed to make the message more clear and understandable. There has been no change in the wording.

Preface

The writings of Ellet J. Waggoner and Alonzo T. Jones have recently been discovered as a once-lost gold mine of almost incredible Good News truth. Especially during recent years, thousands of readers, young and old, in many lands around the world, eagerly grasp for every book or article by these two authors that gets into print.

As editors of the Signs of the Times in the last decade of the 19th century, they broke through centuries of foggy confusion into the pure sunlight of New Testament gospel concepts. On almost every page of their writings one comes across refreshing insights of Good News truth that make one's daily Christian walk more light-hearted and joyous. Totally unlike in disposition and personality, yet complementary in their ministry, Jones and Waggoner were in complete harmony in their understanding of the gospel.

Their view of justification by faith, for example, was unique in that it transcended both Calvinism and Arminianism. They saw that by His sacrifice Christ did something for every man, woman, and child in the world. They saw how Scripture says that Christ is already "the Savior of all men," that He has "tasted death for every man," even the second death; that Christ died for the world, not only for "the elect;" that our sins and guilt have already been laid upon Him. One has to resist and reject His on-going grace in order to be lost. Their view of the gospel made Paul's letters to the Romans and the Galatians come alive.

In fact, they saw Good News on almost every page of the Bible. The cross of Christ is a revelation of a love that passes understanding. The one who believes and appreciates it is motivated henceforth to a life of unending happiness in devotion to Christ.

This adds up to something astounding that thrills one's soul forever: it's easy to be saved, and it's hard to be lost, if you understand how good the Good News is. The Lord is trying to get you into His kingdom; He is not trying to keep you out. Let Him do His work in your heart; don't beat Him off.

Here are delicious morsels of daily Good News. May you enjoy reading them as much as we have enjoyed compiling them.

—*Glad Tidings Publishers*

*More reading from gifted
authors Jones and Waggoner*

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- Lessons on Faith
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“To the death of Christ we owe even this earthly life.

The bread we eat is the purchase of His broken body.

The water we drink is bought by His spilled blood.

*Never one, saint or sinner, eats his daily food, but he is nourished
by the body and the blood of Christ.*

The cross of Calvary is stamped on every loaf.

It is reflected in every water spring.”

1

Burdens are lifted by glorious good news

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. . . . My yoke is easy and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:28, 30).

Under the reign of grace it is just as easy to do right as under the reign of sin it is easy to do wrong. This must be so, for if there is not more power in grace than there is in sin, there can be no salvation from sin.

But there is salvation from sin. No one who believes Christianity can deny this.

Salvation from sin depends upon there being more power in grace than there is in sin. It cannot possibly be otherwise. Wherever the power of grace can have control, it will be easy to do right.

No one ever naturally found it difficult to do wrong, because man is naturally enslaved to the power of sin that is absolute in its reign. And so long as that power has sway, it is not only difficult, it is impossible to do the good that he knows, and that he would.

But let a mightier power than that have sway, then is it not plain enough that it will be just as easy to serve the will of the mightier power as it was to serve the will of the other power when it reigned?

But grace is not simply more powerful than is sin. If this were all, even then there would be good cheer to every sinner in the world. But there is much more power in grace than there is in sin. For “where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”

So [there is] much more hope for every sinner in the world! Whence comes grace? From God. “Grace be unto you . . . from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” Whence comes sin? From the devil, of course. Well, it is as plain as A B C that there is much more power in grace than there is in sin, as there is more power in God than there is in the devil.



2

Why do we think it's so hard?

"I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads'" (Acts 26:14).

Where the difficulty comes is that so many people try to serve God with the power of Satan. But that can never be done. Men cannot gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles. The tree must be made good, root and branch. It must be made new. "You must be born again."

Let no one ever attempt to serve God with anything but the present, living power of God that makes him a new creature; with nothing but the much more abundant grace that condemns sin in the flesh, and reigns through righteousness unto eternal life. Then the service of God will indeed be in "newness of life." Then it will be found that His yoke is indeed "easy" and His burden "light." Then His service will be found indeed to be with "joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Did Jesus ever find it difficult to do right? Every one will instantly say, No. But why? He took flesh and blood the same as ours. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). And the kind of flesh that He was made in this world was precisely such as was in this world. "In all things He had to be made like His brethren" (Hebrews 2:17). "In all things." It does not say, In all things but one. There is no exception. He was of Himself weak as we are, for He said, "I can of Myself do nothing" (John 5:30).

Why then did He find it always easy to do right?—Because He never trusted to Himself, but His trust was always in God alone. He always sought to serve God, only with the power of God.

But as He is, so are we in this world. He has left us an example, that we should follow His steps. "It is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure," as well as in Him (Philippians 2:13). All power in heaven and in earth is given unto Him; and He desires that you may be strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power.

3

Everything that Christ had, you have

"Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power" (Colossians 2:8-10).

"In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily," and He strengthens you with might by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your heart by faith, that you may be "filled with all the fullness of God."

True, Christ partook of the divine nature, and so do you if you are a child of promise, and not of the flesh. By the promises you are partakers of the divine nature.

There was nothing given to Him in this world, and He had nothing in this world, that is not freely given to you, or that you may not have. All this is in order

- that you may walk in newness of life;
- that henceforth you may not serve sin;
- that you may be the servant of righteousness only;
- that you may be freed from sin;
- that sin many not have dominion over you;
- that you may glorify God on the earth;
- and that you may be like Jesus.

Therefore "to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift . . . till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:7, 13).

And I "plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain" (2 Corinthians 6:1).

4

The gift of His boundless grace is already given to you

“The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:11-13, NIV).

This boundless grace is all given, given freely, to “every one of us.” To you and me, just as we are. We need just that much grace to make us what the Lord wants us to be. And He is just so kind as to give it all to us freely, that we may be indeed just what He wants us to be.

The Lord wants every one of us to be saved, and that with the fullness of salvation. And therefore He has given to every one of us the very fullness of grace, because it is grace that brings salvation. It is written, “the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.” Thus the Lord wants all to be saved, and therefore He gave all of His grace, bringing salvation to all. The marginal reading of this text is just as true as the reading in the verse itself: “The grace of God that brings salvation to all men, has appeared.” [Editor’s note: the Greek of Titus 2:11 allows this reading.]

All the grace of God is given freely to every one, bringing salvation to all. Whether all or any one will receive it, that is another question. What we are studying now is the truth and the fact that God has given it. Having given it all, He is dear even though men may reject it.

God has sent grace and peace, bringing righteousness and salvation to all men—even to you, whoever you are, and to me. Do not read this as a complimentary phrase or mere passing salutation, but as the creative word that brings to you personally all the blessings of the peace of God. It is to us the same word that Jesus spoke to the woman: “Your sins are forgiven.” “Go in peace.” (Luke 7:48, 50.)



5

“Be, perfect” is a promise more than a command

“Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven . . . You shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:44, 48).

The Lord wants us to be perfect; and so it is written: “You shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.” He has given us, every one, all the grace that He has, bringing the fullness of His salvation, that every one may be presented perfect in Christ Jesus.

The very purpose of this gift of His boundless grace is that we may be made like Jesus, who is the image of God. It is written: “To each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift . . . till we all come . . . to a perfect man” (Ephesians 4:7, 13).

Do you want to be like Jesus? Then

Receive the grace that He has so fully and so freely given.

Receive it in the measure in which He has given it, not in the measure in which you think you deserve it.

Yield yourself to it, that it may work in you and for you the wondrous purpose for which it is given, and it will do it.

It will make you like Jesus.

It will accomplish the purpose and the wish of Him who has given it.

“Yield yourselves unto God.”

Let no professed Christian take counsel of his own imperfections and say that it is impossible for a Christian to live a sinless life. It is impossible for a true Christian, one who has full faith, to live any other kind of life. “How can we who died to sin still live in it?” (Romans 6:2, RSV).



6

*Grace will do its work
if we don't resist*

“As by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous. . . . Where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 5:19-21).

Can every believer have grace enough to keep him free from sinning?—Yes.

Indeed, everybody in the world can have enough to keep him from sinning. Enough is given; and it is given for this purpose.

If anyone does not have it, it is not because enough has not been given, but because he does not take that which has been given.

The measure of the gift of Christ is Himself wholly, and that is the measure of “all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.”

The boundless measure of the fullness of the Godhead is the only thing that can express the proportion of grace that is given to every one in this world, in order that sin shall not have dominion over you, because you are under grace.

It is given for “the perfecting of the saints” (Ephesians 4:12, KJV), for the building up of the body of Christ. This grace is given to every one where sin abounds; and it brings salvation to every one to whom it is given.

As boundless grace is given to every one, bringing salvation to the extent of its own full measure, then if any one does not have boundless salvation, why is it?—Plainly, only because he will not take that which is given. If sin still reigns in any one, where lies the fault?—Only in this, that he will not allow the grace to do for him that which it is given to do. By unbelief he frustrates the grace of God. So far as he is concerned, the grace has been given in vain if it is not bringing the believer onward toward a perfect man in “the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

The grace of God is fully able to accomplish that for which it is given, if only it is allowed to work.

7

*What is it that frustrates
the grace of God?*

“Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts . . . Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God” (Hebrews 3:7, 8, 12).

We have seen that grace being from God, the power of grace is the power of God, able to accomplish all for which it is given,—the salvation of the soul, deliverance from sin and from the power of it, the reign of righteousness in the life, and the perfecting of the believer. All this—if only it can have place in the heart and in the life to work according to the will of God.

But the power of God is “unto salvation to every one who believes.” Unbelief frustrates the grace of God.

Many believe and receive the grace of God for salvation from sins that are past, but are content with that and do not give it the same place to reign against the [present] power of sin, that they did to save from sins of the past. This too is another phase of unbelief. As to the one great final object of grace—the perfection of the life in the likeness of Christ—they receive the grace of God in vain.

God does not want any one to receive grace in vain, lest its blessed working be misrepresented to the world so people be further hindered from yielding to it. When grace is received in vain, offense is given in many things. Yet when it is not received in vain, “no offense” will be given “in anything” and the ministry will be blest.

Our sins, our weaknesses, were upon Christ. For every soul the victory has been gained, and the enemy has been disarmed. We have only to accept the victory which Christ has won. Our faith in it makes it real to us. The loss of faith puts us outside the reality, and the old body of sin looms up again. That which is destroyed by faith is built up again by unbelief.

8

*What it means to receive
the grace of God by faith*

“He says: ‘In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you’ (2 Corinthians 6:2).

How complete and all-pervading is the reign of grace in the life where it is not received in vain?

The Lord has set down the following list embracing “all things” in which we shall approve ourselves unto God. Read it carefully (2 Corinthians 6:4-10):

“In much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings; by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well-known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.”

This list covers all the experiences that can ever enter the life of any believer in this world.

Where the grace of God is not received in vain, that grace will so take possession and control of the life that every experience will be turned to making us “approved unto God,” and building us up in perfection “to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

“We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain” (2 Corinthians 6:1).



9

*What to do with the
problem of sinful flesh*

“What I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do . . . It is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells. . . . O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (Romans 7:15-25).

There is a very bothersome mistake made by many in thinking that when they are converted, their old sinful flesh is blotted out.

In other words, they think that they are to be delivered from the “flesh” by having it taken away from them altogether.

Then when they find this is not so, that the same old flesh with its inclinations, besetments, enticements, is still there, they become discouraged and think they were not converted at all.

If they would think a little they ought to see that that is all a mistake.

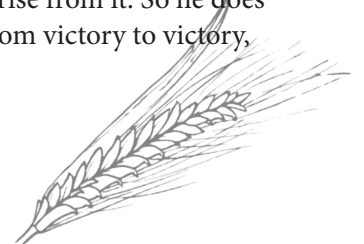
Did you not have the same body, the same flesh and bones and blood, after you were converted as before? Everybody will promptly say, Yes.

Further: Was not that flesh of the same quality as before, still natural flesh? Yes. Is it not still sinful flesh as it was before?

To this last question many are inclined to answer “No,” when it must be a decided “Yes.” And this “Yes” must be maintained so long as we continue in this natural body.

The converted person is so thoroughly convinced that in his flesh dwells no good thing that he will never allow a shadow of confidence in the flesh. His sole dependence is upon something other than the flesh—upon the Holy Spirit of God.

Being everlastingly watchful, suspicious, and thoroughly distrustful of the flesh, he is prepared to beat back and crush down without mercy every impulse or suggestion that may arise from it. So he does not fail or become discouraged, but goes on from victory to victory, and from strength to strength.



10

What conversion does, and what it does not do

“We . . . worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh” (Philippians 3:3).

Conversion does not put new flesh upon the old spirit, but a new Spirit within the old flesh. It does not propose to bring new flesh to the old mind, but a new mind to the old flesh.

Deliverance and victory are not gained by having the human nature taken away, but by receiving the divine nature to subdue and have dominion over the human. Not by the taking away of the sinful flesh, but by the sending of the sinless Spirit to conquer and condemn sin in the flesh.

The Scripture does not say, Let this flesh be upon you, which was also upon Christ; but it does say, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5).

The Scripture does not say, Be transformed by the renewing of your flesh, but it does say, “Be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2). We shall be translated by the renewing of our flesh; but we must be transformed by the renewing of our minds.

The pagan proverb has it that God helps those who help themselves. The truth is that God helps those who cannot help themselves: “I was brought low, and He helped me” (Psalm 116:6, KJV). No one ever cries in vain for help. When the cry goes up for help, the Deliverer is at hand; and so, although sin is working death in us by all the power of the law, we may exclaim, “Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:57, KJV).



11

How not to get discouraged by the flesh

“What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh” (Romans 8:3).

The Lord Jesus took the same flesh and blood, the same human nature, that we have,—flesh just like our sinful flesh. And because of sin, and by the power of the Spirit of God through the divine mind that was in Him, [He] “condemned sin in the flesh.”

Therein is our deliverance. Therein is our victory. “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5). “I will give you a new heart and put a new Spirit within you” (Ezekiel 36:26).

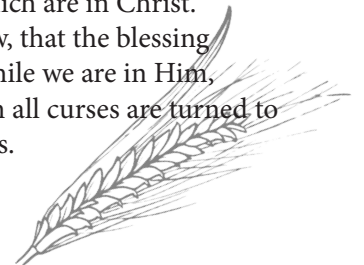
Do not be discouraged at the sight of sinfulness in the flesh. It is only in the light of the Spirit of God, and by the discernment of the mind of Christ, that you can see so much sinfulness in your flesh. And the more sinfulness you see in your flesh, the more of the Spirit of God you have.

This is a sure test!

Then, when you see sinfulness abundant in you, thank the Lord that you have so much of the Spirit of God that you can see so much sinfulness. And know of a surety that when sinfulness abounds, grace much more abounds in order that “as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 5:21).

