

THE WAY MADE PLAIN

An Ancient Classic
Revised and Adapted for
Modern Use

JAMES H. BROOKES, D.D.



NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE
THE SUNDAY SCHOOL BOARD
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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Those who carefully read the first thirteen verses of the tenth chapter of Romans cannot fail to perceive the logical order and marvelous clearness with which the Holy Spirit there sets forth the Way of Life. It is the aim of this little book to follow that order, and it is the hope of the author in some feeble measure to reflect that clearness. Hence the Scriptures are closely followed at every step of the argument, since they alone can guide our feet in the paths of peace.

Frequently has the author, when dealing with inquiring souls, undertaken a simple exposition of this instructive and interesting passage, and often has the Lord been pleased to own it in imparting light to the darkened understanding and comfort to the troubled heart of the anxious sinner. To his blessing and favor it is now commended with the earnest prayer that it may be more greatly owned in his service, to the glory of Father, Son and Holy Spirit forever.

EDITOR'S FOREWORD

THE WAY MADE PLAIN has long been an outstanding classic in evangelistic literature. The book has been condensed and adapted for use in the Sunday School Training Course. It will serve as an optional book on soul-winning and will prove a helpful supplement to other treatises on this always fresh and vital subject.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TRAINING COURSE

The Sunday School Training Course prepared by the Sunday School Department of the Baptist Sunday School Board is one of the major means of promoting Sunday school work. Its influence is limited only by its use.

The six sections of the course include studies in Bible, doctrines, evangelism. Sunday school leadership and administration, teaching, age group studies, and special studies. The range of the course is broad, for the field of Sunday school work is broad and requires comprehensive and specific training. Sixteen books are required for the completion of each Diploma.

The study of the Training Course is not to be limited to the present Sunday school workers. Most churches need twice as many workers as are now enlisted. This need can be supplied by training additional workers now. Members of the Young People's and Adult classes and older Intermediates should be led to study these books, for thereby will their service be assured. Parents will find help as they study what the Sunday school is trying to do.

Write to your state Sunday school secretary or to the Sunday School Department, Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville 3, Tennessee, for a list of the books and other information.

SPECIAL NOTE TO INSTRUCTORS:

During your teaching of this book will you check with the Sunday school superintendent and see if an accurate record of training for the workers is kept. If not, please urge him to set up such a file with an associate superin-

tendent of training in charge. File cards for this purpose will be supplied free of charge upon request. For further information, write to the Sunday School Department, Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville 3, Tennessee.

J. N BARNETTE

Secretary, Sunday School Department
Baptist Sunday School Board

DIRECTIONS FOR THE STUDY OF THIS BOOK

I. FOR TEACHERS

1. Ten class periods of forty-five minutes each are needed for the completion of a book.
2. Teachers of classes are given, without special examination, the same award as is provided for the classes which they teach.

II. FOR CLASS MEMBERS

1. The student must be fifteen years of age or older.
2. The student must attend at least six forty-five minute class periods. Where students attended as many as five class periods, an award can be granted only when the following method is used:

Take the usual written examination on the chapters studied and discussed in class.

Study the remaining chapters of the book in accordance with the requirements of the individual method and hand the paper to the class teacher.

3. The student must take a written examination, making a minimum grade of 70 per cent.

4. The student must certify that the textbook has been read. (In rare cases where students may find it impracticable to read the book before the completion of the classwork, the teacher may accept a promise to read the book carefully within the next two weeks.)

III. FOR INDIVIDUAL STUDY

Those who for any reason wish to study the book without the guidance of a teacher will use one of the following methods:

1. Write answers to the questions printed in the book, or
2. Write a development of the chapter outlines.

If the first method is used, the student will study the book and then with the open book write answers to the printed questions.

If the second method is used, the student will study the book and then with the open book write a development of the chapter outlines.

Students may find profit in studying the text together, but individual papers are required. Carbon copies or duplicates in any form cannot be accepted.

All written work done by such students should be sent to the State Sunday School Secretary.

MAN'S NEED OF SALVATION

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved."—Romans 10: 1.

In the great work of delivering lost men from the ruin in which they are involved, the Holy Spirit produces the conviction that they need to be saved. Without this conviction "they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely" (Psalm 58: 4, 5). However alarming their state as "strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2: 12), and however appalling their peril as exposed to the righteous infliction of "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil" (Romans 2: 8, 9), they neither understand their condition nor perceive their danger until they are made to feel that they are sinners.

The agency which the Spirit employs in teaching them this essential and fundamental truth is the revealed Word of God, or the Sacred Scriptures, whether communicated in the pulpit or through the press; whether made known in public instruction or in private study; whether carried to the heart by a popular address or by a personal appeal. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made" (Psalm 33: 6), and in the new creation "the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4: 12). "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10: 17).

I. THE JEWS AS A PEOPLE WERE UNDER CONDEMNATION

We assuredly learn from the language which I have placed at the beginning of this chapter that the Jews as a people, although they were highly favored above all the nations of the earth, were not delivered from the curse and dominion of sin; for the Apostle writes, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." This earnest expression of concern for his countrymen would, of course, be meaningless or self-contradictory if they were not under the condemnation of God's broken law; and hence the inspired writer, "moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1: 21), asserts that they were still unsaved.

The great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart expressed in this touching assurance, and the astounding declaration that he could wish that himself were accursed from Christ for his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh, are wholly unaccountable on the supposition that they were already saved. No, they were lost! and the Apostle, taught by the Spirit, knew they were lost, in the very face of their exalted privileges and their high religious character in the estimation of men. To them pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises, and the fathers, and national connection with the Messiah; but still they needed to be saved.

Many of them could say, as did Paul describing his own state previous to his new birth by faith in Jesus, "Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church, touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless" (Phil. 3: 5, 6); but still they needed to be saved. Many of them, like the Pharisee of whom our Saviour speaks, could stand in the Temple and pray by themselves, and say, "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even

as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess" (Luke 18: 11, 12); but still they needed to be saved.

Many of them made broad their phylacteries, and enlarged the borders of their garments, and offered long prayers, and scrupulously observed the sabbath, and compassed sea and land to gain one proselyte, and added to the burdensome requirements of the ceremonial law by self-imposed regulations, and in the ardor of their devotion outstripped the demands of divine ordinances by keeping pace with the numerous traditions of the elders; but still they needed to be saved.

II. ALL MEN ARE LOST WITHOUT CHRIST

Yes, my friend, you are involved in the same condemnation, as I shall now proceed to show, and thus bring forward my second argument to convince you of your need of salvation. All who profess to accept any portion of the Scriptures as inspired agree that the words of Jesus must be regarded as authoritative and final upon every doctrine which he teaches. Let us see, then, what he repeatedly affirms touching the necessity of faith and the soul-destroying crime of unbelief. In his memorable interview with Nicodemus, after setting forth the amazing love of God in the gift of his dear Son, he adds, "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3: 18).

Again we hear his solemn testimony, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation (or judgment); but is passed from death unto life" (John 5: 24). "Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6: 28, 29). "Verily, verily, I say unto you,

He that believeth on me hath everlasting life" (John 6: 47). "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8: 24).

These passages are taken almost at random from a single Gospel, and it is unnecessary to say that there is nothing in all the Word of God to contradict them. Elsewhere it is written that the Saviour, whose infinite love for the sinner led him to the cross, declared among the last words he uttered on earth, "He that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16: 16); and the Holy Spirit says, by the Apostle John, "He that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son" (1 John 5: 10). Such, then, is the vital importance of belief in Christ, that salvation in all its unutterable meaning, in all its boundless extent, in all its everlasting joys, depends upon its exercise; and such is the horrible sin of unbelief that if persisted in to the close of life, it will certainly drown the soul in perdition.

How imperative, then, is the duty of the unbeliever to flee for refuge to the cross of Christ! That such a refuge should have been provided in the immeasurable grace and unsearchable wisdom of God affords overwhelming demonstration of the fact that the entire human race was in extremest need: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3: 16). The preciousness of the gift proves the vastness of the want it was designed to meet, and the costliness of the sacrifice reveals the depth of the woe it was intended to reach. If man did not need salvation, Jesus had not died; for it is inconceivable that the Father could have sent him forth from his bosom, and emptied him of his divine and eternal glory, and humbled him to be made of a woman, made under the law, and laid upon him the crushing burden of our iniquities, and looked upon his prostrate form in Gethsemane, and witnessed the blows that bruised his face, and heard his disconsolate cry on Calvary, unless a stern necessity

had demanded this profound condescension and mysterious suffering.

Unbelief, therefore, is a rejection of love in its highest possible manifestation, and hence it is represented as the root of all other sin and the crowning iniquity. It not only sets at defiance the insulted justice of God, but, far more, it treats with disdain or receives with unmoved indifference his overtures of mercy. It derides his authority, it despises his law, it ridicules his warnings, it rejects his invitations, it slights his compassion, it calls him a liar when he says, "He that believeth not shall be damned," and it joins the ribald crowd in reviling his dying Son, or at least it turns with heartless unconcern from that wail of forsaken woe that shook the mighty pillars of the globe.