While knowing the law, we are united in marriage to sin. This sin is in our flesh, since they who are married are one flesh. . . . But sin has in it death; for “the sting of death is sin” (1 Corinthians 15:56). . . . What a terrible condition!

[But] there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ. Why? Because He received the curse of the law, that the blessing might come on us. Nothing can come to us while we are in Him, without first passing through Him; but in Him all curses are turned to blessings, and sin is displaced by righteousness.



12

Learning not to look at yourself

“We do not lose heart . . . Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen” (2 Corinthians 4:16-18).

Some say, “I find something to condemn me every time I look at myself” To be sure! The freedom from condemnation is not in ourselves, but in Christ Jesus. We are to look at Him instead of at ourselves. There will never be a time when one will not find condemnation in looking at himself.

The fall of Satan was due to his looking at himself. The restoration for those whom he has made to fall is only through looking to Jesus. “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up” (John 3:14). The serpent was lifted up to be looked at. Those who looked were healed. Even so with Christ.

Getting into Christ is only the beginning, not the end, of Christian life. It is the entrance to the school where we are to learn of Him. He takes the ungodly man with all his evil habits and forgives all his sins, so that he is counted as though he never had sinned. Then He continues to give him His own life, by which he may overcome his evil habits.

Association with Christ will more and more reveal to us our failings, just as association with a learned man will make us conscious of our ignorance. As a faithful witness, He tells us of our failings. But it is not to condemn us. We receive sympathy, not condemnation, from Him. It is this sympathy that gives us courage, and enables us to overcome.

When the Lord points out a defect in our characters, it is the same as saying to us, “There is something that you are in need of, and I have it for you.” When we learn to look at reproof in this way, we shall rejoice in it instead of being discouraged.

13

The High Priest’s job: cleansing His sanctuary

“And he said to me, ‘For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed’” (Daniel 8:14).

The service in the earthly sanctuary shows that the sanctuary itself could not be cleansed until each of the worshipers had been cleansed. It could not be cleansed so long as there was pouring into it, by the confessions of the people and the intercession of the priests, a stream of iniquities, transgressions, and sins. The cleansing of the sanctuary was the taking away from the sanctuary all the transgressions of the people which had been taken into it during the service of the year. And this stream must be stopped at its fountain in the hearts and lives of the worshipers, before the sanctuary itself could be cleansed.

Therefore the first work in the cleansing of the sanctuary was the cleansing of the people—bringing in everlasting righteousness in the heart and life of each one of the people themselves. When the stream that flowed into the sanctuary was thus stopped at its source, then alone could the sanctuary itself be cleansed from the sins which had flowed into it.

By this we are taught that the service of our great High Priest in the cleansing of the true sanctuary must be preceded by the cleansing of each one of the believers. Transgression must be finished, an end of sins and reconciliation for all iniquity must be made in the heart’s experience of every believer in Jesus, before the cleansing of the true sanctuary can be accomplished.

This is the object of the true priesthood [of Christ] in the true sanctuary. The sacrifices, the priesthood, in the sanctuary which was a figure for the time then present could not really take away sin. The priesthood of Christ in the true sanctuary does take away sins forever, does perfect “forever those who are being sanctified” (Hebrews 10:14).

14

He does His work; we cooperate

“The tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls . . . And you shall do no work on that same day for it is the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the Lord your God” (Leviticus 23:27, 28).

In the “copies of the true” in the sanctuary service made visible, the round of service was completed annually. The cleansing of the sanctuary was the finishing of that figurative, annual service. This was the taking away from the sanctuary all “uncleanness of the children of Israel . . . because of their transgressions, for all their sins” (Leviticus 16:16).

In that day, which was the Day of Atonement, whosoever of the people did not take part in the cleansing of the sanctuary by searching of heart, confession, and putting away of sin, was cut off forever. Thus the cleansing of the sanctuary extended to the people as truly as it did the sanctuary.

And this was all “symbolic for the present time” (Hebrews 9:9), or “time then present” (KJV). That sanctuary was a figure of the true, which is the sanctuary and ministry of Christ. And the time of this cleansing of the true is declared in the words of the Wonderful Numberer to be “for two thousand and three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed” (Daniel 8:14), which is the sanctuary of Christ.

Indeed, the sanctuary of which Christ is the High Priest is the only one that could be cleansed because it is the only sanctuary of which Christ is High Priest and Minister, the true tabernacle “which the Lord erected, and not man” (Hebrews 8:2).

The finishing of the mystery of God is the ending of the work of the gospel, first, the taking away of all sin and bringing in of everlasting righteousness—Christ fully formed—within each believer; and secondly, the destruction of all who shall not have received the gospel, for it is not the way of the Lord to continue men in life when the only possible use they will make of life is to heap up more misery for themselves.

15

How the cleansing of the sanctuary goes forward

“I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever. . . . The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” “And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin” (John 14:16, 26; 16:8).

When sin is pointed out to you, say, “I would rather have Christ than that.” And let it go. [Congregation: “Amen.”] Then where is the opportunity for any of us to get discouraged over our sins? Now some of the brethren here have done that very thing. They came here free; but the Spirit of God brought up something they never saw before, went deeper than ever before, and revealed things they never saw before. And then, instead of thanking the Lord and letting the whole wicked business go, and thanking the Lord that they had ever so much more of Him than before, they began to get discouraged.

If the Lord has brought up sins to us that we never thought of before, that only shows that He is going down to the depths, and He will reach the bottom at last. And when He finds the last thing that is unclean, out of harmony with His will, and shows that to us, and we say, “I would rather have the Lord than that”—then the work is complete, and the seal of the living God can be fixed upon that character.

Which would you rather have, the completeness, the perfect fullness of Jesus Christ, or have less than that with some of your sins covered up that you never knew of? So He has to dig down to the deep places we never dreamed of, because we cannot understand our hearts.

Let Him go on; let Him keep on His searching work.

16

Are you worried about the sun falling down?

“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through 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 at the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Hebrews 1:1-3).

He carries all things, holds them up, by His powerful word. The world? Yes. The sun? Yes. All the starry heavens? Yes. Can we be numbered among the “all things”? Will He hold you up by His powerful word?

Were you ever uneasy in your life, when you arose in the morning with the sun, for fear that the sun would drop out of place before noon, or before sundown? Oh, no. Were you ever uneasy when you arose with the sun for fear that you yourself as a Christian would slip out of place before sundown? You know you have been. Why were you not as uneasy as to whether the sun would drop out of place before sundown, fearing that that might slip out of place and fall, as you were that you yourself would fall?

It is perfectly fair for the Christian to ask, why is it that the sun does not slip out of its place? The answer is, the “powerful word” of Jesus Christ holds the sun there. And that same power is to hold up the believer in Jesus. And the believer in Jesus is to expect it to do so, as certainly as it holds up the sun or the moon. You will simply go about your work, with your mind upon the work, and leave the holding up of the sun altogether to God, to whom it belongs. Also, you will go about your work and let God attend to that which belongs to Him. Give your mind to that which He has given you to do. And thus, you will serve God “with all the mind.” We cannot keep ourselves from falling; we cannot hold ourselves up. He has not given us that task to do.

17

There is no room for boasting

“All these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” (1 Corinthians 10:11, 12).

The one who is relying upon God to hold him up does not depend upon his own efforts. He who constantly bears in mind that God is holding him up, and that he must be held up, is not going to be boasting of his ability to stand. If I had to be carried in here this evening, perfectly helpless, and two or three of the brethren should have to stand here and hold me up, it would not be very becoming in me to say, “See how I stand.” It is so with the Christian.

The word of God says, “To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand” (Romans 14:4). The one who is trusting in God to hold him up, who knows it is God alone who makes him stand,—it is impossible for him to begin to say, “I am standing now, and therefore there is no danger of my falling.” When he takes himself out of the Lord’s hand and begins to try to hold himself up and then boasts that he can stand, it is then that there is not only danger, but he has already fallen. He takes himself out of God’s hand, and he is bound to fall.

If I can measure myself to the satisfaction of myself and pronounce the balance settled—when it is set alongside of Christ’s estimate, my own estimate is so far short that it condemns me utterly. The blood of Christ, the reconciliation of peace brought by Jesus, is in order that He might present you and me “holy and unblamable and unreprovable in His sight.

18

Jesus' name is the same as his Father's

"When He had by Himself purged our sins, [He] sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they" (Hebrews 1:3, 4).

When did He sit down on the right hand of God? Long ago—when He arose from the dead and went to heaven, nineteen hundred years ago. But notice, He had purged our sins before He sat down there. Are you glad that He purged your sins so long ago as that? In Him it is. In Him we find it. Let us thank Him it is so.

There is the contrast between Christ and the angels. Where is Christ? Where God is, with the angels worshipping Him. The Father calls Him God. "He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name" than the angels. You and I have a name that we have by inheritance. That is our father's name. We have that name just as soon as we exist. It belongs to us by nature. The Lord Jesus has "by inheritance" obtained His name, "God." That name belongs to Him by nature. He was not something else, and then named that to make Him that; but He was that, and was called God, because He is God.

The Father was pleased that His Son should be the express image of His Person, the brightness of His glory, and filled with all the fullness of the Godhead. So He has "life in Himself." He possesses immortality in His own right, and can confer immortality upon others.

"Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He ever lives to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25).



19

Where do we see Jesus now?

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone" (Hebrews 2:9).

In the other contrast we saw Jesus higher than the angels; here we see Him lower than the angels. Why? Because man was made lower than the angels, and then by sin went even still lower. We see Jesus where man is since man sinned and became subject to death. So certainly as it is true that Jesus was where God is, so certainly He has come to where man is.

He who was with God where God is, is with man where man is. And He who was with God as God is, is with man as man is. And He who was one with God as God is, is one with man as man is. And so, as certainly as His was the nature of God, so certainly His is the nature of man here.

"For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one" (verse 11). It was Christ and God in heaven—one in nature. How is He with man on earth? "All of one." He is not ashamed to call us "brethren," and "in the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You," He says (verse 12). That time is coming soon, when Christ in the midst of the church will lead the singing. He who was one with God has become one of man. We will follow the thought further tomorrow.

"We have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15 KJV).



20

How did Christ take our flesh and blood?

“Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Hebrews 2:14).

One man (Adam) is the source and head of all our human nature. And the genealogy of Christ, as one of us, runs to Adam. We are the sons of the first man, and so is Christ according to the flesh. The first chapter of Hebrews is Christ and His divine nature. The second chapter is Christ in human nature.

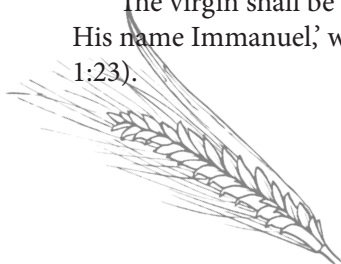
You may have something in the form of man that would not be of the nature of man. You can have a piece of stone in the form of man, but it is not the nature of man. Jesus took the form of man, that is true; but He did more, He took the nature of man.

Christ took flesh and blood in a way like we take it. But how do we take flesh and blood? By birth, and from Adam. Christ took flesh and blood by birth also; and from Adam, too. He is “of the seed of David according to the flesh” (Romans 1:3). While David calls Him Lord, he was also David’s son (Matthew 22:42-45). His genealogy is traced to David, but it does not stop there. It goes to Abraham. Nor does it stop with Abraham, it goes to Adam (Luke 3:38). Thus on the human side, Christ’s nature is precisely our nature.

There is salvation in just that one thing. No, it is not enough to say that way: the salvation of God for human beings lies in just that one thing.

We’re not to be timid about it at all. There is the point where we meet Him—the living Savior against the power of temptation.

“‘The virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,’ which is translated, ‘God with us’” (Matthew 1:23).



21

Why Jesus took our flesh and blood

“In all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people” (Hebrews 2:17).

What kind of flesh is it that this world knows? Just such flesh as you and I have. The world does not know any other flesh of man, and has not known any other since the necessity for Christ’s coming. When “the Word was made flesh” He was made just such flesh as ours is. It cannot be otherwise.

The argument nowadays is that the law could not do what was intended, and so God sent His Son to weaken the law, so that the flesh could answer the demands of the law. But if I am weak and you are strong, and I need help, it does not help me any to make you as weak as I am; I am as weak and helpless as before. But when I am weak and you are strong, and you can bring me to your strength, that helps me. The law was strong enough; but its purpose could not be accomplished through the weakness of the flesh. Therefore God must bring strength to weak flesh. He sent Christ to supply the need. So it is written: “God [sent] His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Romans 8:3).

Man was sinless when God made him a little lower than the angels. That was sinless flesh. But man fell from that place and condition, and became sinful flesh. Now we see Jesus, not as man was when He was first made lower than the angels, but as man is since he sinned, and became still lower than the angels. That is where we see Jesus.



22

What is the “likeness” of our sinful flesh?

“What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh” (Romans 8:3).

Do not get a wrong idea of that word “likeness” It is not the shape; it is not the photograph, it is not the likeness in the sense of an image; but it is likeness in the sense of being like indeed. It is likeness in nature, likeness to the flesh. And in order to be just like sinful flesh, it would have to be sinful flesh; in order to be made flesh at all, as it is in this world, He would have to be just such flesh as it is in this world, just such as we have, and that is sinful flesh. That is what is said in the words “likeness of sinful flesh.”

He took not the nature of angels, but the nature of Abraham. “It was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Hebrews 2:10). It was the proper thing for Him to do. It was appropriate. Who are His brethren? The human race. Because we’re all of one, He is not ashamed to call you and me brethren.

How was it that Christ could be thus “subject to weakness” (Hebrews 5:2), and still know no sin? Some may have thought, while reading thus far, that we were depreciating the character of Jesus by bringing Him down to the level of sinful man. On the contrary we are simply exalting our blessed Savior, who Himself voluntarily descended to the level of sinful man, in order that He might exalt man to His own spotless purity, which He retained under the most adverse circumstances.



23

Was Jesus tempted like we are tempted today?

“Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:14, 15, KJV).

He could not have been tempted in all points like as I am, if He were not in all points like as I am to start with. Therefore it was fitting for Him to be made in all points like me, if He is going to help me where I need help. And oh, I know it is right there where I get it. Thank the Lord! There is where Christ stands, and there is my help.

We have two negatives there; we have not a High Priest who cannot be touched. Then what do we have on the affirmative side? We have a High Priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, my infirmities, your infirmities, our infirmities. Does He feel my infirmities? Yes. Does He feel your infirmities? Yes. What is an infirmity? Wavering, that is expressive enough. We have many of them, all of us have many of them. We feel our infirmities. Thank the Lord, there is One who feels them also, yes, not only feels them, but is touched with the feeling of them.

There was more in that word “touched” than simply that He is reached with the feeling of our weaknesses, and feels as we feel. He is tenderly affected; His sympathy is stirred. He is touched to tenderness and affected to sympathy, and He helps us. Thank the Lord for such a Savior!

“We implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:20).



24

We are all tempted in different ways

“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear if (1 Corinthians 10:13).

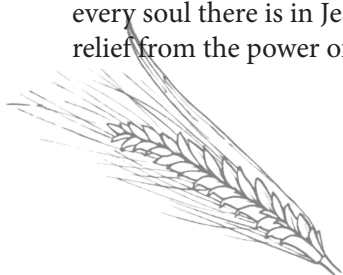
There are things that will tempt you strongly, that will draw hard on you, that are no more to me than a zephyr in a summer day. Something will draw hard on me, even to overthrowing me, that would not affect you at all. What strongly tempts one person may not affect another.

Then, in order to help me Jesus must be where He can feel what I feel, and be tempted in all points where I could be tempted with any power at all.

But as things that tempt me may not tempt you at all, and things may affect you that will not affect me, Christ has to stand where you and I both are, so as to meet all the temptations of both. He must feel all those which you meet that do not affect me, and also all those which I meet that do not affect you. He has to take the place of both of us.

Jesus had to take all the feelings and the nature of my self, of your self, and of the other man also. He must be tempted in all points like as I am, and in all points like as you are, and in all points like the other man is. How many does that embrace? That takes in the whole human race.

And this is exactly the truth. Christ was in the place, and He had the nature, of the whole human race. And in Him meet all the weaknesses of mankind, so that every man on earth who can be tempted at all finds in Jesus Christ power against that temptation. For every soul there is in Jesus Christ victory against all temptation, and relief from the power of it.



25

Tempted like we are, but also more

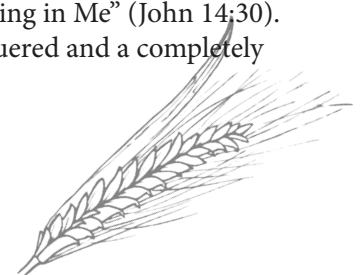
“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.” “The devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time” (Revelation 12:11, 12).

Satan is interested in seeing that we are tempted just as much as possible. But he does not have to employ much of his time nor very much of his power in temptation to get us to yield.

That same one was particularly interested in getting Jesus to yield to temptation. Satan tried Him upon every point upon which he would ever have to try me and to get me to sin; but he tried in vain. He utterly failed to get Jesus to consent to sin in any single point upon which I can ever be tempted.

He also tried Jesus upon every point upon which he has ever tried you or can try you, to get you to sin; and he utterly failed there too. Then that takes you and me both; and Jesus has conquered in all points for both you and me.

But when he tried Jesus upon all the points that he has tried both you and me, and failed, he had to try Him more than that yet. He had to try Him also upon all the points upon which he has tried the other man, to get him to yield. Satan also completely failed there. Satan is the author of all temptation, and he had to try Jesus upon every point upon which it is possible for Satan himself to raise a temptation. He also had to try Jesus with a good deal more power than he ever had to exert upon me. So you are free in Christ. There is a complete failure on the devil's part all around. He has absolutely conquered. And in Christ we are conquerors of Satan. Jesus said, “The ruler [“prince,” KJV] of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me” (John 14:30). In Christ we meet in Satan a completely conquered and a completely exhausted enemy.



26

Satan is stronger than us, but is paralyzed

“The children of a family share the same flesh and blood; and so He too shared ours, so that through death He might break the power of him who had death at his command, that is, the devil” (Hebrews 2:14, NEB).

Yes, in Christ we meet in Satan a completely conquered and completely exhausted enemy [the KJV says “destroy him,” but the Greek means to paralyze him, or break his power].

This is not to say that we have no more fighting to do. But it is to say, and to say emphatically and joyfully, that in Christ we fight the fight of victory. Out of Christ, we fight—but it is all defeat. In Him our victory is complete, as well as in all things in Him we are complete. But, oh do not forget the expression: it is in Him!

Then as Satan has exhausted all the temptations that he knows, or possibly can know, and has exhausted all his power in the temptation too, what is he in the presence of Christ? The answer is: powerless. And when he finds us in Christ and then would reach us and harass us, what is he? Powerless. Praise and magnify the Lord!

Let us rejoice in this, for in Him we are victors. In Him we are free. In Him Satan is powerless toward us. Let us be thankful for that. In Him we are complete.

“Whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 John 5:4, 5).



27

There is no “relative closer” than Christ!

“I will do for you all that you request, for all the people of my town know that you are a virtuous woman. Now it is true that I am a close relative [“near kinsman,” KJV]; however, there is a relative closer than I. . . . If he will perform the duty of a close relative for you—good; let him do it. But if he does not want to perform the duty for you, then I will perform the duty for you, as the Lord lives!” (Ruth 3:11-13).

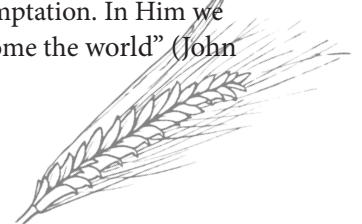
Who was the redeemer in the book of Ruth?—the nearest of kin. The redeemer must be not only one who was near of kin, but he must be the nearest among those who were near. Therefore Boaz could not step into the place of redeemer until, by another stepping out of the place, he became really the nearest. That is the point made in the second chapter of Hebrews.

In Ruth, you remember Naomi’s husband had died. The inheritance had fallen into the hands of others. When she came back from Moab, it had to be redeemed. This is the story also in the second chapter of Hebrews. Adam had an inheritance, the earth, and he lost it, and he himself was brought into bondage. In the gospel in Leviticus, if one had lost his inheritance, it could be redeemed; but only the nearest of kin could redeem (Leviticus 25:25, 26, 47-49).

We need a redeemer! But only he who is nearest in blood relationship can perform the office of redeemer. Jesus Christ is nearer than a brother, nearer than anyone. He is nearest among the brethren,—nearest of kin. Not only one with us, but He is one of us, and one with us by being one of us.

In all points of temptation, wherever we are tempted, He is ourselves right there. In all the points in which it is possible for me to be tempted,

He stood right there against all the knowledge and ingenuity of Satan to tempt me. And thus comprehending the whole human race, He stands in every point where any one of the human race can be tempted. In Him we are complete against the power of temptation. In Him we are overcomers. “Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).



28

How is temptation overcome?

“Paul, a bond servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God. . . . concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh” (Romans 1:1, 3).

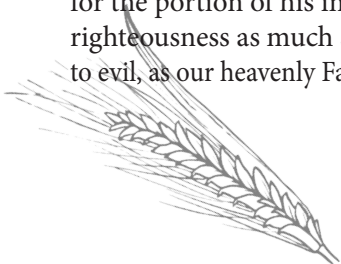
In noticing how Christ became one of us, we found that it was by birth from the flesh. He is “the seed of David according to the flesh.” His genealogy goes to Adam.

Everyone is tempted, “when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed” (James 1:14). That is the definition of “temptation” There is not a single drawing toward sin, there is not a single tendency to sin, in you and me that was not in Adam when he stepped out of the Garden of Eden. All the iniquity and all the sin that have come into the world came from him as he was there. It did not all appear in him in open action; but it has manifested itself in open action in those who have come from him.

But Jesus Christ felt all these temptations. He was tempted upon all these points in the flesh which He derived from David, from Abraham, and from Adam. In His genealogy is Manasseh, who did worse than any other king in Judah; Solomon is there; David is there; Rahab, Judah, Jacob,—all are there just as they were. Jesus came “according to the flesh” at the end of that line of mankind.

There is such a thing as heredity. You and I have traits of character that have come to us from away back—perhaps from great-grandfather.

The new birth completely supersedes the old. “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17). He who takes God for the portion of his inheritance has a power working in him for righteousness as much stronger than the power of inherited tendencies to evil, as our heavenly Father is greater than our earthly parents.



29

Sin is not inherited; But tendencies to it . . . ?

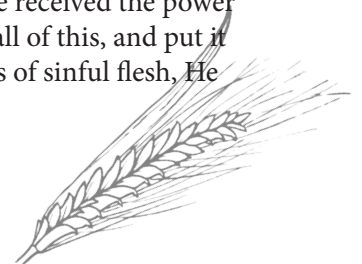
“The law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression.” “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him” (Romans 4:15; 5:8, 9).

It is a good law which says that everything shall have a tendency to go toward the center of the earth. We could not get along without that law.

It holds us upon the earth, and enables us to walk and move about upon it. If our feet slip out from under us, the law works and brings us down with a terrible jolt, you know. Well, the same law that enables us to live and move and walk around the earth comfortably, which works so beneficially while we act in harmony with it, that law continues to work when we get out of harmony with it; but it hurts.

That is an illustration of this law of human nature. If man had remained where God put him, the law would have worked directly and easily. Since man has got out of harmony with it, it still works directly; but it hurts.

That law of heredity reached from Adam to the flesh of Jesus Christ as certainly as it reaches from Adam to the flesh of any of rest of us. In Him there were things that reached Him from Adam; thus in the flesh of Jesus Christ, not in Himself, but in His flesh, our flesh which He took in human nature, there were just the same tendencies to sin that are in you and me. And when He was tempted, it was the “drawing away of these desires that were in the flesh.” These drew upon Him, and sought to entice Him, to consent to the wrong. But by the love of God and by His trust in God, He received the power and the strength and the grace to say “No” to all of this, and put it all under foot. And thus, being “in the likeness of sinful flesh, He condemned sin in the flesh.”



30

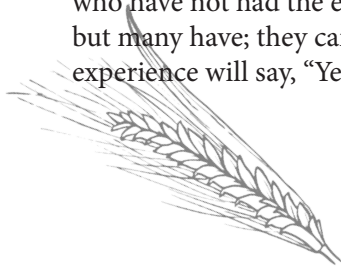
Are temptations and Tendencies sin?

“Each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full grown, brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren” (James 1:14-16).

These tendencies to sin that are in us have appeared in action, and have become sins committed in the open. There’s a difference between a tendency to sin, and the open appearing of that sin in the actions. There are tendencies to sin in us that have not yet appeared; but multitudes have appeared.

Now all the tendencies to sin that have not appeared, Christ conquered. What about the sins that have actually appeared in us? “The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6). “Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed” (1 Peter 2:24). Thus it is plain that all the tendencies to sin that are in us and all the sins which have appeared, were laid upon Him. It is terrible; it is true. But, oh, joy! In that terrible truth lies the completeness of our salvation. He conquered them all, and in Him we all have victory over them all.

We ourselves have felt the guilt of those sins we have committed, we were conscious of condemnation because of them. These were all imputed to Christ; they were all laid upon Him. Now a question: did He feel the guilt of the sins that were imputed to Him? He was never conscious of sins that He committed, for He did not commit any. But our sins were laid upon Him, and we were guilty. We will look at that in such a way that every soul shall say, “Yes.” There may be some who have not had the experience that I will bring for the illustration, but many have; they can say, “Yes.” All others who have had the experience will say, “Yes” at once.



31

Christ is a complete Savior!

“Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him since He ever lives to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25).

God imputes the righteousness of Christ to the believing sinner. Here is a man who has never known anything in his life except sin, never anything but the guilt of sin and the condemnation of it. That man believes on Jesus Christ, and God imputes to him the righteousness of Christ. Then that man who never committed a particle of righteousness in his life is conscious of righteousness. Something has entered his life that was never there before; he is conscious of the joy and the freedom of it.

Now God imputed our sins to Christ as certainly as He imputes His righteousness to us. But when He imputes righteousness to us who are nothing but sinners, we are conscious of it and of the joy of it. Therefore, when God imputed our sins to Jesus, He was conscious of the guilt of them and their condemnation, just as certainly as a believing sinner is conscious of the righteousness of Christ and the peace and joy of it that is imputed to him, that is, that is laid upon Him. It was our sins, our guilt, and our condemnation that were laid upon Him.

He carried the guilt and the condemnation of them all, paid for them, atoned for them. Then in Him we are free from every sin that we have ever committed. Let us be glad, and praise God with everlasting joy. All the tendencies to sin—these He put forever underfoot.

Oh, He is a complete Savior. He is a Savior from sins committed, and the Conqueror of the tendencies to commit sins.

“He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death” (Revelation 2:11).



32

*Shall we take the guilt
and condemnation back?*

“If, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not! For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor” (Galatians 2:17, 18).

Shall he who believes in Jesus allow that which Christ condemned in the flesh to rule over him in the flesh?

It is true that although a man may have all this in Jesus, he cannot profit by it without himself being a believer in Jesus. If this man wants to have Christ for his Savior, if he wants provision made for all his sins and salvation from them, does Christ have to do anything now in order to provide for this man’s sins? No; that is all done. He made all that provision for every man when He was in the flesh, and every man who believes in Him receives this without there being any need of any part of it being done over again. Christ “offered one sacrifice for sins forever” (Hebrews 10:12). Thus every believer in Him is complete. “In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:9). And God gives His eternal Spirit, and eternal life,—eternity in which to live—in order that that eternal Spirit may reveal to us and make known to us the eternal depths of the salvation that we have in Him.

The god of this world blinds no man until he has shut his eyes of faith. Then Satan will see that they are kept shut as long as possible. “If our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them” (2 Corinthians 4:3, 4). Why did the god of this world blind their minds? Because they “believe not.” The Lord will not compel anyone to be righteous. Everyone sins upon his own choice. And everyone can be made righteous at his choice. No man will die the second death who has not chosen sin rather than righteousness. In Christ there is furnished in completeness all that man needs or ever can have in righteousness; and all there is for any man to do is to choose Christ.

33

*The “in Christ” motif
tells us who we are*

“Just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men. . . . Therefore, as through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one man’s obedience many will be made righteous” (Romans 5:12, 18, 19).

Wherein was Adam the figure of Christ? In his righteousness? No; for he did not keep it. In his sin? No; for Christ did not sin. Wherein then was Adam the figure of Christ? In this: that all that were in the world were included in Adam; and all that are in the world are included in Christ. In other words, Adam in his sin reached all the world; Jesus Christ, the second Adam in His righteousness touches all humanity.

The first Adam touched all of us; what he did included all of us. What he did made us what we are.

Now, here is another Adam. Does He touch as many as the first Adam did? The answer: It is certainly true that what the second Adam did embraces all who were embraced in what the first Adam did.

Does the second Adams righteousness embrace as many as does the first Adam’s sin? Look closely. Without our consent, we were all included in the first Adam. Jesus, the second man, touched us “in all points.” The first Adam brought man under the condemnation of sin; the second Adams righteousness undoes that, and makes every man live again. Every man is free to choose which way he will go; therefore he is responsible for his own individual sins. When Christ stood where we are, He said, “I will put My trust in Him.” That trust was never disappointed. The Father dwelt in Him and with Him and kept Him from sinning. And thus the Lord Jesus has brought to every man in this world divine faith, saving faith.

34

God will never disappoint you

“The Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us—by me, Silvanus and Timothy—was not Yes and No, but in Him was Yes. For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us. Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee” (2 Corinthians 1:19-22).