I asked the heavens, What foe to God hath done
This unexampled deed? The heavens exclaim:
"*'Twas man!* and we, in horror, snatched the sun
From such a spectacle of guilt and shame!"

I asked the Sea: the Sea in fury boiled,
And answered with his voice of storms, "*'Twas man!*
My waves in panic at his crime recoiled,
Disclosed the abyss, and from the centre ran!"

I asked the Earth: the Earth replied aghast,
"*'Twas man!* and such strange pangs my bosom rent,
That still I groan and shudder at the past!"
To man, gay, smiling, thoughtless *man*, I went,
And asked him next: *he* turned a scornful eye,
Shook his proud head, and deigned me no reply.

Think you that a sin like this, which remains unsubdued and unaffected even at the cross, can be a slight offense, or that man does not need salvation while it holds dominion over him? If every other sin were forgiven, or if no other sin had been committed, this alone would drive the unbeliever away forever from the pres-

ence of God, and rear an insurmountable barrier between his soul and true happiness.

III. SIN INVOLVES UTTER RUIN

Unbelief and all other iniquities spring from a nature essentially corrupt, according to the abundant testimony of God, and consequently the force of the argument to establish man's need of salvation becomes irresistible if this can be shown. Let us look, then, at some of the testimony as it lies scattered throughout the Bible. In the beginning of the inspired word, and at a period in the history of our race which poets delight to celebrate as marked by winning simplicity and crowned with child-like innocence, we are told, "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6: 5). The words *every* and *only* and *evil* and *continually* are exceedingly significant in this connection, for they show that the whole fabrication or formation which distinguished him from the brute creation, including all the imaginations, desires, and purposes of the soul, were sinful, and sinful unceasingly.

Passing by other testimony in the old covenant Scriptures which could be gathered from every book, and in some form from nearly every chapter, we hear our Lord saying, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John 3: 6), and, "From within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness. an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man" (Mark 7: 21-23).

Glancing forward a little further, we find the inspired Apostle writing, "We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes" (Rom. 3: 9-18).

Without quoting other declarations of the same import, enough has been said to show that, according to the infallible testimony of God, man is utterly ruined. Whenever, wherever, and however tried, he has proved a miserable failure. He was tried in Eden, and failed; for having believed the devil's lie, and plucked the forbidden fruit, conscious guilt took the place of original innocence, "and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden" (Gen. 3: 8). He was tried before the giving of the law, and failed, for "until the law sin was in the world" (Rom. 5: 13); and the Holy Spirit deduces from the universal prevalence of death the universal supremacy of sin; leading us to hear in every dying groan the thrilling announcement and to see in every new-made grave the visible demonstration of Jehovah's righteous abhorrence of iniquity. He was tried under the law, and failed; for it is written, "We know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore, by the deeds of law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3: 19, 20). He was tried under grace, and failed; for "this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3: 19).

IV. A CORRUPT TREE CANNOT BRING FORTH GOOD FRUIT

Out of this corrupt nature necessarily spring those evil deeds which are plainly contrary to the law of God, and therefore promptly recognized by an enlightened con-

science as sinful. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit" (Matt. 7: 16-18). Do what you will with a tree in cultivating, pruning, or transplanting it, you can never so change its nature that thorns will bring forth grapes and thistles will produce figs. So, do what you will with man by all the appliances of the highest culture and the most refined civilization, you cannot so change his nature that it will become holy. God can—and, blessed be his name, he does—impart a new nature by the power of the Holy Spirit, through faith in Jesus Christ, as revealed in his word; but the nature which we derive by birth from our parents is evil, and only evil, continually.

That the outward manifestations of such a nature should be in open conflict with the law of God is just what might be expected. "Sin," we are told, "is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3: 4); or, to render strictly, "sin is lawlessness": it is that spirit of insubordination, that inward resistance to divine authority, which distinguishes the soul, and which finds expression in unceasing and flagrant disobedience.

The law says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Mark 12: 30, 31). Our theological writers are much in the habit of speaking of the law as the transcript or reflection of the divine nature; but surely the divine nature is more than law, "for God is love" (1 John 4: 8); and hence it would be better to say that the law is the transcript or reflection of the divine will concerning the duty of man to his Creator and his fellow creatures.

V. MAN MUST BE BORN AGAIN

After what has been said it is hardly necessary to dwell upon the words of our Lord when he exclaimed, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3: 3). When he made this statement he was speaking with Nicodemus, who was a master of Israel, a ruler of the Jews, and blameless, as we would say, in all his character and conduct. Even he was informed that, except a man (or, as it is in the original, except any one, except every one) be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. The best, therefore, can do with nothing less than this, whatever may be their standing in their own estimation or in the estimation of others. "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John 3: 7). I do not deny for a moment the possession of amiable traits of character and virtuous principles of conduct by thousands who know nothing of Christ as their Saviour; but still I dare not go back of his own explicit declaration, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3: 5).

All the attractiveness of the most lovely disposition, and all the firmness of the most incorruptible integrity, may exist without the slightest reference to the will and glory of God, and therefore they may exist without the least spiritual life. We often witness in the brute creation touching exhibitions of devoted affection, of unswerving fidelity, of unflinching courage, and of what would be termed in man the loftiest nobility of action; but among the inferior animals there is a total want of spiritual life, because there is a total want of capacity to know God and to perform these heroic deeds from the high and commanding motive of regard to the pleasure of God.

Now, of human beings it may truthfully be affirmed, no less than of the lower orders of beings, that by nature they are incapable of knowing and loving the true God and that they are utterly devoid of spiritual life

until born again and made a new creation in Christ Jesus. Out of scores of texts that could be easily quoted to sustain this important proposition, two or three must answer for the present: "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5: 12). "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14: 23). "Without faith it is impossible to please him" (Heb. 11: 6). Whatever else a man has, whatever excellences that excite our admiration and win our regard, he has not life until he has the Son by faith in his name; and hence we again see man's deep need of salvation.

II

MAN'S SINCERITY CANNOT SAVE HIM

For I bear them record that they have zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.—Romans 10: 2.

It is a common opinion that it matters little what a man's religious views may be, provided he is sincere in his belief. This opinion is sometimes advanced with all the assurance of conscious truth, sometimes with all the arrogance of conscious error, and at all times with a confidence in its soundness that surprises the thoughtful mind. It is not only received as an axiom by the world, lulling the dead soul into a profounder slumber, but it is held to a lamentable extent by the church crippling her energies and nullifying her testimony for Jesus.

We often hear Christians apply the term "good" to those who embrace and propagate fatal heresies, simply because they appear to be honest in their convictions and labor for the advancement of various humanitarian and philanthropic schemes. Nay, in some of the most popular pulpits of the day preachers are found sneering at "creeds," and journals professedly conducted in the interest of Christ's suffering cause pour contempt through their columns upon what they are pleased to call "a dry orthodoxy." It seems to be taken for granted that the time has come to do away with "doctrinal differences," as belonging to a former and darker age, and to substitute a polite education, a benevolent disposition, and refined manners, in place of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, faith in the Son of God, and holiness of life.

The question, then, is simply this, Does God hold man responsible for his belief as well as for his conduct, or will mere sincerity, although we may sincerely believe an error, entitle us to his favor? The former I affirm, the

latter I deny; and I appeal at once to the inspired Book which contains the authentic decision of "the Lord of all the earth."

I. THE JEWS WERE SINCERE BUT THEY WERE LOST

We gather from the words of the Apostle which introduce the present chapter that the Jews were not only sincere in their religious convictions, but zealous, and zealous for God; and yet they were lost, for he writes: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." They had zeal, but it was not according to knowledge; and therefore it could not commend them to the regard of him who, though abundant in love and mercy, yet desireth "truth in the inward parts" (Psalm 51: 6).

The Holy Spirit informs us that they were ignorant of God's righteousness, and that they were held accountable for this ignorance; all their efforts to establish their own righteousness were unavailing.

The Saviour tells us that in the ardor of their zeal they compassed "sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is made," he adds, "ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves" (Matt. 23: 15). Here we see that the most intense sincerity in maintaining their religious opinions, and the most fervent devotion in seeking to spread them abroad, could not deliver them from the fearful charge of being the children of hell, and of involving all whom they persuaded to receive their views in a common ruin. Again, our Lord wept over Jerusalem, exclaiming, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes" (Luke 19: 42). According to this solemn testimony, their crushing doom came upon them just because they knew not the things which belonged to their peace, and their overthrow as a nation was the result of their ignorance.

Again, he said to them, "Now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God. . . . Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts

of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not" (John 8: 40, 44, 45). They were called the children of the devil not because they were insincere, irreligious, or indifferent to the claims of God upon their worship, but because they believed not the truth when it was made known by him who is Truth itself.