Saving faith is not something that comes from ourselves with which we believe on Him; but it is that something with which Christ believed,—the faith which He exercised, which He brings to us, and which becomes ours and works in us,—the gift of God.

That is what the word means, “here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” (Revelation 14:12). They keep the faith of Jesus, because it is that defined faith which Jesus exercised Himself.

He brought to us that divine faith by which we can say with Him, “I will put my trust in Him.” That trust today will never be disappointed any more than it was then. God responded then to His trust, and dwelt with Him. God will respond today to that trust in us, and will dwell with us.

Therefore His name is Immanuel, God with us—not God with Him; God was with Him before the world was. He could have remained there, and not come here at all, and still God would have remained with Him, and His name could have been God with Him. But what we needed was God with us. Oh, that is His name! Rejoice in that name forever more!

“Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).



35

How to know you are not under condemnation

“Oh wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! . . . There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 7:24, 25; 8:1).

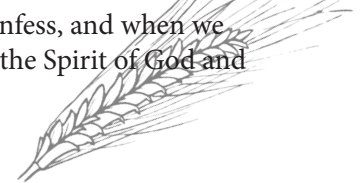
In these words lies a practical thought. And from it arises a question which troubles many.

They say, “I believe all that in theory, and I know that Christ can cleanse me from sin. If I confess my sins, He is faithful and just to forgive me, and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness. But my question is, Have I confessed all my sins? If I were only sure that I have, then I could claim that promise and believe that there is no condemnation for me.”

How are we going to know that we’re not under condemnation? Of course, confess everything the Lord shows you. But don’t stop halfway. Believe that God forgives it, and take His peace into your heart. And if He shows you other sins, confess them, believe that they are forgiven, and keep His peace still. But honest souls deprive themselves of a blessing and go into darkness because when they have confessed their sins they do not take the forgiveness, and thank God for the freedom that must follow.

The idea that we have confessed all the sins we know of, but still they’re not acknowledged freedom from condemnation, is really bringing a serious charge against God. It is making the Lord out to be the forgiver of the person who has the best memory. But was it your memory alone that enabled you to remember those sins that you did confess? Who quickened your memory? It was the Spirit of God. Are we going to charge God with doing a partial work? He sent His Holy Spirit to show you those sins. Shall we say He kept back a part of them that He did not reveal to us?

He showed us just what He wanted us to confess, and when we have confessed that, we have met the mind of the Spirit of God and we are free.



36

Real forgiveness takes the sin away

“If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

I have no business to make myself out any better than God. When anyone comes to me or to you, all broken down, and confesses his wrong, we forgive him freely, and before he has told half what he might tell, we tell him that it is all right, he is forgiven, and to say no more about it.

That is just what God does. He has given us the parable of the prodigal son as an illustration of how He forgives. His father saw him a great way off, and ran to meet him. I am so thankful that God does not require me, before I can be forgiven, to go back and take up every sin that I ever committed and confess it. If He did, He would have to lengthen my probation longer than I believe He possibly can, for me to repeat the smallest part of them. Well may David say, “My iniquities have overtaken me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head; therefore my heart fails me” (Psalm 40:12). Yes, our sins are “innumerable,” but “the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, you will not despise” (Psalm 51:17). Thus we make a covenant with God by sacrifice!

The Lord forgives freely, and we can know it. He shows us the representative sins of our lives. Sins that stand out prominent stand for our whole sinful nature, and we know that our whole life is of that same sinful character. God is infinite in love and compassion. “As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust” (Psalm 103:13, 14). Shall we charge God with saying, “I’ve shown you those sins and you’ve confessed them; but there are other sins and I will not show them to you, but you must find them out for yourself, and until you do I will not forgive you.” God does not deal with us in that way.

37

Let’s stop inviting Satan to discourage us

“I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day” (2 Timothy 1:12).

People say, “I have taken Christ, and now I look back and trace my life history through the day, or the week, and I cannot see anything but imperfection in what I’ve done. Then the feeling of condemnation comes over me, and I cannot stand free. How can I say, there’s no condemnation for me, when I see these failures?”

This is a subtle deception of Satan to deprive us of acceptance and peace with God. Do we expect to be justified by these deeds? If we do, we make a grand mistake in the beginning. “By the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight” (Romans 3:20).

Says one, “I’m afraid that I will fall.” You need not be afraid. What have you committed unto Him? Your life, and He is able to keep it. When we get over into the kingdom of God, we will not look to the best deeds that we have done, and thank God that we are justified because we have done so well. But our song of joy will be, “To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood” (Revelation 1:5). And so we know that when we yield ourselves to Him and die to self constantly, He does these things for us that we cannot do for ourselves. Let us look to Him continually! But when we take our eyes from Him and go into sin, He is not responsible for that.

“He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6).

38

Help when you are tired and exhausted

“You did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together” (Romans 8:15-17).

“Abba” means Father. We realize that He is infinite in power, and so great that to Him the nations are as a drop in the bucket. Great and awesome as He is, we can call Him “our Father.” He has the tenderness of a parent, backed by the power of infinite divinity.

Some say that if they only had the witness of the Spirit, they would rejoice. What is the witness of the Spirit?

“Why,” says one, “it is a sort of feeling, and when I have it I will know that God has accepted me.” But it rests on something more substantial than a feeling.

Sometimes I feel so tired and exhausted that I hardly have any power to feel in any way. That is when I want to know that I am a child of God. Sometimes disease takes hold of us and saps all our strength, and we have no power of mind or body. We are just barely alive, conscious, but with no emotion. That is when we want the witness of the Spirit. Can we have it then? Yes, “the Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (verse 16). How does He witness? “He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself” (1 John 5:10).

What does a witness do? Bears testimony. How do I bear witness in a court?—By telling what I know. Perhaps I back it up by my oath. Then if the Holy Spirit witnesses, He must say something, must He not? Yes. God spoke by His prophets, by Jeremiah, David, Paul. Who speaks in this word, the Bible? The Spirit of God. Then what is the witness of the Spirit? The word of God is the voice of the Spirit of God. Then we have the witness in ourselves, when we have His word in our hearts by faith.

39

Let us believe how much the Lord loves us

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God” (Romans 8:14).

God has put His testimony on record and sworn to that testimony. When God has put Himself on record, what can you bring to corroborate that word? When God has spoken, will you bring up the testimony of a man to sustain it? No, the word of God is our anchor. It enters in within the veil, where the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus.

When you go to your home, to your room, recognize the voice of God speaking to you. His Spirit witnesses with our spirit that we are the children of God. It means something to be a child of God. “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God” (1 John 3:1). Behold it. It is too wonderful for the human mind to grasp fully. Poor, unworthy, miserable creatures, worthy of nothing, yet God has had such an infinite love for us, that He has made us worthy to be His sons; and He gives us everything that He gives to Christ.

The Father loves us just as much as He loves His only begotten Son. How do we know? By the fact that He let His only begotten Son die to save us from death. We share with Christ all the love that the Father has for Him.

Christ cannot enter into His inheritance without us because we are “joint heirs with Christ.” If you and I are joint heirs to an estate, we must have it together. By and by when Christ takes His own throne, we will take it too. And it is something that God reveals to us now. We must not put it all off to the golden streets of the New Jerusalem, to the pearly gates, and the walls of jasper. Everything that Christ has, we have now.

Like David we can say, “The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; yes, I have a good inheritance” (Psalm 16:6). Jesus says, “You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me” (John 17:23).

40

What part does suffering have in glory?

“I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18).

Think of it,—God has one only begotten Son, the brightness of His glory, the express image of His person; He is the well beloved. But O, the wideness of His love, that He is able to take us into it, to adopt us into His family and make us share the same title that His only begotten Son shares.

The world did not recognize Him as the divine Son of God, the heir of heaven; so it will not recognize us as the sons of God and heirs of heaven. But we are the children of God now, just as much His sons now as we ever will be. The glory of the Sonship is not manifested in us, but when Christ shall appear we shall be like Him.

That throne to which we come and make our petitions is both a throne of grace and a throne of glory. The grace that is bestowed is equal to the measure of the glory that there is in that throne. That glory is by and by going to be revealed in us, so that this poor, vile body will shine like the sun. This is our assurance that the measure of that grace may be revealed in us now.

Just as our sufferings are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed, so the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the grace that is given us at this present time to endure them. The grace is equal to the glory.

By looking at these promises this way, we can see how heaven begins right here on earth. To have the Spirit of God and be the sons of God is entering upon the riches of our inheritance now. And if we continue to be the sons of God, we continue in our inheritance right along through eternity, the only difference being that when the Son of God comes, we shall have the full inheritance and glory of it.



41

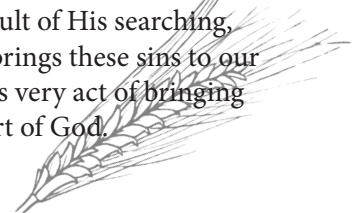
Is someone special praying for you?

“We do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God” (Romans 8:26, 27).

I have thought when I have heard one after another say, “Pray for me,” that Christ Himself prayed for us, and that the Holy Spirit Himself is making intercession for us. While we can ask for others to pray for us, can we not appropriate the prayers that are being continually offered for us in heaven above? Christ and the Holy Spirit are praying for us.

For myself, I can understand and draw encouragement this way: I lay my soul open before God, and ask Him to give me—what shall I ask for?—sometimes the words are gone, and I can think of nothing, only an inexpressible desire for something more than I have. But the Holy Spirit knows what I need, and knows the mind of God. He knows what God has to give me, and so He makes intercession for me and God gives exceeding abundantly above all I can ask or think. The Spirit of God takes those thoughts that we cannot put into words and can scarcely think, and transmutes them into words and petitions before the throne of God, and He who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the spirit.

Some say they are “going to search their hearts, and put away all the evil things that they can find to be in them.” Jeremiah says, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind” (Jeremiah 17:9, 10). We cannot search our hearts and put away all the wickedness in them. The heart will deceive us every time. Yet God can search the heart, and He does. And if we will take the result of His searching, great will be our joy. It is the Comforter who brings these sins to our hearts, that the Lord has searched out: and this very act of bringing our sins before our eyes is a part of the comfort of God.



42

*The free gift is given
to everyone*

“We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28).

Here we have the matter of “calling,” and that causes some to be discouraged. A brother will say, “Perhaps I’m not called, I’m not at all sure that I am. And therefore it doesn’t work for me.”

That matter of “calling” can be settled very easily. Who has God called? “And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17).

The call is to every man and woman and child on earth. Those who hear it are to take it up and pass it along. The kindness of God is wide enough to take in every individual; “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). Those two texts are sufficient to scatter to the four winds all the theological trash that has been written to prove that God has set some few that He has called, and no others. Let no soul stay away because he thinks he’s not called. All do not come, all do not take the advice of Peter and make their calling and election sure; but that is not the fault of God.

Sometimes we get afraid of that word, “elected.” Is there any need to be afraid? No; for every individual can be a candidate, and every candidate can be elected. The free gift by grace of the justification of life comes upon all (Romans 5:18). The moment you give up self and take Christ instead, you have everything that Christ has to give. He is able to bless you “in turning every one of you from your iniquities” (Acts 3:26). Everything that is necessary for life and godliness is given to us in Christ. Therefore the soul that stands in Christ may stand as firm and secure as the Rock of Ages. Everyone is called to the fellowship of Christ if he will accept. We are elected in Him, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace.

43

*The Good News of the
foreknowledge of God*

“Whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified” (Romans 8:29, 30).

“Did God know that Adam was going to sin, and does He know whether well be saved or not?” Yes, He knows all about it. “Then how can it be that we are free?” I do not know, and it does not make any difference. I know from His word that I am free to have salvation and to have it when I want it.

God foreknew us in Christ, and we were predestined to just such a place in the earth in a state of purity as God wants us to have. How do I know I am a child of God? He loved me and He bought me, and I gave myself to Him, and therefore I am His. Now I am in Christ, and it matters not what happens to me. There is not a bad thing that can come upon me, for everything that does come, God will work it for my good.

Now Satan concocts some wicked scheme against me that is calculated to destroy me. Well, God takes those very wicked schemes and out of them He brings good for me. There is no one who would think of complaining when he is having a good time. But the Christian is having a good time all the time, for all things work together for good to him. These bad things are bad when they start, designed to ruin us, yet by the time they get to us, God transforms them into good. When we look at things in this way, we can praise God no matter what happens. The Lord “will beautify the humble with salvation” (Psalm 149:4). “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31).

There is not a wicked person, not even the devil himself, but God just takes his wickedness as it comes and makes it work out his own eternal purpose. There is a world of comfort in the thought that this is the kind of God whom we serve.

44

*What a joy to know
that YOU are called!*

“Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:10, 11).

Who are called? “For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call” (Acts 2:39). The Lord calls “whosoever will.”

Now what is the purpose of God calling whosoever will to come to Him? “That in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ” (Ephesians 1:10). We are to be gathered together in Christ according to the grace of God. Seeing this, what is our duty? “Be even more diligent to make your call and election sure.”

Everyone is called; but the purpose of God is in Christ. When we tell the Lord day by day, “Here is my heart, Lord; I have made no change in the gifts; I want you to have it,” He will bind us with cords of divine love to the altar. We are then predestined with Christ. What He has, we have. He said, “Neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand” (John 10:28).

Those who are called are justified in Christ; therefore we have justification. But those who are justified are also glorified. If we can believe that, we have a wonderful amount of strength. Yes, “the glory which You gave me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one” (John 17:22).

Mark, it is past tense. The glory that God has given to Christ is ours today. It is true that that glory does not yet appear, and the world knows us not, because it knew not Christ. But it is ours. Even now it appears in the form of grace. “The Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly” (Psalm 84:11). Peter says that believing we may “rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory” (1 Peter 1:8).

The glory is all ours and we have it now.

45

*Can anybody or anything
be “against us”?*

“If God is for us, who can be against us? . . . Who shall bring a charge against Gods elect? . . . Who is he who condemns? . . . Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? . . . In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us” (Romans 8:31-37).

Remember that Christ gave the example of defeating Satan by the word of the testimony. Every time temptation came, He said, “It is written.” So when the clouds of darkness come, and the thick darkness gathers around us, just say, “If God is for us, who can be against us!” And God is for us as is shown in that He gave Christ to die for us and raised Him again for our justification.

Then it does not matter what comes against us, for it comes against the purpose of God, and that is as sure and firm as the Almighty can make it.

Now who is against us? Satan. Satan has tried his power with Christ, and it has proved to be nothing. “All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth,” says Christ (Matthew 28:18, KJV). If all power has been given to Christ in heaven and in earth, where is there any left for Satan?

Satan is against us. He brings pestilence, disease, puts things in our way against us. But the very things he arrays against us to our ruin God takes and makes them for us. We often sing:—

Let good or ill befall, It must be good for me,
Secure of having Thee in all, Of having all in Thee.

But we often sing things we do not believe. Often, if you took the words from the music and put them into plain prose, there would not be any one in the congregation who would dare to say them. Let us believe them not because they’re in the hymn, but because they are Bible truth.

All things are yours, at the present time. Therefore, if people heap on us reproach and persecution, the only thing we can do is to pity them and labor for them, for they do not know the riches of the inheritance.

46

*Something you think
you see really isn't there*

“Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Corinthians 4:17, 18).

Does your sight often deceive you? Sometimes you think you saw something that you did not see, and then again you saw things that when you came to look at them closely were not as they really appeared to be. But the word of God never deceives. The truth is that the only things we can depend on are the things that we cannot see. We can see the earth and we can see the heavens, but they're going to pass away.

We can say, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea” (Psalm 46:1, 2). That time is coming. And there will be some people who will feel perfectly calm and trustful; but they will be those who have learned to say that all things work together for good to them who love God, who are called according to His purpose. The man who doubts God now will doubt Him then.

“Who shall bring a charge against Gods elect?” Well, there is one who will do it surely. We have his name, Satan. Here is a testimony concerning him: “The accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down” (Revelation 12:10).

But says one poor discouraged soul, “I believe all that, and I have confessed my sins, but these sins keep coming up before me all the time!” Why does Satan bring these things up? Because he is a false accuser, and if he brings these up and accuses you, then you know that they are forgiven, because he would never have brought them up if they had not been forgiven. If you are sure Satan brings them up, you ought to be one of the happiest creatures alive.

47

*Satan accuses; the angel
of the Lord vindicates*

“Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him. And the Lord said to Satan, ‘The Lord rebuke you, Satan!’” (Zechariah 3:1, 2).

Satan could not tell the truth if he tried, and unless your sins had been forgiven, he never would bring them up, because he would be afraid that you would confess them, and they would be forgiven.

Well, another query: “I don't know; perhaps it is not Satan; perhaps it must be God” No, “It is God who justifies.” If God justifies, He cannot condemn. He shows us our sins and we confess them and give ourselves to Him, and He justifies us.

Therefore, when He justifies, who is there who can condemn? Satan. If we would only give more credence to God's truth and less to Satan's lies, it would be better for us. Don't you see there is not a possible loophole left for discouragement? It is the Comforter who convicts of sin, so He comforts us in the very act of calling to our remembrance the wrongs that we have done. I will thank Him for the comfort, and when Satan brings them up again, I will praise God again.

We often hear the expression, “If I can only get inside the gates of heaven, I will be satisfied.” I'm so thankful we don't have to just get in as if we apologize for our presence after we were there.

“An entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:11).

48

When battles are a pleasure to fight

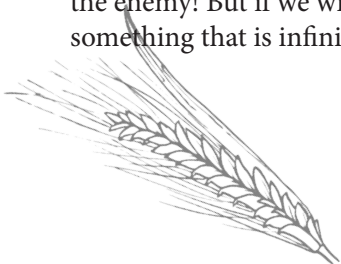
“We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand” (Ephesians 6:12, 13).

“We have enemies to contend with,” says somebody. Don’t talk about them or your trials and temptations! Talk of the power of Christ. All power has been given to Him. So when we wrestle, we will remember that it is not an even-handed battle, but we fight a fight of faith, and where sin abounded, there did grace much more abound.

Who are conquerors? Those who have gained the victory. Flesh and blood are of no account in the defense. The only power that can resist evil is the power of an endless life, and he who has the Son has that life. If I fight with my fists, I do the fighting. If I fight the fight of faith, someone else is fighting for me and I am getting the benefit.

Christ has fought hand-to-hand with Satan here on earth and triumphed. What must be the result when a battle has been fought and one side has conquered completely? Peace. “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you. . . . Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27). We simply lay hold of the eternal life of Christ, and that is done by laying hold of His word, which is spirit and life.

The trouble is that sometimes we have some darling sin that we do not want to give up, so we are afraid that Christ will gain the victory and that sin will have to be given up. We call Christ in to help us defeat our enemy, and when He comes He finds us on the side of the enemy! But if we will give up all these things, Christ will give us something that is infinitely better.



49

The place of the law in true heart conversion

“To Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. . . . The law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect” (Galatians 3:16, 17).

Was the law given to put discouragement into the hearts of the people? No. Go back to Abraham, and we shall see what else was taught by the giving of the law.

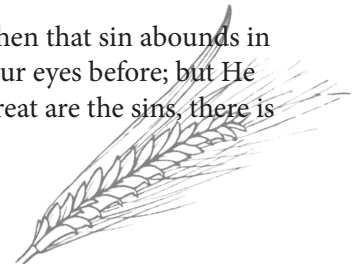
There was a promise to Abraham of a righteous inheritance. God had pledged His own existence that there should be righteous men—whose righteousness should be equal to the righteousness of the law.

But here was the law in awful majesty. There could be no righteousness gotten out of it. Now put two things together: the law is so holy that no man can get any righteousness out of it; but God had sworn that there should be men who would have all the righteousness that it demands. Therefore the very giving of the law showed the people that there must be another way of getting that same righteousness.

The One who gave the law was the One who brought them out of Egypt, who swore to Abraham that he and his seed should be righteous through Christ. So there was a super abundance of grace. That is acted out every time there is a sinner converted. Before his conversion he has not realized the sinfulness of his sins. Then the law comes in and shows him how awful those sins are, but with it comes a gentle voice of Christ in whom there is grace and life.

Shall we go about mourning and sighing, saying our sins are so great that God cannot forgive? It is God who shows us our sins. By His law,

He drives the sins home to our hearts and then that sin abounds in the proportion that it should. It was small in our eyes before; but He makes us see it as He sees it. No matter how great are the sins, there is grace much more than enough.



50

How do we get hold of Christ?

“I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:19, 20).

How do we get the benefits of Christ’s righteous life? At what point is it that we touch Him and make the connection? At what point in His ministry does He touch us and effect the union? It is at the lowest possible point where a man can be touched—and that is death. He takes the point of death—and there, when we are actually dead, we step into Christ.

The ceremony of baptism is the symbol of Christ’s death and resurrection. If we died with Christ, we are certain to live again, for Christ is alive. Therefore if we die with Him, we shall live with Him. When we acknowledge our life forfeited and give up all claims to everything connected with it, that very moment we die with Christ. What do we naturally have in ourselves? Sin! The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life, envy, malice, evil speaking, evil thinking—all these things make up the natural life of every one on earth.

When we are ready to give them up and pay the forfeit, then it is that we can die with Christ and take His sinless life instead. In yielding up that life of ours, we give up all these things and then we are dead with Christ.

That newness of life which we have is a sinless life. When one reckons that he has no life of his own and the life he lives in the flesh he lives by the faith of the Son of God, then his life is hid with Christ in God. What can that person fear that man can do to him? A questioner may say, “You make it out that we ought never to sin anymore—you leave no room for sin.” But is that not what the Bible says? “Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law but under grace” (Romans 6:14). By death we make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts or desires.

51

“It’s easy living when you are dead”

“He said to them all, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it’” (Luke 9:23, 24).

Men start out on dangerous expeditions—some to conquer a country, and when they reach that land they burn the boats they came in, so they cannot go back if they desired to.

Here is this pleasure and that indulgence; can I give them up? They have been very dear to me, entwined around my very life. They show themselves in my countenance, embedded in my character, a part of myself. I have clung to them as I cling to life itself. But Christ was not in them, they do not savor of the life of Christ. For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross. Can I, for the sake of sharing that joy, endure that cross?

There is the joy of having an infinite power working in us. For that joy, which we can have now, are we willing to give up everything and become sharers of the sufferings of Christ? This is a joy that will last forever, so let us burn the boats and the bridges behind us!

Says one, “I’ve tried to give up these things before, and I’ve fallen again; now how do I know but what I shall fall again?” You are not making a new resolution this time, you are not turning over a new leaf and saying that you’re going to do better. You’re merely letting the old life go. Simply say, “I know there is power in God. And the same power which spoke the world into existence and which brought Christ forth from the tomb—into the hands of that power I yield myself.” This from a human standpoint is impossible; difficulties arise on every hand. But we go forth in faith that He who can cast down imaginations in our hearts and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, can bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. He can do that work. It was the same power which caused the walls of Jerico to fall down before the people of God.

52

Sinless living: possible or not?

“Do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. . . . For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace” (Romans 6:12, 14).

Is it true that man can live without sin? “When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness” (Romans 6:20). We all know what that means. Our past experience is not pleasant to look over. Why was it that we were free from righteousness?—because we were the servants of Satan. “But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness” (verse 22).

In all our Christian experience we have left little loopholes here and there for sin. We have never dared to come to that place where we would believe that the Christian life should be a sinless life. We have not dared to believe it or preach it. But in that case we cannot preach the law of God fully. Why not? Because we do not understand the power of justification by faith. Without justification by faith it is impossible to preach the law of God to the fullest extent. To preach justification by faith does not detract from or lower the law of God, but is the only thing that exalts it. If a Christian is committing sin part of the time and doing righteousness the rest of the time, it must be that Satan and Christ are in partnership. But there is no consort between light and darkness, between Christ and Belial. They are in deadly antagonism, even to the death.

Now the question comes: how am I going to become a servant of Christ, so I will be able to die to my old life? “To whom you present your-selves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey” (verse 16). The moment I yield myself to Christ, that moment I am His slave. How do I know that Christ will accept my service if I do give it to Him? Because He has bought that service and paid the price for it.

53

No lost sheep can seek its shepherd

“The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

All those years when I yielded myself as a servant to sin, I have been defrauding Christ of His right. But He has been going about searching for me, and seeking to draw me to Him. And when we say, “Lord here I am, I give myself to You,” that very moment Christ has found us and we are His servants.

But how do we know we are going to continue in His service? Just in the same way that we know we have lived a life of sin.

When we were servants of sin, we were free from righteousness, because Satan used us at the mercy of his power. But is sin stronger than righteousness? Is Satan stronger than Christ? No! Just as surely as when we were the bond-servants of sin, it kept us free from righteousness, so when we yield ourselves to Christ, He has power to keep us from sin.

The battle is not ours, it is God’s. We will not only say, I do not want to be Satan’s servant, but, I will not be his servant. We yield ourselves to Christ, and repeat over and over again, “O Lord, truly I am Your servant; I am Your servant, the son of Your maidservant; You have loosed my bonds” (Psalm 116:16). So in the hour of trial we have a victory that is already gained.

The strength of the Christian lies in submitting—the victory lies in yielding to Christ. But it does not matter how great the trial may be, if we have Christ there will be peace in our hearts.

“Thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place” (2 Corinthians 2:14).

54

*The most powerful force
in the world is the gospel*

“I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith’” (Romans 1:16, 17).

There is but one gospel for all men. It is not magic. There is nothing in the world that can confer grace and righteousness upon men, and there is nothing in the world that any man can do that will bring salvation. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, not the power of man.

Any teaching that leads men to trust in any object, whether it be an image, a picture, or anything else, or to trust for salvation in any work or effort of their own, even though that effort be directed toward the most praiseworthy object, is a perversion of the truth of the gospel—a false gospel.

There are in the church no “sacraments” that by some sort of magical working confer special grace on the receiver. But there are deeds that a man who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ and who is thereby justified and saved, may do as an expression of his faith. “By grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:8-10). This is the “truth of the gospel” for all time.

There is no man or body of men on earth that has a monopoly of truth, a corner so to speak, so that whoever wishes it must come to them. Truth is independent of men. Truth is of God. Whoever gets the truth must get it from God and not from any man, just as Paul received the gospel. God may use men as instruments or channels, but He alone is the Giver.

55

*The truth of God may
not be with the majority*

“You shall not follow a crowd to do evil” (Exodus 23:2).

Neither names nor numbers have anything to do with determining what is truth. It is no more mighty nor to be accepted more readily when presented by ten thousand princes than when maintained by a single humble laboring man. And there is no more presumptive evidence that ten thousand men have the truth than that one has it. Every man on earth may be the possessor of just as much of the truth as he is willing to use, and no more.

He who would act the pope, thinking to hold a monopoly of the truth and compel people to come to him for it, giving it out here and withholding it there, loses all the truth that he ever had (if he really had any). Truth and popery cannot exist together. No pope, or man with a popish disposition, has the truth. As soon as a man receives the truth, he ceases to be a pope. If the pope of Rome should become converted and be a disciple of Christ, that very hour he would vacate the papal seat.

Just as there is no man who has a monopoly of truth, so there are no places to which people must necessarily go in order to find it. The fact that truth was first proclaimed in a certain place does not prove that it can be found only there, or that it can be found there at all. In fact, the last places in the world to go to with the expectation of finding truth are the cities where the gospel was preached in the first centuries after Christ, as Jerusalem.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem, a place that was “little among the thousands of Judah” (Micah 5:2). Nearly all His life He lived in a little town of so poor repute that a man in whom there was no guile said, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” It is no farther to heaven from the smallest village or lonely cabin than it is from the largest city or the bishop’s palace. “The High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy” dwells “with him who has a contrite and humble spirit” (Isaiah 57:15).

56

*Be happy to have a
humble place*

*“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. . . .
Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:3, 5).*

God looks at what a person is, not at what he is reputed to be. What he is demonstrates the measure of the power and wisdom of God that is in him.

God does not set any store upon official position. It is not position that gives authority, but authority that gives the real position. Many a humble, poor man on earth, with never an official title to his name, has occupied a position really higher and of greater authority than that of all the kings of the earth. Authority is the unfettered presence of God in the soul.

The brethren in Jerusalem showed their connection with God in that they “perceived the grace that was given to” Paul (Galatians 2:9). Those who are moved by the Spirit of God will always be quick to “perceive” the workings of the Spirit in others. The surest evidence that one knows nothing personally of the Spirit is that he cannot recognize His working.

Some have said they cannot see how one can acknowledge himself to be “wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked” (Revelation 3:17) and not know it, and at the same time be rejoicing in the Lord. I would like to know how one is going to rejoice in the Lord when he thinks he is all right himself! But when one knows that he is what the Lord says he is and acknowledges that, and then finds that the Lord is so good that He will take him just as he is and fit him to stand in the presence of God through all eternity—then he has something to rejoice for. He can’t do anything else.

The Lord does not save us because we are so good, but because He is so good. And the blessedness of it is that He will bless us so much when we are so bad. And the rejoicing is that He saves us and makes us to reflect His own image, as bad as we are.

57

*How to be happy yet
have no reputation*

*“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who . . .
made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant”
(Philippians 2:5-7).*

How is anybody going to be faithful who cares particularly what people say about him, and has much respect for, or puts his dependence on, reputation? Thank the Lord, He has something a great deal better for us to depend on, and that is character. Let us not forget that Jesus, our example in this world, “made Himself of no reputation.”