So the Apostle Peter, after boldly telling the people that they had "killed the Prince of life" (Acts 3: 15), says: "And, now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers" (Acts 3: 17). But did their ignorance of Christ's true character as the anointed One, or their sincere belief that he was an impious blasphemer, atone for their stupendous crime in putting him to death? Not at all; for the same Apostle earnestly exhorts them to repent of that crime, declaring that with wicked hands they had crucified and slain him. The Apostle Paul, also referring to the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory, writes, "Which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2: 8), but their want of knowledge did not release them from responsibility, however sincere their convictions; because God has again and again announced that he will bring them into judgment for the murder of his Son.

But without quoting additional statements of the same import from the inspired word, enough has been said to prove that according to the unerring testimony of God it is not a thing of small moment whether a man does or does not believe the truth. If in his infinite grace and condescension he has given us a revelation, he justly requires us to accept it as true; and our disbelief of it he justly regards and treats as a sin demanding the severest punishment.

It is a remarkable fact, deserving the serious attention of my reader, that while so many are saying, It is of no consequence what a man believes, provided he is sincere, the "Lord God of truth" (Psalm 31: 5) is solemnly saying, "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life." The opinion which I am here opposing confidently asserts that it is not necessary to believe the very doctrine which our Maker declares to be essential to the deliverance of the soul from endless death!

One says, He that believeth not shall be saved, if he is sincere in his unbelief; the other says, He that believeth not shall be damned. Judge ye which of these two witnesses is entitled to your confidence. "Let God be true, but every man a liar" (Rom. 3: 4). "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ" (1 John 2: 22)? "He that believeth not God hath made him a liar" (1 John 5: 10). It comes, then, to this: either the common notion that man is not responsible for his belief is false, or the eternal Creator of heaven and earth has not spoken the truth in the Bible; for the former is a flat contradiction of the latter.

II. IF NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR BELIEFS, THEN NOT FOR CONDUCT

The denial that man is responsible for his religious belief leads legitimately and logically to the conclusion that he is not responsible for his conduct: because the two sustain an intimate and indissoluble relation to each other. One is the fountain, the other is the stream; one is the foundation, the other is the superstructure; one is the root, the other is the tree which springs from it and bears good or evil fruit. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and

cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7: 16-20).

Human actions of a moral character are always the result of certain opinions or principles; and they can neither rise higher than the source from which they spring, nor fail to partake of its nature. Good actions cannot proceed from evil principles, nor can evil actions proceed from good principles. A person's principles are himself: and surely it is a shallow philosophy which would not only divide him in twain, but array the separated portions of his being in direct opposition, pronouncing one part of him virtuous and the other vicious.

If a man sincerely believes that there is no God, he will be an atheist practically; if he believes that prayer is a vain and useless ceremony, he will never bow the knee in supplication to the throne of grace; if he believes that it is unnecessary to confess Christ before men, he will refuse to be enrolled among the number of the Saviour's disciples; if he believes that the gratification of his appetites is the highest end of life, he will be a sensualist; if he believes that the acquisition of wealth in any manner is the supreme good, he will be a thief or swindler whenever he can feed the passion of his soul without danger of detection and punishment; and so of every other belief that is connected with our conduct as accountable beings in the unavoidable relations we sustain to our Creator and our fellow creatures.

We may or may not believe the assertions of human science, the testimony of uninspired history, and the narratives of travelers in new and unknown countries, without damage to our eternal interests, because these matters do not necessarily carry our faith into the high region of morals: but the moment we invade that loftier sphere, our belief is clothed with the dread responsibility of personal action, because it is sure to express itself in outward manifestations that exhibit its character as righteous or sinful in the sight of God. If the belief is wrong, the life must be wrong; and; on the other hand, if the life is wrong, the belief must be wrong.

III. THE TESTIMONY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

That man is responsible for his belief is the distinct testimony of consciousness. The process of reasoning by which this proposition may be established is simple, but direct and conclusive. That he is conscious of responsibility for his actions is almost universally admitted, and is fully attested by the sacrifices and superstitions, by the penances and prayers, by the terrors and remorse, that have marked his history in all ages and in all lands. That he is also conscious of responsibility for the dispositions of his heart is equally obvious, for they alone give moral character to his conduct; and if they are left out of view, he is no more accountable for his deeds than are the brutes that perish.

Hence, if he flies into an unreasonable rage at the bidding of an unsubdued temper, when the calm of sober reflection has succeeded the storm of passion he condemns himself not only for what he has done, but for what he has felt. And our opinion with regard to moral truth being largely under the control of our dispositions, and intimately associated, as has been proved, with our moral actions, a consciousness of responsibility for our belief inevitably follows; and the moment we are awakened from the deep sleep of sin and spiritual death by the quickening voice of the Son of God, we pass judgment upon our belief as wrong, no less than upon our conduct.

The Saviour, describing the work of the Holy Spirit in the salvation of men, says he will convince "of sin, because they believe not on me" (John 16: 9); and the first experience, perhaps, of the enlightened and regenerated soul is to see that his unbelief for so many years is the most aggravated of all his iniquities.

It is certain, then, that with the millions of Christians who have lived there has been a clear consciousness of responsibility for belief; and if it is not so with others, it only proves that they have fallen under the spell of a dreadful sorcery which has locked them fast in spiritual

insensibility. There are multitudes who have no consciousness of sin for their conduct; but this fact, instead of showing that they are not sinners, only reveals the depth of ruin into which they are plunged. If they are ever raised out of that ruin by the exceeding greatness of God's power, they will not only perceive that they are sinful in their outward actions, but will pass an immediate sentence of condemnation against themselves for the long-cherished sin of unbelief.

IV. THE JUDGMENT OF MANKIND

It is the judgment of mankind that we are responsible for our belief, and they hold us accountable for it both to civil governments and at the bar of public opinion. A criminal is never acquitted on the ground that he sincerely believed the law which he had violated to be wrong, or that he sincerely believed that it had been repealed, or that he sincerely believed its penalty would not be enforced. The law goes on the presumption that its subjects are acquainted with its provisions and punishments, and it requires them to answer not only for what they know, but for what they might know. It does not lay its arrest upon the idiotic or the insane to treat them as culprits, but where the moral faculty exists, associated with even a low degree of intelligence, it demands obedience to its authority under pain of its avenging justice.

There are some things which a man may believe or disbelieve without receiving either commendation or censure, because the will and the dispositions of the heart are not called into exercise in accepting them as true or in rejecting them as false. We do not say that he deserves praise for believing that two and two make four; or for refusing to believe that two and two make five; or for crediting the evidence of his senses; or for relying upon the testimony of his own consciousness.

In such cases the action of his mind is involuntary, so to speak, and does not depend upon his inclination or power of choice. He is obliged to believe as he does; or if, owing to some rare eccentricity, he believes other-

wise, his condition is justly regarded as demanding pity rather than blame. But there are other subjects which cannot be reached by mathematical reasoning, nor perceived by the senses, nor known by intuition, and when these subjects embrace moral truth, they at once determine man's responsibility for his belief, because his belief here depends upon his will and the state of his heart.

It is a noteworthy fact that the warmest advocates of this delusive and dangerous opinion do not pretend to apply it except in man's relations to God. None are more unsparing than they in their denunciations of what they conceive to be his erroneous political belief, or his wrong views of the standard of integrity that should be observed in business transactions, or even his religious convictions when they differ from their own. If man is not responsible for his belief, there is nothing whatever to justify them in so persistently assailing those of us who hold that he is responsible; since, according to their own notion, it is of no consequence what we believe, provided we are sincere; and if he is responsible, what becomes of their shallow conceit that he is not responsible?

This alone is sufficient to condemn them; for why are they so prompt to recognize man's responsibility for his belief of the truth, save when they come to the infinitely important truth contained in the Sacred Scriptures? Does not their position confirm the testimony of the Bible when it declares that "the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8: 7)? Does it not prove that they have taken counsel together "against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us" (Psalm 2: 3)? Alas! their astounding inconsistency in holding man responsible for his opinions, while stoutly denying his responsibility for unbelief towards Christ, only reveals a guilty conscience full of fears, or a wicked purpose to throw the reins upon the neck of the transgressor and encourage him in a career of unrestrained sin.

V. MAN IS HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS BELIEFS BY THE PHYSICAL LAWS OF HIS BEING

An argument from analogy is suggested by the admitted fact that man is made responsible for his belief by the physical laws of his being. He sees, for example, a white powder which he sincerely believes to be harmless; but if it is arsenic, and he is rash enough to act upon his belief by swallowing it, his sincerity will not prevent excruciating pain, and probably death. An intelligent and conscientious physician may inform him that his continued dissipation will result in disease and drag him down prematurely to the grave; and although he may sincerely believe that his medical adviser is mistaken, his sincerity cannot avert the consequences of his folly and crime.

Without citing other illustrations of a truth so obvious that none will have the hardihood to call it in question, it may be asked why a merciful God does not respect the sincerity of his creatures in such cases, and save them from the sufferings which they bring upon themselves. If it be replied that they violate certain fixed laws, and therefore receive the merited penalty, I answer that they also violate a certain and fixed law who refuse to believe the testimony of the Son of God; and we have already proved that the Almighty will no more interfere to arrest the penalty in one instance than in the other.

VI. THE CONSTITUTION OF THE HUMAN MIND

Another argument to prove man's responsibility for his belief might be derived from the constitution of the human mind. As I do not wish to extend this chapter to an undue length, I shall throw out only a hint or two, which with the blessing of God, may be profitable to the awakened soul. Even the heathen philosophers of ancient times clearly perceived that the mind is the organ of truth, as the eye is the organ of vision and the ear the organ of hearing. The jaundiced eye can impart a sickly yellow appearance to the pure white snow, and the deaf

ear is dull to the most entrancing melody; but, for all that, no one doubts that they were originally constituted to be the proper organs of sight and sound.

And although it is written that "the wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies" (Psalm 58: 3), yet they were created at first with reference to truth as much as to any other end of their existence. Their minds have become sadly diseased and perverted from the use for which they were so wonderfully organized; but this fact proves their responsibility, because it is the introduction of sin which has wrought the change.

If God should command us to look at a beautiful landscape which he had created to glorify himself and to gratify us, and we should deliberately put out our eyes, our blindness would be no excuse for disobeying his requirement. And so if we have wronged our souls and injured our minds by sin until the wonderful organ of truth which he bestowed on man at first can no longer perform its proper functions, we have ourselves to blame for groping in darkness.

But what is Truth? 'Twas Pilate's question put
To Truth itself, that deigned him no reply.
And wherefore? Will not God impart his light
To them that ask it? Freely: 'tis his joy,
His glory, and his nature to impart.
But to the proud, uncandid, insincere,
Or negligent inquirer, not a spark.

III

MAN'S RIGHTEOUSNESS CANNOT SAVE HIM

For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.—Romans 10: 3.

I. WHAT IS RIGHTEOUSNESS?

The first question to be settled here is the meaning of the term *righteousness*. Some idea of the importance of the question may be gathered from the fact that the same word, which is used three times in the passage placed at the head of this chapter, occurs ninety-two times in the New Testament, and is found thirty-six times in the Epistle to the Romans.

Now if it be true that God has made known in the Sacred Scriptures his will concerning the way in which he would have men feel and think and speak and act, it is certain that this revealed will is the supreme rule of duty. Of course, a Being who "is righteous in all his ways and holy in all his works" (Psalm 145: 17) cannot enjoin us to be or to do anything in the slightest degree improper or unbecoming in the relations we sustain to him and to our fellow creatures; and as "the law of the Lord is perfect" (Psalm 19: 7), it will at once be admitted that no higher rule is possible as the standard of right.

Webster is correct, therefore, in defining righteousness as "conformity of heart and life to the divine law." The law of God is like a plumb-line, let down from heaven to test the uprightness of our character and the rectitude of our conduct; it is like an exact measure applied both to our inward and outward life to discover whether it is according to holiness; it is like light shining into the chambers of our souls to reveal their real condition. If

any are perfectly obedient in every respect to the requirements of the law, they are righteous, and the obedience they render constitutes their righteousness.

The phrase "righteousness of God," which frequently occurs in the inspired Epistles, next demands our consideration. We find the Apostle writing to the Romans, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, . . . for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith" (Rom. 1: 16, 17). Again, "The righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe" (Rom. 3: 21, 22). Again, he expresses an earnest desire to be found in Christ; not having, he says, "mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Phil. 3: 9). Simon Peter also sends his salutation "to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1: 1).

The term righteousness, when applied to God, does not so much refer to any one attribute as it denotes the perfection of his nature and sets forth the fact that he is most holy in himself and most just in all his dealings with his creatures. The righteousness of God as used in the passages just quoted is understood by some writers to mean nothing more than God's method of justification; but that they are mistaken in their view is evident, first, because the Holy Spirit would have said God's method of justification if this had been the thought in his mind; and, secondly, because no man can be justified until there is a righteousness that precedes as the ground upon which the sentence of justification is pronounced.

Wordsworth well says, "This significant phrase, *the righteousness of God*, is not to be lowered, weakened, and impaired, so as to mean only the *method of justification* by which God acquits and justifies mankind." Other writers tell us that the expression means "the righteous-

ness which God gives and which he approves"; but while this is the truth, as far as it goes, it is not the whole truth. God might give and approve a creature-righteousness such as Adam had in the garden of Eden, and such as angels possess in the paradise of heaven; but there is something better and nobler than this in store for the redeemed sinner.

The righteousness of God is an expression which has a broader and deeper significance than that given to it by those who explain it to mean simply God's method of justification or the righteousness of which God is the author and approver. The law demands righteousness; and as we cannot meet the high demand, grace gives righteousness; and as it is a gift, it is bestowed in a manner worthy of God who gives us his own righteousness. Nothing less than this could suffice to admit us into his blessed presence. If the soul has upon it the faintest stain of sin, it must be excluded forever from his glorious dwelling-place; for "there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth" (Rev. 21: 27), and only those who are righteous in the sense that God himself is righteous can appear for a moment in the dazzling splendor of his holiness.

Hence, amid the untold wonders of his creation and providence the most wonderful thing he has ever done is to impute a divine righteousness to the believing sinner who can say, with perfect confidence: "Holy Father! there is no difference now between thy righteousness and mine; for I am made the very righteousness of God in Christ." I need not add that this righteousness is no less enduring and immutable than is the self-existent and unchangeable nature of the Almighty; and never, never can it be torn from those to whom it has been reckoned as the ground of their justification until the eternal Jehovah shall cease to exist or be hurled from his throne.

II. IGNORANCE OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS IS FATAL

Ignorance of God's righteousness is declared by the Holy Spirit to be as fatal and soul-destroying as the grossest wickedness. It led the Jews, and it leads others, to go about the vain attempt to establish their own righteousness; and therefore they refuse to submit themselves unto the righteousness of God.

It has been the great purpose of Jehovah from the beginning, I may say, to teach this fundamental truth to mankind, for he stated and rehearsed it as distinctly before the coming of the Saviour into the world as he did afterwards. Thus when our first parents plucked the forbidden fruit, we are told, "the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons" (Gen. 3: 7). The violated law instantly thundered its curse against them: "Thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2: 17); but grace sweetly spoke in the promise of the conquering seed, and then it is added, "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothed them" (Gen. 3: 21). What have we here but the insufficiency of man's righteousness as well as the precious truth of divine righteousness taught in symbol?

The attempt which Adam made with his apron of fig-leaves to cover his nakedness utterly failed, and hence he and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden; but the robe which Jehovah provided, and which told the story of the shedding of blood (as the appointed victim had to be slain before it could be presented), was divinely perfect in its way; and when once received we read no longer of the sinner hiding from the view and voice of his Father.

Again, in the next chapter, we learn that "in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat

thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth, and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well (that is, If thou offerest properly), shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well (offerest not properly), sin lieth at the door" (Gen. 4: 3-7). Here we have two altars, the one laden with beautiful fruits and fragrant flowers, the product of the worshiper's honorable toil, and the expression, no doubt, of his grateful and sincere homage, while the other is dripping with the blood of a dead lamb.

The difference between the two brothers did not consist in the superiority of either by nature, but in the sacrifices which they presented. The one occupied the ground of man's righteousness in his worship, and hence was rejected; the other occupied the ground of divine righteousness, and consequently was accepted; for the Holy Spirit informs us that "by faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gift" (Heb. 11: 4). The offeror and the offering were identified, and stood or fell together, God regarding the former in the light of the latter, and proclaiming, even in that early age, that man's righteousness cannot save him.

The Old Testament clearly shows how and where righteousness is to be obtained; and in every instance it entirely excludes man's righteousness as the ground upon which God pronounces the sentence of justification. "All our righteousnesses," it declares, "are as filthy rags" (Isa. 64: 6) (not all our wickedness merely, for this any one is ready to admit, but all our righteousnesses are as rags, nay, filthy rags), and "he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool" (Prov. 28: 26).

Even the most illustrious saints whose splendid achievements are recorded in its pages are held up by the Holy Spirit in illustration, not of the value, but of

the worthlessness, of creature-righteousness as the means of gaining acceptance with the Holy One of Israel. "For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it (his believing God) was counted unto him for righteousness" (Rom. 4: 3). "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works" (Rom. 4: 6). To this must be added the testimony of the selfsame Spirit in the New Testament, who says, "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. 4: 5).

Again, he speaks of righteousness not as a reward fairly earned, but as a gift freely bestowed: "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men (all united to Christ) unto justification of life" (Rom. 5: 17, 18).

Again: "What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law" (Rom. 9: 30-32).

Again: "After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3: 4-7).