The people who are to stand faithful to God in the world are to do it with respect to character only, and no question of reputation can come into the calculation. Reputation will not save one. When all the power of the world stands against those who will maintain their allegiance to God, then the character of Jesus Christ is worth ten thousand reputations that anybody can manufacture.

But reputation is a big thing in the eyes of the world. A reputation is all that Satan has to offer. A statement often quoted is correct enough, “The dearest treasure that mortal times afford is spotless reputation.” That was well enough for him, for reputation was all he had. He went on to say he had lost his: “O my reputation! I have lost it!” And when he had lost that, of course he had nothing to support him. He did not have character, but only reputation to depend on. The dearest treasure is spotless character; and the only spotless character is the character of Jesus Christ. And that character He gives to you and me, a free blessed gift from Him who made it.

Then let all questions of reputation go to the winds; that is where they belong. Reputation is as unstable as the winds, while character is fixed as eternity. Though Satan with all his power might succeed in saddling upon us the worst reputation he can invent, thank the Lord we have a character that will stand in the judgment.

58

Christ actually did something for everyone

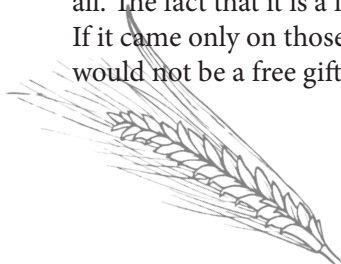
“As through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life” (Romans 5:18).

We are inheritors of a sinful nature through Adam. We cannot complain that we are unjustly dealt with. It is true that we are not to blame for having a sinful nature, and the Lord recognizes the fact. So He provides that just as in Adam we were made partakers of a sinful nature, even so in Christ we shall be made partakers of the divine nature.

But “much more.” The life of which we are made partakers in Christ is much stronger for righteousness than the life which we received from Adam is for unrighteousness. God does not do things by halves. He gives “abundance of grace.”

There has not a man lived on earth over whom death has not reigned, nor will there be until the end of the world. There are no exceptions, for the Scripture says that “death passed upon all men.” For the reign of death is simply the reign of sin. Enoch was righteous only by faith; his nature was as sinful as that of any other man. Remember that this present going into the grave is not the punishment of sin. It is simply the evidence of our mortality. Good and bad alike die. This is not the condemnation, because men die rejoicing in the Lord, and even singing songs of triumph.

“Through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.” There is no exception here. As the condemnation came upon all, so the justification comes upon all. Christ has tasted death for every man. He has given Himself for all. Nay, He has given Himself to every man. The free gift has come upon all. The fact that it is a free gift is evidence that there is no exception. If it came only on those who have some special qualification, then it would not be a free gift.



59

The reasons why everyone cannot be saved

“God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved” (John 3:16, 17).

It is a fact, plainly stated in the Bible, that the gift of righteousness and life in Christ has come to every man on earth. There is not the slightest reason why every man that has ever lived should not be saved unto eternal life, except that they would not have it. So many spurn the gift offered so freely.

Someone may ask, “Why are not all made righteous by the obedience of One?” The reason is that they do not wish to be. People are not simply counted righteous, but actually made righteous, by the obedience of Christ who lives today in those who yield to Him. His ability to live in any human being is shown in the fact that He took human flesh eighteen hundred years ago. What God did in the person of the Carpenter of Nazareth, He is willing and anxious to do for every one who believes. The free gift comes upon all, but all will not accept it, and therefore all are not made righteous by it.

Nevertheless, “many” will be made righteous by His obedience.

Is the heart full of sin? Know that where sin abounds, there does grace much more abound (Romans 5:20). Christ, who is full of grace, stands at the door of the heart that is sinfulness itself, and knocks for admission. “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief” (1 Timothy 1:15). When Wesley sang,

“Plenteous grace with Thee is found,
Grace to cover all my sin,”

he had the authority of Romans 5:20 for it!



60

“Under grace” means obedience to God’s law

“Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace” (Romans 6:14).

Although the throne of God is the habitation of His law, that law which is death to sinners, yet it is a throne of grace. We “come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16). Note—we are to come to obtain mercy. Note also that the top of the ark of the testimony in which were the tables of the law was called the mercy-seat. The ark of the earthly tabernacle not only represented the throne where God’s law is enshrined, but it represented that throne as the throne of grace.

“Even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 5:21). Christ’s life was given for us and to us on the cross. By being crucified with Him we live with Him. In His heart was the law, so that the heart of Christ was really the throne of God. Sinai and Calvary are not in opposition, but are united. Both present the same gospel and the same law. The life which flows for us from Calvary bears to us the righteousness of the law that was proclaimed from Sinai.

Thus we see how grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life. Eternal life is in Christ, because His life is the life of the self-existent God who is “from everlasting to everlasting.” But the life of God is the law. The grace of God flows to us through the life of Christ, and thus in Christ we receive the law as it was ordained to life.

To accept the unspeakable gift of God’s grace therefore is simply to yield ourselves to Him, that Christ may dwell in us and live in us the righteousness of the law as spoken from Sinai, and treasured in the throne of God, From Christ that living stream still flows, so that receiving Him, we shall have in us that well of water spring up unto everlasting life.



61

The Good News is very, very good

“God our Savior . . . desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. . . . The Man Christ Jesus . . . gave Himself a ransom for all” (1 Timothy 2:3-6).

Wherein was Adam the figure of Christ? In this: That all that were in the world were included in Adam. And all that are in the world are included in Christ. In other words, Adam in his sin reached all the world; Jesus Christ, the second Adam, in His righteousness touches all humanity. That is where Adam is the figure of Him that was to come. The first Adam touched all of us; what he did included all of us. If he had remained true to God, that would have included all of us. And when he fell away from God, that took us also. Whatever he should have done embraced us; and what he did made us what we are.

Now, here is another Adam. Does He touch as many as the first Adam did? That is the question! The answer: what the second Adam did embraces all that were embraced in what the first Adam did.

“The free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.” Are all men going to be justified? All men might if they would. But, says Christ, “You will not come to Me that you might have life.” All are dead in trespasses and sins. The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It comes right within the reach of all men, and those who do not get it are those who do not want it.

The faith of Christ must bring the righteousness of God, because the possession of that faith is the possession of the Lord Himself. This faith is dealt to every man, even as Christ gave Himself to every man. Do you ask what then can prevent every man from being saved? The answer is, Nothing, except the fact that all men will not keep the faith. If all would keep all that God gives them, all would be saved.



62

How to meet temptation

“Do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life” (Romans 6:12, 13, NIV).

There is one man, Christ Jesus, who resisted successfully all the powers of sin when He was here upon earth. He was the Word made flesh. He could stand before the world and challenge any to convict Him of sin. No guile was found in His mouth. By His obedience shall many be made righteous.

Many today ask, How can I have His life or His righteousness? If we will eat the flesh of Christ and drink His blood, we will have the life of Christ. If we have His life, we have a righteous life. His obedience works in us, and that makes us righteous. This does not leave any room for the statement that Christ obeyed for us and that therefore we can do as we please, and His righteousness will be accounted unto us just the same. His obedience must be manifested in us day by day. It is not our obedience, but the obedience of Christ working in us. The life we live is the life of the Son of God. He lets us get all the benefit of that obedience because we have shown our intense desire for obedience.

When you go to God in prayer, take these Scriptures on your lips: “We shall be saved by His life.” “By the obedience of One shall many be made righteous.” Then when you come to the time of temptation, the time when you have usually fallen, you can tell Satan that he has no power to make you fall beneath that temptation, for it is not you but Christ that dwells in you.

We must have a life different from our natural life in order to resist sin. That must be a life that sin has never touched and can never touch. Repeat the glorious words over and over again, “His life is mine, I cannot be touched by sin. That was a sinless life, and by faith I have it.” That is the only way to resist, and that will be successful every time.

63

*Saved by faith and works,
or by faith which works*

“The righteousness of faith speaks in this way, . . . ‘The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart’ (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:6-9).

May we accept the statement in the last verse as literally true? Shall we be in danger if we do? Is not something more than faith necessary to salvation?

To the first of these questions we say, Yes. To the last two we say, No. So plain a statement cannot be other than literally true, that can be depended on by the trembling sinner.

Take the case of the jailer at Philippi. Paul and Silas, after having been inhumanly beaten, were placed in his care. Notwithstanding their lacerated backs and manacled feet, they prayed and sang praises to God at midnight. Suddenly an earthquake shook the prison and all the doors were opened. It was not alone the dread of Roman justice if the prisoners should escape that caused the jailer to tremble. He felt in that earthquake shock a premonition of the great Judgment. Trembling under his load of guilt, he fell down before Paul and Silas saying, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

Mark well the answer: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved” (Acts 16:30, 31). This agrees exactly with the words we quoted from Paul to the Romans. On one occasion the Jews said to Jesus, “What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?” Just the thing we want to know. Mark the reply: “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent” (John 6:28, 29).

Would that these words might be written in letters of gold and kept before the eyes of every struggling Christian. The seeming paradox is cleared up. Works are necessary; yet faith is all-sufficient, because faith does the work.

64

*A true idea of faith
clears up confusion*

“Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law” (Romans 3:31).

The trouble is that many people in general have a faulty conception of faith. They imagine that it is mere assent, and that it is only a passive thing, to which active works must be added.

But faith is active, and it is not only the most substantial thing, but the only real foundation. The law is the righteousness of God for which we are commanded to seek, but it cannot be kept except by faith. The only righteousness which will stand in the Judgment is “through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith” (Philippians 3:9).

Making void the law of God by man is not abolishing it, for that is an impossibility. No matter how much men may trample upon it and despise it, it remains the same. The only way that people can make void the law of God is by their disobedience. So when the apostle says that we do not make void the law through faith, he means that faith and disobedience are incompatible. No matter how much the law-breaker professes faith, the fact that he is a law-breaker shows that he has no faith. But the possession of faith is shown by the establishment of the law in the heart, so that the man does not sin against God.

Let no one decry faith as of little moment.

Christ does not ask you to put all your sins away before you can come to Him and be wholly His. He asks you to come, sins and all; and He will take away from you all your sins. He gave Himself for you, sins and all. He bought you, sins and all; let Him have what He bought. Let Him have His own. Let Him have you, sins and all.



65

*James and Paul are not
contradicting each other*

“We conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law” (Paul, in Romans 3:28). “You see, then, that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only” (James, in James 2:24).

Does not the apostle James say that faith alone cannot save a man, and that faith without works is dead? Let us look at his words a moment.

Too many have with honest intent perverted them to a dead legalism. He does say that faith without works is dead, and this agrees most fully with what we have just quoted and written [from Paul]. For if faith without works is dead, the absence of works shows the absence of faith, for that which is dead has no existence.

If a man has faith, works will necessarily appear, and by faith boasting is excluded. Boasting is done only by those who trust wholly in dead works, or whose profession of faith is a hollow mockery.

“If someone says he has faith but does not have works . . . can faith save him?” (James 2:14). The answer is of course, that it cannot. Why not?—Because he hasn’t it. Must we decry the power of faith simply because it does nothing for the man who makes a false profession of it? The fact that he has no good works—no fruit of the Spirit—shows that he has no faith, despite his loud profession. Faith has no power to save a man who does not possess it.

Justification, first, last, and all the time, is by faith alone. The Christian cannot be justified by works any more than the sinner can be.

But this is not to say that works have nothing to do with faith. Faith which justifies is a faith which makes the man a doer of the law. One is not justified by faith and works, but by faith alone which works.



66

*Could God be on trial
in the judgment?*

“What if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written: ‘That You may be justified in Your words, and may overcome when You are judged’” (Romans 3:3, 4).

God is now accused by Satan of injustice and indifference, and even of cruelty. Thousands have echoed the charge. But the judgment will declare the righteousness of God. His character, as well as that of man, is on trial. In the judgment every act, both of God and man, that has been done since creation will be seen by all, in all its bearings. And when everything is seen in that perfect light, God will be acquitted of all wrongdoing, even by His enemies.

God is Himself on trial before the universe, and Satan and evil men have always charged Him with being unjust and arbitrary. But in the judgment all the universe will say, “Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints” (Revelation 15:3, KJV).

Satan himself can never find any fault with the way of salvation as being in any sense unfair. He deceived and overcame man, as man stood in the glory and image of God with all the blessing and the power and the goodness of God on his side. Now, when this second Adam comes into human flesh at the point to which Satan had brought the whole race by sin, and in this weakness [He] enters upon the contest, Satan can never say that “You have an unfair advantage. You have come here with too strong a panoply about You, with too many safeguards, for it to be a fair contest.” There stood Christ in the very weakness of the flesh to which Satan had brought man. And in that weakness our Brother won! He won it! Thank the Lord!

When Jesus is crowned before the universe, then every knee from Lucifer unto the last man that has rejected Him, will also bow and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord; and they will do it to the glory of God the Father.

67

*It’s astounding that
God has faith in us!*

“No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you” (John 15:15).

The Lord says that He proposes to keep back nothing from you. That shows that He has a great deal of confidence in us!

But it is so natural to think that He only tolerates us when we believe in Jesus. By forcing Himself to do so He can bear our ways a little longer, if by any means we can make ourselves good enough so that He can like us well enough to have confidence in us. And Satan is so ready to talk to us like that.

But the Lord does not want us to hesitate and doubt as to our standing before Him. He says: “When you have believed in Me, you are accepted in Me. I do not propose to tolerate you merely to try to get along with you. I propose to put confidence in you as in a friend, and take you into the councils of My will, and give you a part in all the affairs of the inheritance.”

I have heard people say that they were thankful for the confidence they had in the Lord. I have no objection to that, but I do not think it is a very great accomplishment, or worthy of any very great commendation, that I should have confidence in the Lord, considering who I am and who He is.

But it is an astonishment that He should have confidence in me! That is where the wonder comes. You know that is the last point that a human being can reach in confidence and friendship that the family secrets should be laid open to him. Yet that is the way the Lord treats the believer in Jesus!

The Lord does not take us upon suspicion, nor does He merely tolerate us. He says, “Come unto Me.” You are accepted in the Beloved. Come into the house; sit down at the table, and eat. You are henceforth one of the family.

68

Even when Christ was dead He was stronger

“I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death” (Revelation 1:18, KJV).

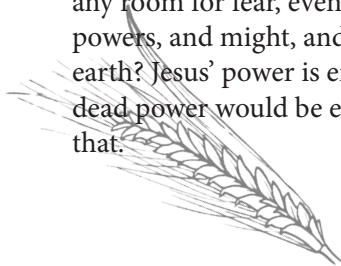
By deception Satan became the head of this world. And having taken Adam under his control, he became the head of this dominion, this world, and of all principality and power in it.

But a stronger One than he came into the world. A second Adam came, not as the first Adam was, but as the first Adam had caused his descendants to be in the degeneracy of the race to which it had come from the first Adam. That second Adam came and disputed the dominion of this one who had taken possession.