III. GOOD CHARACTER AND CONDUCT CANNOT SAVE

Keeping in mind that righteousness, when applied to man, signifies the state or condition of being right ac-

According to the infallible judgment of God's law, a moment's reflection will show that we can never be saved by virtue of our own good character and conduct. The Holy Spirit tells us that "as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. 3: 10).

If, therefore, a man expects to be saved by means of his well-doing, it is obvious that he must not only profess to do, or try to do, right, but he must actually do, and continue to do, not only some things, but all things, which are written in the book of the law. If, however, he has failed to do right, and on the other hand, has done wrong, it is no less obvious that he cannot be saved by his doing, whatever other ground of hope may suggest itself to his mind. "Master," said a certain lawyer to our Saviour, "what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? How readest thou? And he answering, said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live" (Luke 10: 25-28).

Those, then, and only those, who can truthfully assert that they have always loved God with all the faculties of their being, and their fellow men as themselves, may claim to be righteous, and expect eternal life on the ground of their own righteousness. But what shall we say when we find it written in the Word of Truth, "There is none righteous, no not one" (Rom. 3: 10), "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3: 23)? Clearly, the only possible conclusion is that reached by the Apostle when he argues, "Therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3: 20).

It will not remove the difficulty to repent and promise to abstain in the future from any violation of the law;

for if such a promise could be kept for a day or an hour, could it atone for past transgressions?

Suppose that a criminal, arrested after repeated offenses running through a long course of years, and put on trial and convicted, and asked by the judge if he had anything to say showing that sentence should not be pronounced against him, could only reply that he was sorry he had committed the crimes, and would hereafter conduct himself as a good citizen.

Could such a plea be accepted as vindicating the majesty of violated law or as satisfying the claims of insulted justice? But the sinner has been going on all his lifetime breaking the law of God with every breath, and at every beat of the pulse; and manifestly it is the silliest delusion to expect that he will be acquitted and pronounced righteous before the high tribunal of heaven simply because he has undertaken at length to perform the duties he was required to perform from the first. But alas! his efforts to keep the law in its true intent will be as futile as his hope of acceptance on the ground of his own works.

"Thy commandment," says the Psalmist, "is exceeding broad" (Psalm 119: 96); and it sweeps over the whole extent of our being, including the thoughts and emotions as well as the words and deeds. Our Lord, who knew the meaning of the law, declares that "whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matt. 5: 28), and the Spirit declares that "whosoever hateth his brother," though the hand may not be raised nor anger gleam from the eye, "is a murderer" (1 John 3: 15). "Wherefore, then, serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made" (Gal. 3: 19). "Moreover, the law entered that the offence might abound" (Rom. 5: 20). It was never designed to give life nor to be a rule of life to a sinner with the expectation that he would keep it, but its ministry is to penetrate the soul like the sunlight streaming into a dark room to reveal the dust and de-

filement that had remained concealed. Hence he who has been truly awakened, and who seeks to be conformed to the law, invariably finds that it keeps ahead of his most earnest strivings, discovering impurities and iniquities of which he had never dreamed before, and often wringing from him the cry of anguish, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death" (Rom. 7: 24).

If, however, any are disposed to argue that, notwithstanding their imperfections, God will be merciful, and bestow eternal life for the sake of the good they have done, you observe that they shift the ground of their hope from their own doings, and really admit that their righteousness cannot save them.

IV. A BETTER RIGHTEOUSNESS THAN OUR OWN IS NEEDED

The work of Christ shows conclusively that we need a better righteousness than we ourselves can render; "for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by law" (Gal. 3: 21); and "if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (Gal. 2: 21). Yes: he who relies for salvation upon his own works defiantly sets his opinion in opposition to the eternal counsel of Jehovah, and boldly declares that the awful scene on Calvary, when the tender heart of the immaculate and incarnate One was broken by reproach upon the cross, was altogether unnecessary.

Every one must see, then, at a glance, the gross inconsistency of professing to believe the Bible, and, at the same time, denying the necessity of the atonement; for Christ and his cross form the key to unlock the meaning of the Scriptures, and constitute the all-pervading theme of its sacred pages.

They exhibit in every possible form of expression the divine person and mediatorial work of Christ Jesus, "who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in

the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2: 6-11). Whoever, in proud or ignorant dependence upon his good character and conduct, refuses to confess that most worthy name which raises the anthems of heaven to their highest notes, will certainly find his boasted righteousness a foundation of sand when the Lord "ariseth to shake terribly the earth" (Isa. 2: 19).

Dear reader! be persuaded, "before that great and notable day of the Lord come" (Acts 2: 20), to accept the perfect and proffered righteousness of Christ, which alone can stand the inspection of him whose eyes are as a flame of fire. I do not ask you to "give your heart to God," or to "enter into covenant with God that you will serve him," as the means of obtaining his favor, for this is wretched advice, although you often hear it urged. God is already favorable, and in his infinite love is holding out to your immediate acceptance a divine righteousness,—yea, his own righteousness,—as the ground of your instant, complete, and eternal justification.

IV

CHRIST THE SAVIOUR OF THE BELIEVER

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.—Romans 10: 4.

I. CHRIST IS THE *End* OF THE LAW

Having proved by the testimony of God, first, that man needs salvation; second, that his sincerity cannot save him; and, third, that his righteousness cannot save him, it may be asked by my reader, How then can he be saved? The reply to this inquiry has already been given incidentally in the passages of scripture that were quoted for another purpose; but in the present chapter I ask your attention to the special discussion of a subject which is beyond all comparison the most important that can engage our regard.

We know not how soon death may come to summon us away to our unchanging destiny beyond the grave, nor how soon the Lord may come to gather his people to himself as a preliminary step to the infliction of terrific judgments upon the inhabitants of the earth; and surely every reasonable man must see that the question of his salvation should be distinctly, definitely, and intelligently settled instantly; for according to the same unimpeachable testimony which has established the propositions thus far advanced, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

The precise meaning of the terms in this statement is the first point that demands our notice. The word translated *end* is used in the New Testament forty-one times. The corresponding verb is sometimes rendered "to accomplish," sometimes "to finish," sometimes "to fulfil," and sometimes "to perform." When, therefore, it is said that Christ is the end of the law, we may understand that as the object of its types and the subject of its predictions he accomplished all that it announced as needful

to be done; or that he finished its career in its bearing upon our salvation; or that he fulfilled its requisitions, its symbols, and its ceremonies; or that he performed the work which it exacted as essential to the deliverance of the sinner from its curse. But clearer light will be thrown upon the signification of the word if we will inquire for a moment how it is employed in other portions of the Sacred Volume. For example, we read in Matthew, "Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake; but he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matt. 10: 22). "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matt. 24: 14).

These quotations are sufficient to illustrate the ordinary use of the word by the inspired writers, and they show that we are to take it in its obvious sense when it is said, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." The law at Sinai demanded righteousness, but grace at Calvary gives righteousness, even the perfect righteousness of Christ; and to him that believeth, the law comes to an end, and nothing remains but the righteousness of God himself as the immovable ground upon which the believer forever stands. If a man owes a debt which he cannot discharge, and his surety pays it for him, the law comes to an end so far as that debtor is concerned, because its requirements have been met and its claims satisfied, although by another, and it has no further demands upon him. In like manner, the law of God is at an end in its bearing upon the believer in Jesus, not because it has been set aside and trampled under foot by the lawgiver, but because Christ took the place of the believing sinner, paying his debt and suffering the dreadful penalty in his stead.

II. CHRIST IS THE END OF THE *Law*

The word "law" in English is said to be derived from a Saxon term which signifies "to lay." Worcester is correct, therefore, in defining it as "a rule of action laid down or prescribed by a superior." The Greek word

here used strictly signifies "anything assigned, distributed, apportioned; hence a usage, custom, and all that becomes law thereby; a law; ordinance." We are safe, then, in asserting that the word "law," which occurs about seventy-five times in the Epistle to the Romans, denotes the rule of action which God has laid down or assigned for the government of man in his relations to his Creator and his fellow creatures. About this rule of action a few remarks must be made that will carry us back for a moment to ground which we have previously traversed to some extent, but which it is well for us to notice again.

First, It is a rule which it is right and proper for man to observe. "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7: 12). "We know that the law is good" (1 Tim. 1: 8). It is the expression of the will of a righteous God concerning the way he would have us feel and act, and hence its requirements cannot be wrong. No one will venture to affirm that there is anything unjust or unbecoming in commanding us to love the Lord our God with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and with all the mind, and our neighbors as ourselves, and "on these two commandments," says the Saviour, "hang all the law and the prophets" (Matt. 22: 40).

Second, It is a rule which applies to the thoughts, emotions, and desires no less than to the words and deeds. We have just seen that it demands supreme, unfaltering, unceasing love to God and to our fellow men, and love exists in the heart. Hence it is written, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity (love), I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal" (1 Cor. 13: 1). "Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13: 10). No man, therefore, can keep the law in its true intent, unless love is the sovereign principle of his soul, subordinating to its imperial and undisputed sway every aspiration and sentiment, every aim and purpose, of his being. His life may be conformed to the highest standard of human integrity,

but "the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. 16: 7). "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins" (Jer. 17: 10), and hence in his sight the look of lust is "adultery" (Matt. 5: 28), and the secret passion of hate is "murder" (1 John 3: 15).

Third, It is a rule which consists of two parts: a precept or command, and a penalty or punishment in case of disobedience. Without this threatened penalty it could not constitute a rule of action. We might have advice or exhortation, but law, in the sense in which the word is here used, cannot exist unless it carries with it rewards and punishments as its high sanction to encourage and enforce obedience. Human governments never lay down or assign a rule of action for the observance of their subjects until they arm it with a penalty, for the simple reason that it could not be a law at all were it not clothed with power to punish the transgression or neglect of its requirements. In the divine government too, as a matter of fact, penalty is connected with every rule of action which God has laid down for our guidance, so far as our experience and observation extend. There are certain rules of action which apply to our bodies, as the law of gravitation, and hygienic laws, or laws pertaining to the preservation of health. If these rules are disregarded, the penalty is inevitable. Sometimes it follows instantly, and sometimes it is long delayed, but sooner or later its relentless inflictions are sure to vindicate the majesty of broken law. Still further, there are certain rules of action which are plainly intended for the regulation of our moral nature; and often, very often, we witness the fearful results of disobeying these rules in the agony, remorse, and sufferings of various kinds that overtake the wicked. Indeed, it is universally admitted, I believe, that sin is punished; while, with strange inconsistency and a feebleness of reasoning actually puerile, many argue, or rather hope and suppose, that it is punished only in the present life.

They do not reflect that, if God is too merciful to

punish it hereafter, he should be too merciful, according to their view, to punish it here, since it is a mere question of degree or duration. They seem to recognize the justice, or, at all events, they are compelled to acknowledge the fact, of its punishment to some extent; and how can they hesitate to accept the logical conclusion that God will deal with it in eternity as he deals with it in time, and manifest towards it his righteous displeasure forever? The wish with them is plainly father to their thought; but whatever their desires and conjectures, it remains unalterably true that God's law has a penalty, and that every sin committed under his government will be strictly punished either in the person of the sinner or in the person of the Divine Substitute. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6: 23); and death includes all the penal evils inflicted as the consequence of sin both in this world and the world to come. "Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law that doeth evil; for the Jew first, and also of the Gentile" (Rom. 2: 8, 9).

Fourth, It is a rule of action which every human being, except the man Christ Jesus, has violated. Sin is any desire, thought, word, action, or omission contrary to the law of God, and it is written, "There is no man that sinneth not" (1 Kings 8: 46). "There is not a just man on earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (Eccl. 7: 20). "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3: 23). "In many things we offend all" (James 3: 2). The conclusion which the apostle draws from such statements as these is unavoidable when he writes: "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3: 19, 20).

Yes, the plummet has been let down only to prove that there is a total lack of rectitude on our part; the

straight rule has been applied to our character and conduct only to show an utter want of righteousness; the light from heaven has flashed into our souls only to reveal the defilement of our nature.

It is impossible, then, that a sinner can be justified by doing the things required by the law, because he has already failed, and continually fails, to do them; and the law convicts and condemns, and curses him, as it is said, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. 3: 10). You will observe it is not said, Cursed are some very wicked people, but Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things—not some things, but all things—which are written in the book of the law to do them; for again it is said, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2: 10).

III. *Christ* IS THE END OF THE LAW

Having considered the meaning of the term "end" and the term "law," we must now glance at the import of the word "Christ." It properly signifies the Anointed One, and is equivalent to Messiah in Hebrew, as denoting an illustrious personage who was to be anointed or consecrated to the work of salvation. From the time the promise of the woman's conquering seed was made to our fallen parents in the Garden of Eden, holy men of God who spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit constantly uttered predictions concerning this personage, and looked forward to his coming with eager expectation.

Eternity is said to be the measure of his existence; for it is written, "In the beginning was the Word" (John 1: 1); "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8: 58); "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17: 5). *Immutability* belongs to him; for God addresses him in the sublime words, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are

the works of thine hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail" (Heb. 1: 10-12). "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Heb. 13: 8). *Omnipotence* is his; for even as Mediator, he could say, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28: 18); and he reveals himself to John on Patmos as the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty" (Rev. 1: 8). *Omnipresence* is his; for while on earth he spoke of himself as "the Son of man which is in heaven" (John 3: 13); and encouraged the hearts of his disciples with the sweet promise, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18: 20); "and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28: 20). *Omniscience* is his; for it is said, "He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man" (John 2: 24, 25); and Peter, led of the Holy Spirit, said to Him, "Lord, thou knowest all things" (John 21: 17); and he himself declares, "I am he which searchest the reins and hearts" (Rev. 2: 23).

We look a little further and find that the works of God are ascribed to him throughout the Scriptures; for we learn that "all things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1: 3); and "by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the Church" (Col. 1: 16, 18).

Once more, we find that he is the object of worship which is due to God alone, and which it is the height of blasphemy to render to the most exalted creature in the universe. When Paul and Barnabas were at Lystra, the

inhabitants of that city, amazed by a miracle wrought upon a cripple, said, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men," and prepared to offer sacrifices to the strangers; "which, when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things" (Acts 14: 14, 15).

I would not hang the interests of my undying soul upon the arm of the strongest seraph in heaven; for angels have sinned and fallen from their high estate (2 Peter 2: 4); and I need, yea, I must have, the righteousness, the power, and the unchangeableness of a Divine Redeemer as the solid foundation of my hope before I can find lasting repose.

IV. OUR NEED IS PERFECTLY MET IN CHRIST

Man's need is precisely and perfectly met in the person and work of "Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation (emptied himself), and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2: 6-8). If the phrase, "took upon him the form of a servant," means that he was truly man, it is equally certain that the phrase, "being in the form of God," means that he was truly God; and if you ask me how God could become man, I reply, I do not know, nor care to know, because the blessed fact satisfies my mind and heart; and until I can tell how I raise my hand, or how a blade of grass grows, I shall not reject the glorious doctrine of the Incarnation on account of its mystery.

As another has beautifully written, "We were under the curse, because we had not kept the law; but Christ, the perfect Man, having magnified the law and made it honorable by the very fact of his obeying it perfectly, became a curse for us by hanging on the tree. Thus, in his life he magnified God's law, and in his death he bore

our curse. There is, therefore, now, no guilt, no curse, no wrath, no condemnation for the believer; and albeit he must be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ; he will find that judgment-seat every whit as friendly, by and by, as the mercy-seat is now. It will make manifest the truth of his condition, namely, that there is nothing against him; what he is, it is 'God that hath wrought him.' He is God's workmanship. He was taken up in a state of death and condemnation, and made just what God would have him to be. The Judge himself has put away all his sins and is his righteousness, so that the judgment-seat cannot but be friendly to him; yea, it will be the full public, authoritative declaration to heaven, earth and hell, that the one who is washed from his sins in the blood of the Lamb is as clean as God can make him."

Thus it is, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth"; because his righteousness, or that which he did to satisfy the claims of the law, is imputed to the believer; and if you desire to know the meaning of the term "imputed," turn to the Epistle to Philemon where the Apostle, speaking of Onesimus, says, "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee aught, put that on mine account" (Philemon 18). There the phrase, "put that on mine account," is precisely the same word in Greek which the Apostle uses in Romans where he says, "Sin is not imputed when there is no law" (Rom. 5: 13).

The righteousness of Christ, then, is *put on the account* of the believer; and whatever merits Christ has in the sight of the Father the believer also possesses. He who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb. 7: 26); "who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Peter 2: 22); who had the approval of God in "a voice from heaven saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3: 17); who could say, "I do always those things that please him" (John 8: 29), and who "appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9: 26), is no nearer to

the heart of the Father than is the believing sinner. The measure of the acceptance of one in the sight of God is the precise measure of the acceptance of the other.

Oh, matchless grace! I do not wonder that men are so slow to believe it, for the news seems too good to be true. But it is true, for the Holy One hath said it, and it is true to every one that believeth. Believeth what? Believeth that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness; believeth that Christ appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; believeth the testimony of God that "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1: 7).

You have only to believe; and believing is not doing: it is the opposite of doing; it is simply receiving, and resting on the finished work of Christ which is already done, and done more than eighteen hundred years ago. The sin-hating God met the sin-bearing Jesus at the place of a skull, and there once and forever settled the question of the believer's salvation, and we had nothing to do with it. Now the glad tidings are sent forth to the ends of the earth: "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13: 38, 39). *Are* justified: mark that. They are already justified; and they cannot be partly justified and partly unjustified, partly saved and partly unsaved.

If they believe that what God has said about his Son is true, and true for them, as it is for any other sinner, they have at this present moment a perfect righteousness, and there is not one condemnation against them. What, then, do these doubting believers mean, if I may be allowed to use such an expression as doubting believers? If their doubts are true, God is a liar, but if God is true, their doubts are liars; for he hath said, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

NO HOPE FOR THE SINNER IN THE LAW

For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law,
That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.—
Romans 10: 5.