He who came into this rebellious dominion proved to be stronger than he who had possession, and He defeated him at every step. Then in order to show to the universe how completely more powerful He is than the other, Jesus not only defeated Satan while He was alive, but after He gave Himself over dead into the hands of this one who was in possession, who shut Him up in his stronghold, dead. And even then He broke the power of Satan! The battle has been fought and won.

Thus Christ has demonstrated that He is not only stronger than Satan when He is alive, but that [even] when dead He is stronger. Therefore He came forth from the tomb and exclaimed before the universe, “Behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.”

Well then, when a dead Christ is stronger than all the power of the devil, what can a living Christ not do who sits at the right hand of God today? Is there any room for our being discouraged? Is there any room for fear, even in the presence of all the principalities, and powers, and might, and dominion, that the devil can muster on the earth? Jesus’ power is enlisted in our behalf—His living power. His dead power would be enough, wouldn’t it? But He does not stop at that.



69

Christ has the keys of our prison-house

“Because I live, you will live also” (John 14:19).

Jesus came into the very citadel of this illegal power who held this world of might as against right. This One came forth carrying the keys and He holds them still.

Then if this illegal power should even get some of us into the same prison-house, it is all right; he cannot keep us there, for our Friend has the keys. He spoiled principalities and powers. He led a multitude of captives from this dominion of death when He came forth. He made a show in a grand parade of them openly, triumphing in it. The word “triumph” here refers to a Roman triumph granted to the Roman general who had gone into an enemy country, taken spoil and captives, and brought them home to his own city. If any of the Roman citizens were captives in that land, he brought them home. When his victory was complete, the Senate granted him a triumph—all the people out in the great gala-day.

Jesus Christ, our Conqueror in our behalf, came into this land of the enemy. We were prisoners under the power of this illegal one. Our General fought our battles clear through and broke open the citadel. He brings forth the captives, and leads them in triumph to His own glorious city.

Jesus died as a malefactor, abused, tossed about, mobbed, scoffed, spit upon, crowned with thorns, and He died under it in His appeal to the power of right against might. And that power of right has moved the world ever since, and it is to move the world in our day as it never has been moved before.



70

Distress of nations is coming

“And there will be . . . on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven will be shaken” (Luke 21:25, 26).

The Lord Jesus entered upon the open field in contest with Satan, in human flesh at the point in degeneracy when He was born into the world. Human nature will never be any weaker, never reach any lower in itself, than when Jesus Christ came into the world. The only means by which man will be worse is that the same iniquity will be professing Christianity.

And that makes him worse in this respect, in that he has cut himself off from salvation by taking God’s means of salvation and making it a cloak for his iniquities. In himself, in the flesh, his own practical wickedness is not any greater: only now he is a hypocrite as well as wicked.

The world in the last days will not be any worse in itself than it was when Christ was born into the world. The only way in which it will be worse is that in having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof, it uses the profession of Christianity to cover its ungodliness. So it perverts God’s only means of salvation so as to destroy itself against all remedy.

Read the last verses of the first chapter of Romans if you wish to have a picture of the world in the last days. The one who believes in a millennium of peace and righteousness before the coming of the Lord will doubtless be shocked; but he needs to be. The seed which produces such a crop is already sown broadcast. “The man of sin, . . . the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped” (2 Thessalonians 2:3) is the strongest force in Christendom, and its power is daily increasing, by the blind acceptance of its principles by professed Protestants. The majority of Protestants follow in its train, accepting the symbol of justification by works instead of by faith.

71

The prosecuting attorney is defeated

“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel” (Genesis 3:15).

Ever since Satan obtained control of this world and God said, “I will put enmity between you and the woman,” God has been calling people from the ranks of Satan unto Himself into His dominion. And many had been coming all the time.

But Satan had been making the charge that that was not fair, arguing: “These are my rightful conquest, and You are leading them off to You. What have You done, that by right You can do, when I gained it here?” Thus he was always accusing those before God day and night whom God called out of this world unto Himself. Satan declared: “These are my property, my rightful subjects; they are laden with sin and altogether wicked. Yet You call them out and justify them and propose to hold them before the universe as though they had been good all the time. That is not fair. They are sinners; they are wicked; they are just like all the rest of us over here.”

This accuser comes as a prosecuting attorney into a court. He would prosecute all these, his subjects, as slave-holders used to do under the Fugitive Slave Law in the United States, and demand that they should be given up once more to his authority.

And there was room for him to present that argument with an apparent shadow of right, because the contest had not yet been carried on. The battle had not been fought and the victory won so completely that his argument as a prosecuting attorney should be annihilated.

Now Jesus came into the world to demonstrate that He had the right to do all this and that it was fair. At the point of weakness He entered upon the contest with Satan to recover, by right, the headship of this lost dominion. The promise and the victory had to be tested in an open conflict in the flesh.

72

*How the divine-human
Defense Attorney won*

“My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have One who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:1, 2, NIV).

When Christ came in the flesh, was there as much temptation for Him to meet, and was it as real a temptation, as though no promise had ever been made of redemption? Assuredly. If not, then He was guarded against temptation, and the conflict was not real but imaginary.

He came into the world to demonstrate the unrighteousness of that argument that Satan was presenting in the courts of God as the prosecuting attorney. It is legal all the way through. And He conquered, and became by right the Head of this dominion again, and of all who will be redeemed from it.

That word in the Greek which says that the accuser of our brethren “is cast down” conveys the idea of a prosecuting attorney who comes into court but has no case any more, no place for argument. Now we have an Advocate in the court, Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus in heaven will never be in all respects as He was before. He who was in the form of God took the form of man. Thus He will bear our human form before the Father’s throne through eternal ages. He says, “The glory which You gave Me I have given them” (John 17:22). Instead of Christ’s being lowered, we are exalted. Instead of divinity’s being lessened, humanity is exalted. Instead of bringing Him down to all eternity to where we are, it lifts us to all eternity where He is. Instead of robbing Him of His glory and putting Him where we are who have none, He laid aside this glory for a season and became ourselves, took our form forever, in order that this form shall be exalted to the glory which He had before the world was.

In what form was the contest carried on with Satan? In our human form, in my nature, in your nature.

73

*Christ had to take our
fallen, sinful nature*

“Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people” (Hebrews 2:17).

The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life—these tendencies to sin are in the flesh, drawing upon us. In this is the temptation. But temptation is not sin. Not until the desire is cherished is there sin.

But as soon as the desire is cherished, as soon as we consent to it and receive it into the mind and hold it there, then there is sin. And whether or not that desire is carried out in action, the sin is committed. In consenting to it we have already done the thing so far as the mind itself goes. All that can come after that is simply the sensual part, the satisfaction of the flesh.

Therefore the only place where the Lord could bring help and deliverance to us is right in the place where the thoughts are, at the very root of the sin, the point where the sin is conceived, where it begins. Consequently, when He was tempted and tried as He was, when He was spit upon, when they struck Him in the face and on the head, and in all His public ministry when the priests in their iniquity were doing everything they could to irritate Him and get Him stirred up—when he was constantly tried thus, His hand was never raised to return the blow. He never had to check any such motion, because not even the impulse was ever allowed. Yet He had our human nature in which such impulses are so natural.

Why did not these motions manifest themselves in our human nature in Him?

He was surrendered to the will of the Father. The power of God, through the Holy Spirit worked against the flesh and fought the battle in the field of the thoughts. Under all these insults and grievous trials our human nature in Him was just as calm as when the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove overshadowed Him on the banks of the Jordan. Now “let this mind be in you.”

74

Good News: we too can have the victory

“For we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” “He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him (Hebrews 4:15 [KJV]; 7:25).

It is not enough for a Christian to become all stirred up and say a few spiteful words or raise the hand in resentment, and then say, “O, I am a Christian; I must not say this or do that” We are to be so submitted to the power of God and the influence of the Spirit of God that our thoughts shall be so completely controlled that the victory shall be won already, and not even the impulse be allowed.

Then we shall be Christians everywhere all the time, under all circumstances, and against all influences.

The things that were heaped upon Christ, which He bore, were the very things that were the hardest for human nature to bear. And before we get through with the cause in which we are engaged, we are going to have to meet these very things that are hardest for our human nature to bear. Unless we have the battle already won, we are not sure that we shall show the Christian spirit when it is most needed.

Now in Jesus, the Lord has brought to us just the power that will cause us to be submitted to Him, “bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5).

The law of God is written upon the heart. In the inmost recesses, the secret chamber of the heart, at the very root, the fountain of the thought—there Christ sets up His throne. Thus at the very citadel of the soul, the only place where sin can enter—there God sets up His throne. There He puts His law. The result is peace only, and all the time.



75

The Master Workman doesn't get discouraged

“I went down to the potters house, and there he was, making something at the wheel And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel as it seemed good to the potter to make” (Jeremiah 18:3, 4).

No master workman looks at a piece of work he is doing as it is half finished, and begins to find fault. There may be faults in it, but it is not finished yet.

And while he works on it to take away all the faults, still he looks at it in his finished purpose in his own original plan.

It would be an awful thing if the wondrous Master Workman were to look at us and say, That is good for nothing. He doesn't do that. He looks at us as we are in His eternal purpose in Christ, and goes on with His wondrous work.

You and I may look at it and say, “I don't see how the Lord is ever going to make a Christian out of me, and make me fit for heaven, or anything else.” If He looked at us as we look at ourselves, and if He were as poor a workman as we, we could never be of any worth. No; He looks at us as we are in His finished purpose. Although we may appear all rough, marred, and scarred now, as we are here and in ourselves; He sees us as we are yonder in Christ.

As we have confidence in Him, we will let Him carry on the work. Has He not given us an example of His workmanship? God has set before us in Christ His complete workmanship in sinful flesh. Now He says to us, “Look at that. That is what I am able to do with sinful flesh. Now you put your confidence in Me and let Me work. I will carry on the work.” It is not our task at all.



76

Take your eyes off of yourself

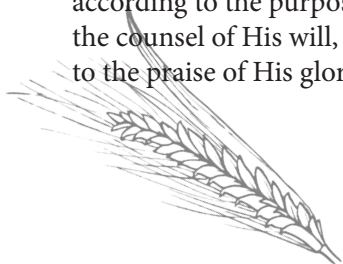
“By grace you have been saved through faith. . . . We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works” (Ephesians 2:8, 10).

You can go outside of this Tabernacle and look up at that window (referring to the window at the back of the pulpit), and it looks like only a mess of melted glass thrown together, unsightly. But come inside and look from within, and you see it as a beautiful piece of workmanship, written in clear texts: “Justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:24), and the law of God written out in full.

You and I can look at ourselves from the outside and all looks dark, ungainly, as though it were only a tangled mass. God looks at it from the inside, as it is in Jesus. When we look through the light that God has given us from the inside as we are in Jesus Christ, we shall also see in clear texts by the Spirit of God, “Justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1). We shall see the whole law of God written in the heart and shining in the life, and the words: “Here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” (Revelation 14:12).

Those who accept Christ are looked upon not as they are in Adam, but as they are in Jesus Christ, as the sons and daughters of God. Are you glad for it? Let us take it in. In Him He has perfected His plan concerning us. Let the power of God work in us, raise us from the dead, and set us at God’s right hand in the heavenly places in Christ, where He sits.

In Him “we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory” (Ephesians 1:11, 12).



77

The practical reality of “Not I, but Christ”

“Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself” (Philippians 2:5-7, NASB).

Christ was so entirely emptied of Himself, so entirely was He from being manifested in any way, that no influence went forth from Him except the influence of the Father. No man could come to Him except the Father drew that man to Him.

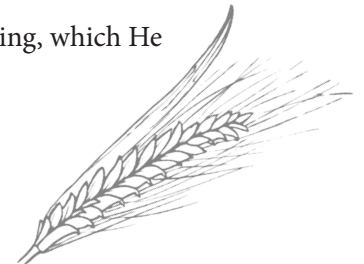
That shows how completely He Himself was kept in the background, how completely He was emptied. It was done so thoroughly that no man could feel any influence from Him or be drawn to Him except from the Father Himself.

That illustrates what it is to glorify God. It is to be so entirely emptied of self that no influence go forth from the individual but the influence of God,—so emptied that everything, every word, will tell only of the Father.

When Jesus was upon earth, He was in our human, sinful flesh. And when He emptied Himself and kept Himself back, the Father so dwelt in Him and manifested Himself there, that all the works of the flesh were quenched. The glory of God, the character of God, were manifested instead of anything of the human.

God was “manifest in the flesh,” in sinful flesh—not God manifested in sinless flesh, but in sinful flesh. He will so dwell in our sinful flesh today that although that flesh be sinful, its sinfulness will not cast any influence on others. In spite of all the sinfulness of sinful flesh, His righteousness, His character, shall be manifested wherever that person goes.

That was the intent of God from the beginning, which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.



78

*is the secret cause
of backsliding?*

“If, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we ourselves were found to be sinners, is Christ then an agent of sin? Certainly not! But if I build up again those things which I tore down, then I prove myself a transgressor” (Galatians 2:17, 18, RSV).

Jesus is “the Holy and Righteous One” (Acts 3:14, RSV). “In Him is no sin” (1 John. 3:5, KJV). He not only “committed no sin” (1 Peter 2:22), but also “knew no sin” (2 Corinthians 5:21). Therefore it is impossible that any sin can come from Him. He does not impart sin. In the stream of life that flows from the heart of Christ through His wounded side there is no trace of impurity. He is not the minister [the agent] of sin; that is, He does not minister sin to anybody.

If in anyone who has sought and found righteousness through Christ, there is afterward found sin, it is because the person has dammed up the stream, allowing the water to become stagnant. The Word has not been given free course. And where there is no activity, there is death. No one is to blame for this, but the person himself.

If a Christian tears down or destroys his sins through Christ and then later builds those sins back up, he again becomes a lawbreaker in need of Christ.

That which is destroyed is the body of sin, and it is destroyed only by the personal presence of the life of Christ. It is destroyed for everybody, for Christ in His own flesh has abolished the “enmity” the sinner’s carnal mind. Our sins, our weaknesses, were upon Him. For every soul the victory has been gained, and the enemy has been disarmed. We have only to accept the victory which Christ has won. Our faith makes it real to us. The loss of faith puts us outside the reality, and the old body of sin looms up again. That which is destroyed by faith is built up again by unbelief.

This is a present personal matter with each individual.

79

*God cannot bear false
witness about anyone*

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1).

What does this mean? What is it to be justified?

Many think it is a sort of half-way house to perfect favor with God, a substitute for real righteousness. Their idea is that if one will only believe what the Bible says, he is to be counted as righteous when he is not. This is a great mistake.

Justification has to do with the law. The term means making just. To be just means to be righteous. To justify one, to make him just, is to make him a doer of the law.