I. DOES SALVATION COME BY DOING OR BELIEVING?

There are only two ways by which men expect to enter heaven. One is by *doing*, the other is by *believing*. We often hear doleful and unmeaning complaints about the great diversity of religious opinions in the world, but all systems of faith can be readily reduced to the two already mentioned.

In the one class we must place that vast multitude without the pale of the Christian Church who, acknowledging in general terms the existence of God and a future state of rewards and punishments, seek to win the approval of their Creator by their amiable character, or by their upright conduct, or by certain acts of worship sanctioned by custom or suggested by conscience.

To these must be added that vast multitude within the pale of the Church who seek to win the approval of their Creator by their prayers, or good works, or reception of what are called the Sacraments. I am not here referring to any particular denomination who rely upon anything whatever that they have done or can do to be saved.

They agree precisely with the former class, and stand upon precisely the same ground, and are doomed to the same end; for the unbelievers are to have their "portion with the hypocrites" (Matt. 24: 51), and the hypocrites are to have their "portion with the unbelievers" (Luke 12: 46). If the one will be saved by well-doing, so will the other, unless it can be shown that God has

promised eternal life for a special kind of well-doing; but if the one will be lost for refusing to rest simply and solely upon the finished work of Christ, so will the other. The fact that some are members of the Church and some are not does not change in the slightest degree the principle on which they act, and which in both cases is the principle of *doing* as the procuring cause of salvation.

It is obvious that these two kinds of men do not differ with respect to the principle which underlies their hope of salvation, for they depend alike upon their own doing to be admitted into the glorious dwelling-place of God when called to leave the world. Men of one class may utterly reject the divine authority of the Bible, while men of the other class may be Presbyterians, or Baptists, or Congregationalists, or Methodists, or Episcopalians, or Roman Catholics, or known by any other denominational title; but it is clear that they all build upon the same foundation and must stand or fall together. If you ask for the reason of their expectation that they will be saved, you will find that in both cases they rely on something that they have *done*, or are *doing*, or intend to *do*, and hence the ground of their hope, so far as they put themselves to the trouble of forming any distinct views of the subject, is one and the same, whether they are in or out of the church.

It is to be feared that there are thousands in all the churches who would listen with blank amazement to the solemn direction of the Holy Spirit, "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3: 15), but when we are able to close questioning to arrive at that reason, it amounts to nothing more than this: they were taught to believe that they are sinners, and sometimes a slumbering conscience wakes up long enough to confirm the teaching; and influenced by the example and wishes of parent, or husband, or wife, or friend, they made a profession of religion, as it is significantly called.

They are not happy in their relations to God, who is an object of dread or indifference, and hence they think it wise to do something to secure them against punishment in the eternal world in case of sudden death, while their tastes, aims, and aspirations center with supreme regard about the present world. I have known Christian mothers to take great comfort from the fact that their daughters, after a night of God-forgetting and God-defying revelry, were pious enough to say their prayers before retiring to rest; and the poor deluded daughters really fancy that they have done something to cause the sleepless eye of Jehovah to look upon them complacently.

Upon ministers of the gospel—nay, ministers of the law, I should term them—largely rests the responsibility for this lamentable state of things; because in reply to the earnest question of many an anxious soul, "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16: 30) instead of answering in the language of the Apostle, and preaching the good news of God's love and of a finished salvation to the believer, they tell the inquirer to be confirmed, or to unite with the Church, or to enter into covenant with God to serve him, or to keep on praying and striving, and thus put the dead sinner on a course of worthless doing. "They be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matt. 15: 14).

God knows I do not desire to express myself harshly; and surely I can have no wish to excite the enmity and call forth the opposition of those who are warmly attached to their religious teachers and to the systems of religious faith in which they have been educated; but the interests involved in this discussion are too precious to allow the use of honeyed phrases concerning me who claim to be "the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation" (Acts 16: 17). "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8: 20). "For Moses describeth the righteousness

which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them."

II. IF WE SEEK SALVATION BY LAW WE MUST OBSERVE THE WHOLE LAW

If then a man expects to obtain righteousness by the law or by the principle of doing, he must do the things required by the law. It is not enough that he tries to do them; or that he promises to do them; or that he is sorry because he has not done them; or that he does some of them; but he must actually do, and do without faltering, and do all the things demanded by the law, or a voice breaks like thunder above his head, saying, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. 3: 10). God, who gave the law and knows why he gave it, has also said, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2: 10). Even the Incarnate One who came on a mission of love and salvation to our lost race solemnly declared, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5: 18). The law, therefore, cannot lower its demands to humor the caprices or to suit the necessities of the sinner, for then it would be no law at all. It is an unalterable expression of the will of God concerning the duty of man, and it remains forever the same in its holy precepts and in its dread penalty, whatever may be our state. It is written, "If the word (that is the law) spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation" (Heb. 2: 2, 3)?

The law, we here learn, is stedfast, stable, firmly established; and every transgression—not only some gross and enormous transgressions, but *every* transgression and disobedience—is sure to receive a just recompense of reward; "for the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6: 23). What hope, then, can the *sinner* derive from the law or from

reliance upon his own doing to be saved? None whatever. The righteousness which Moses describeth, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them, most clearly can be of no avail to the man who has not done them.

The promise is only to him who doeth them, and not to him who fails to do them. If any can be found who have perfectly obeyed the requirements of the law in thought, emotion, word, and deed, they may begin to speak of winning heaven on the principle of doing; but if it can be proved that all, without exception, have disobeyed these requirements, it follows, so far as the law is concerned, that it condemns and curses the entire human family, and demands that the threatened penalty shall be inflicted.

III. OBSERVING THE WHOLE LAW HENCEFORTH WILL NOT SUFFICE

But I will go a step further and say that if my reader were able from the hour his eye falls upon these lines to abstain entirely from sin, he could not be saved in virtue of his own doing. Yes, I will take it for granted, for the sake of argument, that henceforth he can perfectly keep the law of God in thought, word, and deed; and, after all, he must inevitably be lost if his dependence is placed on his own good character and conduct; "for Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them." He does not say that the man which doeth those things part of the time, but all the time; for if life is to be earned on the principle of doing the things required by the law, they must not be left undone, but done.

If they are left undone once or for a single instant, all hope of being saved by doing is gone, and gone forever. Suppose, then, that when judged by the law you could truthfully claim that you had strictly observed all its commands for ten, twenty, or thirty years, the Judge would very properly reply, Why did you not observe them all the time? What were you doing the many

years previous to your observance of them but committing sin continually? According to your own showing, you have utterly failed in your duty, and as you prefer to be judged by the law, O sinner, you are condemned. "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 25: 30).

What would be thought of a court of justice which would justify or declare righteous a man arraigned at its bar on the ground that, although he had committed innumerable crimes through a long series of years, he had subsequently reformed and become an upright citizen? The chief executive might possibly pardon him in view of his reformation, but he could not do it without setting the law aside; and surely he could not pronounce him a righteous man, or right according to law. But God can never set his "holy, just and good" law aside, nor can he fail, as has been previously shown, to punish sin; and therefore, if the sinner could be obedient hereafter in every respect to the demands of the law, his subsequent good conduct could not possibly atone for his former bad conduct, nor exempt him from the penalty which is denounced against "every transgression and disobedience."

I am but stating the experience of all, without exception, who have earnestly and resolutely tried the law, or the principle of doing, in order to be saved, when I say that a miserable failure has been the uniform result; and it is owing to my anxiety to save you this bitter experience, dear reader, that I dwell so much upon a point which may seem to you of little importance. How many sincere souls might be spared months and years of gloomy despondency and harassing fears if taught at the beginning of their religious experience the utter uselessness and worthlessness of their own doing!

IV. THE CHURCH CANNOT SAVE

What, then, will you do? Go to the church to save you? Poor sinner! how can the church save you when

it is nothing, as its name implies, but an assembly of sinners called out from the world to be the witness of the grace that has plucked them as brands from the burning? I verily believe that there is nothing about which there is such mischievous confusion of mind and such horrible darkness as concerning "the church." If the church saves, pray in what part of it is salvation found? Is it in the preacher, or the people, or the services?

Do you not perceive at a glance that in going to the church for salvation you are going back to the law and to this fatal principle of doing? Do you not see that you are guilty of blasphemy in transferring the perfections of Jehovah, whose high province and sole prerogative it is to save, to sinful creatures like yourself? Take heed, I beseech you, how you put your trust in the church, lest you should be aroused by the terrors of the judgment to the frightful discovery that you have been building your hope of life on a foundation of sand.

I will go a step further with my argument and assert that there could be no hope for the sinner, in the law or on the principle of doing, even if he were able to abstain entirely hereafter from the transgression of the commandments; and even if he were able to say truthfully that he has never in the past violated one of these precepts; and even if he were able to discover a church exactly conformed in all respects to the apostolic standard, and should become the most prominent leader in its services.