Being justified by faith is simply being made a doer of the law by faith. Not only have all sinned, but “the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be” (Romans 8:7). Since man has sinned, it is impossible that any amount of subsequent obedience could make up for that sin. The fact that one does not steal today does not do away with the fact that he stole something yesterday, nor does it lessen his guilt. The law will condemn a man for a theft committed last year, even though he may have refrained from stealing ever since.

Further, it is impossible for any one by nature to be subject to the law of God. He cannot do what the law requires. “In me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells” (Romans 7:18). The fault is not in the law, but in the man.

But what the law cannot do, the grace of God does. It justifies a man. What kind of men does it justify?—Sinners, of course, for they are the only ones who stand in need of justification. So we read, “To him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (Romans 4:5). It does not mean that God glosses over one’s faults so that he is counted righteous when he is really wicked; but it means that He makes that person a doer of the law. The moment God declares an ungodly man righteous, that instant that man is a doer of the law.

80

How is one justified, or made righteous?

“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:23, 24).

Remember that to justify means to make one a doer of the law, and then read the text again: “Being made a doer of the law freely, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” The redemption that is in Christ is the worthiness, or the purchasing power, of Christ. He gives Himself to the sinner. His righteousness is given to the one who has sinned, and who believes.

That does not mean that Christ’s righteousness which He did 1900 years ago is laid up for the sinner to be simply credited to his account; it means that His present, active righteousness is given to him. So the one who was a sinner is transformed into a new person, having the very righteousness of God.

It will be seen therefore that there can be no higher state than that of justification [by faith]. It does everything that God can do for one, short of making him immortal, which is done only at the resurrection.

But this does not mean that being justified, there is no more danger of falling into sin. No; “the just shall live by faith.” Faith and submission to God must be exercised continually in order to remain a doer of the law.

This enables us to see clearly the force of these words, “Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law” (Romans 3:31). Instead of breaking the law and making it of no effect in our lives, we establish it in our hearts by faith. This is so because faith brings Christ into the heart, and the law of God is in the heart of Christ. This One who obeys is the Lord Jesus Christ, and His obedience is done in the heart of everyone who believes.

To Him shall be the glory for ever and ever.

81

The only way we can endure looking at the sun

“We all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:18).

There is the sun shining in the heavens. You and I would like to look upon it, but even a glance so dazzles our eyes that it takes a moment for them to recover.

Now if you take a prism—a three-sided piece of glass—and hold it to the sun that the rays shine through it, what do you see reflected on the wall? A rainbow. And what is a more beautiful blending of colors?

But that rainbow is simply the sun with its glory so distributed that we can look upon it and see how beautiful it is. The prism causes it to shine in such rays that we can look on it. Looking at the open face of the sun we cannot see it.

God is ever so much brighter than the sun. What would His transcendent glory do upon our mortal, sinful eyes? It would consume us. But He wants us to see His glory. Therefore Jesus puts Himself here between the Father and us, and the Father causes all His glory to be manifest in Him, to shine forth from His face. Thus we are enabled to see God as He is.

You can have the glory of God manifest every day of the year if you will only hold Christ before your eyes as a blessed prism for refracting the bright beams of God’s glory. Your own self [is] presented to God for these refracted rays to fall upon for reflection. Then not only you but other people will constantly see the glory of God.

Will you let yourself stand there, open to the refracted rays of the glory of God, as they shine through that blessed prism?

“Jesus spoke to them again, saying I am the light of the world.”
“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. . . . Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (John 8:12; Matthew 5:14, 16).

82

The miracle-working power of forgiveness

“Jesus . . . said, . . . ‘Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins—then He said to the paralytic, Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house” (Matthew 9:4-6).

One of the most common expressions to be heard is this: “I can believe that God will forgive sin, but it is hard to believe He can keep me from sin.” Such a person has yet to learn what is meant by God’s forgiving sin.

Jesus healed the palsied man for the purpose of illustrating forgiving sin. The power in the healing of that man is the power in the forgiveness of sins.

The words of Jesus made a change in him. The common idea is that when God forgives sin the change is in Himself, that God simply ceases to hold anything against the one who has sinned. But this is to imply that God has a hardness against the man, which is not the case. It is not because He has a hard feeling in His heart against a sinner that He forgives him, but because the sinner has something in his heart. God is right, the man is wrong; therefore God forgives the man so that he may also be right.

The power that raised that man up made him walk. That power remained in him and he walked in all time to come, provided of course that he kept his faith. “I waited patiently for the Lord, and He . . . set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps” (Psalm 40:1, 2). It is the power of God’s forgiveness alone that keeps one from sin. If he continues in sin after receiving pardon, it is because he has not grasped the blessing that was given him in the forgiveness of sins.

The beginning of the Christian life is receiving the life of God by faith. How is it continued? Just as it is begun—simply holding fast the Life which at the beginning forgives the sin. God forgives sin by taking it away. He reconciles the rebel sinner to Himself by taking away his rebellion.”

83

The secret of overcoming

“Just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness” (Romans 6:19).

The secret of overcoming lies (1) in wholly yielding to God with a sincere desire to do His will; (2) in knowing that He accepts us as His servants; (3) in retaining that submission to Him and leaving ourselves in His hands.

Often victory can be gained only by repeating again and again, “O Lord, truly I am Your servant; I am Your servant, the son of Your maidservant; You have loosed my bonds” (Psalm 116:16). This is simply an emphatic way of saying, “O Lord, I have yielded myself to You; let Your will be done and not the dictates of the flesh.”

But when we realize the force of that scripture that we are servants of God, immediately will come the thought, “Well, if I am indeed an instrument in the hands of God, He cannot use me to do evil with, nor can He permit me to do evil as long as I remain in His hands. He must keep me if I am kept from evil, because I cannot keep myself. But He wants to keep me from evil, for He has shown His desire and His power to fulfill it in giving Himself for me. Therefore I shall be kept from this evil.”

All these thoughts may pass through the mind instantly. Then must come a gladness that we shall be kept from the dreaded evil! That gladness naturally finds expression in thanksgiving to God. And while we are thanking God, the enemy retires with his temptation, and the peace of God fills the heart.

Then we find that the joy in believing far outweighs all the joy that comes from indulgence in sin!

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. . . . Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil” (Matthew 6:9, 13).

84

How the law of God becomes the final issue

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1).

“Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law” (Romans 3:31). To “make void” the law is not to abolish it, for no one can abolish it. To “make void the law” is to show by the life it is of no consequence.

We make void the law of God when we allow it to have no power in the life. To make void the law is to break it; but the law remains whether it is kept or not. Making it void affects only the individual.

Therefore the apostle means that faith does not lead to violation of the law, but to obedience. No, we should not say that faith leads to obedience, but that faith itself obeys. Faith establishes the law in the heart. If the thing hoped for is righteousness, faith establishes it. Instead of faith leading to antinomianism, it is the only thing that is contrary to antinomianism [the doctrine that the law of God is abolished or that it is impossible for anyone to keep it truly].

It matters not how much a person boasts in the law of God; if he rejects or ignores implicit faith in Christ, he is no better than the one who directly assails the law. The man of faith is the only one who truly honors the law of God.

Yes, faith does the impossible, and it is that which God requires us to do. When Joshua said to Israel, “You cannot serve the Lord,” he told the truth, yet it was a fact that God required them to serve Him. It is not within anyone’s power to do righteousness even though he wants to. Therefore it is a mistake to say that all God wants is for us to do the best we can. He who does no better than that will not do the works of God. No, he must do better than he can do.

He must do that which only the power of God working through him can do. It is impossible for a man to walk on water, yet Peter did it when he exercised faith in Jesus.

85

How weak people become strong

“Peter said, ‘Silver and gold I do not have, hut what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.’ And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength” (Acts 3:6, 7).

This notable miracle caused a wonderful excitement among the people. Now make the application:

The man was “lame from his mother’s womb,” unable to help himself. He would gladly have walked but he could not. We likewise can say with David, “I was brought forth in iniquity and in sin my mother conceived me” (Psalm 51:5). Each year of the man’s life increased his inability to walk by increasing the weight of his body, while his limbs grew no stronger. So the repeated practice of sin as we grow older strengthens its power over us.

Yet the Name of Christ, through faith in it, gave him perfect freedom from his infirmity. So we, through faith, may be made whole and enabled to do what hitherto has been impossible. One of the wonders of faith, as shown in the ancient worthies, is that “out of weakness [they] were made strong” (Hebrews 11:34).

The very act of loosing us from the power of sin proves Gods acceptance of us as His servants. And now comes the conflict again. Satan comes, armed with the lash of fierce temptation. We know by sad experience that he is more powerful than we are, and that unaided we cannot resist him. But we cry for help. Then we call to mind that we are not Satan’s subjects any longer. We have submitted ourselves to God, and therefore He has accepted us as His servants. This is evidence that God will protect us, for He cares for His own. We have the assurance that He who has begun a good work in us “will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6).

In this confidence we are strong to resist.

86

*The lady who was bent
over for 18 years*

“There was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up. But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, ‘Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity.’ And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God” (Luke 13:11-13).

Consider this miracle:

(1) The woman was bound; we, through fear of death, have been all our life-time subject to bondage.

(2) Satan had bound the woman; Satan has also set snares for our feet and brought us into captivity.

(3) She could in nowise lift herself up; our iniquities have taken hold of us so that we are not able to look up (Psalm. 40:12).

(4) With a word and a touch Jesus set the woman free; we have the same merciful High Priest now in the heavens, who is touched with the feeling of our weaknesses. The same word will deliver us from evil.

Why were the miracles of healing recorded, which were performed by Jesus? John tells us. Not simply to show that He can heal disease, but to show His power over sin. “These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name” (John 20:31). They are recorded simply as object lessons of Christ’s love, of His willingness to relieve, and of His power over the works of Satan, whether in the body or in the soul.

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened” (Luke 11:9, 10).

“If two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven” (Matthew 18:19).



87

*The kind of prayer that
brings victory*

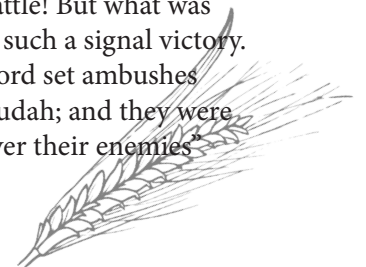
“Some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, ‘A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea.’ . . . And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah” (2 Chronicles 20:2, 3).

The king and the people took the wise course of gathering together “to ask help of the Lord” The prayer of Jehoshaphat was a prayer of faith and contained within itself the beginning of victory: “Are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You?” (2 Chronicles 20:6). The one who can begin his prayer in the hour of need with such a recognition of God’s power, has victory already on his side.

Then Jehoshaphat concluded: “We have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You” (verse 12). Since the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the earth to show Himself strong in behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him (16:9), it becomes those in need to trust Him alone.

Now, what was the result? The prophet of the Lord came and said, “Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God’s.’ . . . And Jehoshaphat stood and said, ‘Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper.’ . . . He appointed those who should sing to the Lord, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army” (20:15, 20, 21).

Surely this was a strange way to go out to battle! But what was the result? Few armies have been rewarded by such a signal victory. “When they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes against the people . . . who had come against Judah; and they were defeated—The Lord had made them rejoice over their enemies” (verses 22, 27).



88

*Jehoshaphat's God still
hears his kind of prayer*

"He who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

It may not be amiss to study into the philosophy of the victory of faith as illustrated in this instance [of Jehoshaphat; 2 Chronicles 20:1-27].

What must the enemy have concluded? Nothing else but that the Israelites had received reinforcements; it would be useless to oppose them. So a panic seized them and each looked on his neighbor as an enemy.

Were they not correct—that Israel had received reinforcements? Indeed! "The Lord set ambushes." But the point which should be specially noticed is that when Israel began to sing and to praise, it signifies that their faith was real. The promise of God was considered as good as the actual accomplishment. Thus they were "established."

Let us apply this in a conflict against sin. Here comes a strong temptation. We know we have no might against it. But now our eyes are upon the Lord who has told us to come with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may find grace to help in time of need. So we begin to pray, not with a mournful statement of our weakness, but with a joyful acknowledgement of God's mighty power.

If we state our weakness and discouraging situation first, we are placing ourselves before God. In that case Satan will throw his darkness around us so we can see nothing else but our weakness. Although our cries and pleading may be fervent and agonizing, they will be in vain. They will lack the essential element of believing that God is, and that He is all that He has revealed Himself to be.

But when we start with a recognition of God's power, then we can safely state our weakness, for then we are simply placing our weakness by the side of His power, and the contrast begets courage.



89

*Things to remember
when we pray*

"Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father" (Galatians 1:3, 4).

As we pray, the promise of God comes to our mind, brought there by the Holy Spirit. It may be that we can think of no special promise that exactly fits the case, but we can remember "that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15), and that He gave Himself for our sins. We may know that "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32).

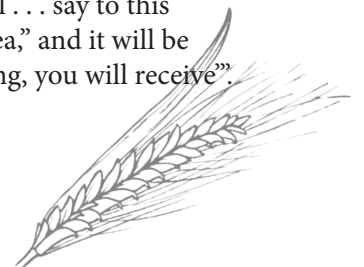
We remember that God can speak of those things that are not as though they were (Romans 4:17). That is, if God gives a promise, it is as good as fulfilled already. And so we count the victory as already ours and begin to thank God for His "exceeding great and precious promises."

As our faith grasps these promises, we cannot help praising God; and while we are doing this, our minds are wholly taken from evil and the victory is ours. The Lord sets "ambushes" against the enemy!

This shows Satan that we have obtained reinforcements; and as he has tested the power of the help granted to us, he knows that he can do nothing on that occasion, and so he leaves us.

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6, 7).

"If you have faith and do not doubt, you will . . . say to this mountain, "Be removed and be cast into the sea," and it will be done. And whatever you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive". (Matthew 21:21, 22).



“Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price” (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20).

Many hesitate to make a start to serve the Lord because they fear that He will not accept them. I reply by a question: If you go to a store and make a purchase, will you receive the goods? The fact that you bought them is sufficient proof, not only that you are willing but that you are anxious to receive them.

Let us apply this to the sinner coming to Christ. “He purchased [us] with His own blood” (Acts 20:28). He “gave Himself for us” (Titus 2:14).

He bought the whole world of sinners, “for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son” (John 3:16). Jesus said, “The bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world” (John 6:51). “When we were still without strength, . . . Christ died for the ungodly. . . . God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:6, 8).

“But I am not worthy.” That means you are not worth the price paid, and you fear to come lest Christ will repudiate the purchase. You might have some fear on that score if the bargain were not sealed and the price not already paid. But you have nothing to do with the question of worth. Christ made the purchase with His eyes open. He is not at all disappointed when you come to Him and He finds that you are worthless. If He was satisfied to make the bargain, you should be the last one to complain.

Most wonderful of all, He bought you for the very reason that you were not worthy. His eye saw in you great possibilities, and He bought you not for what you were then or are now worth, but for what He could make of you.

We have no righteousness, therefore He bought us, “that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

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