When you read this assertion, do not, I pray you, throw the book contemptuously down, but, however offensive it may be, at least consider what I have to say in its support. I would not thrust a bony and cold-blooded theology at you to haunt your dreams like a spectre, and I have as little relish as you can possibly have for those nice hair-splitting distinctions in doctrinal statement that are of no practical value to the soul. But, dear reader, I am dealing with a solemn truth and a tremendous fact when I repeat that if your outward life were perfectly blameless, and if you were a distinguished mem-

ber of the only true church on the face of the earth, could you find such a body, you would still need something else before obtaining a scriptural hope of salvation.

My authority for this declaration is found in the oft-repeated testimony of the Word of God that our *very nature is sinful*, and hence our Lord, as if addressing each person belonging to our race, distinctly affirms, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee"—I who can neither deceive nor be deceived—I who came down from heaven to die in the room and stead of lost men—"I say unto thee, Except a man (except any one, every one) be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3: 3).

V. WE MUST BE BORN FROM ABOVE

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and do what you will with it, you can never make anything of it but flesh. Adorn it with all the charms of the most attractive morality, beautify it with all the graces of the most refined culture, and still it remains flesh. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles" (Matt. 7: 16)? Can you by any amount of care and industry cause thorns to produce grapes or thistles to bring forth figs? This may be done just as soon as flesh can be turned into spirit, or that which is inherently and essentially sinful can be changed into holiness. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then," says the Lord, "may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil" (Jer. 13: 23).

In other words, neither in the case of the Ethiopian, nor the leopard, nor the sinner, can the nature be changed into another nature. A new nature may be imparted or a new creation wrought by the power of the Almighty, but the old nature will be the old nature still. Hence the Bible in describing the way of salvation does not represent it as due to certain moral influences which God brings to bear upon the soul, but to "the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power (or the energy of the might of his power) which he wrought in Christ,

when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places" (Eph. 1: 19, 20).

Nothing short of the highest exercise of divine power can avail to raise us out of the profound abyss of our misery, because our nature is helplessly sinful and hopelessly ruined. God's judgment of our state by nature is contained in his own solemn declaration, "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jer. 17: 9); and it will give the full force of this declaration to remember that the word translated "desperately" is rendered "incurable" and "fatal" when applied to a disease or a wound.

Man's nature then is *incurably* wicked, it is *fatally* injured; and, therefore, in the promise of salvation which the Lord addresses to Israel, he says, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you" (Ezek. 36: 26). The Psalmist, taught by the Holy Spirit, prays, "Create in me a clean heart, O God" (Psalm 51: 10); and neither he nor any other of the inspired writers ever uses the unscriptural phrase, "a change of heart," which we so often hear in our pulpits and read in our religious books.

The phrase is objectionable because it implies that the New Birth does not consist in the imparting of the new nature, but in the improvement or reformation of the old; and for this view I am satisfied there is no foundation whatever in the Word of God or in Christian experience. On the other hand, it is written, "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8: 7). Here we are told that the carnal mind, the fleshly mind, that which is born of the flesh, man's nature, is not only an enemy, but enmity itself against God, and that it *cannot* be subject to the law of God. "So, then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8: 8). The carnal mind, or the flesh, or the old nature cannot, therefore, be changed or improved; for then it could become subject to the law of God and please him, which is here declared to be impossible.

In the light of these clear statements, and of many others like them that could be quoted if necessary, we are compelled to see that the nature we have inherited from fallen Adam is totally ruined. There is not, according to the vain thought of many, a little good in man as he is born into the world, "for I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7: 18), and in God's sight, "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6: 5).

He is not like a ship whose sails have been split by a storm and whose masts have been splintered by the lightning, so that it needs repair; but like a shattered wreck upon the shore. A new vessel must be built. He is not like a musical instrument whose strings have become discordant by the violence of some rude clashing hand, but like one broken to pieces. A new instrument must be constructed. He is not like a temple whose altar is desecrated, whose walls are defaced, and whose pillars have been dismantled of their beauty; but the magnificent edifice that once reflected the glory of the Godhead now lies a shapeless mass of worthless rubbish, the fit abode of unclean birds and venomous reptiles; and a new building must be reared.

Our nature is like a human body full of "wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores; they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment" (Isa. 1: 6): and the Holy Spirit did not come down in witness of the ascension of Christ, to inhabit such a thing as this, and seek its improvement. It has been cast out as vile; and not only has the righteous sentence of its doom been pronounced, but it has been executed; for "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Blessed be his name, he struck at the very root of the evil, at sin in the flesh or in our nature; and yet, in his adorable grace, the blow fell not upon us, but upon his own Son, "for he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5: 21).

Sin, then, in its broadest and deepest sense, including both actual transgressions and the depravity of our nature, has already been judged and condemned and punished, so far as the believer is concerned, in the person of Jesus Christ, "who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Pet. 2: 24); who "appeared to put away sin (not sins only, but sin, the poisonous root down in our nature) by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9: 26); and on the ground of that ample and atoning sacrifice, the Holy Spirit proceeds to impart a new nature, to give a new life, to form a new creation in Christ through faith in his name as he is made known to us in the gospel.

The sharp and unchanged contrast between the two natures as presented in the Bible might be continued at great length, but enough, probably, has been said to convince you that if you are looking for the gradual sanctification of the old nature, instead of trusting in the accomplished sacrifice of Christ, you will be wofully disappointed. You will find that the old nature remains the old nature in spite of all your struggles and tears and vows. "No man putteth a piece of new cloth into an old garment; for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved" (Matt. 9: 16, 17).

If men are not guilty of the folly described here by the Saviour, neither is the Lord; for he just casts aside the old garment, the old bottles, the old nature, as condemned and worthless, and gives unto us "exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1: 4), and "in Christ a new creation." It is all in Christ, for "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affection and lusts" (Gal. 5: 24). "Knowing this, that our old man is (was) crucified with him" (Rom. 6: 6). "I am (have been) crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2: 20).

The scene of this crucifixion is not in ourselves—as so many imagine, to their own perpetual discomfort and sorrow—but it was on Calvary, for when Christ was crucified the believer was crucified; when Christ died the believer died; when Christ was quickened the believer was quickened; when Christ arose the believer arose; when Christ was seated in the heavenly places the believer was seated together with him, forever past condemnation, and judgment, and death, and standing in the light and glory of the new creation, an heir of God and joint-heir with Christ, saved now and saved forever.

This will come up again more fully hereafter, but for the present I ask you to consider that if you were perfectly obedient to the law in your outward life, and if you were the most prominent member of what is called by various denominations the only true church, you would require something else as long as the old nature remains the old nature, and as long as it is true that “ye must be born again.” The worst need nothing more than this, but the best can do with nothing less. Thanks to God, there is nothing, nothing whatever, between the worst of sinners and the gracious Saviour, as I shall now proceed to show.

VI

NOTHING BETWEEN THE SINNER AND THE SAVIOUR

But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above). Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead). But what saith it? The word is nigh unto thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach.—Romans 10: 6-8.

I. CHRIST FULLY SATISFIES THE LAW

“The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1: 17). The law says, Do and be saved; grace says, Believe and be saved. The law says, Do and live; grace says, Live and do. The law says, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezek. 18: 4); grace says, “Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom” (Job 33: 24). The law says, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them” (Gal. 3: 10); grace, speaking only of believers, says, “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us” (Gal. 3: 13).

This shows us precisely how we are delivered from the curse of the law. It is said, “Christ hath redeemed us, being made a curse for us.” He was “made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Gal. 4: 4, 5). The law, therefore, has not been set aside, but satisfied. It has not been trampled under foot, but it has triumphed in the infliction of the threatened penalty against sin; only the penalty has, in amazing grace, fallen upon the person of the sinner’s Divine Substitute.

If a man were put in prison for debt, and a friend should pay the full amount to the creditor, it would be impossible in strict justice to retain the debtor in confinement, because the law would be satisfied—not by anything the prisoner could do, but by what his friend does as his representative and in his place. His further detention in prison after the discharge of the debt would be grossly illegal and tyrannical.

It is most important in the present discussion to keep in mind that the sacrificial death of Christ has already been endured, and his atoning work already accomplished. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53: 5, 6). "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4: 25). "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15: 3). God "hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5: 21).

You will observe that in these texts not only is the death of Christ directly connected with our sins, and described as vicarious, or endured in our stead, and represented as furnishing the only ground upon which we can be saved, but the past tense is used in every passage, to indicate that the great transaction has already taken place. More than nineteen hundred years ago our redemption was accomplished, and by the power of faith even the Old Testament saints regarded it as achieved in their day, because their impressive types daily proclaimed "the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world" (1 Peter 1: 19, 20). The Father, as representing the unsullied holiness of the divine nature, and the inviolable majesty of the divine law, and the unspeakable interests of the divine government, met the Son at Calvary bearing upon him the mighty load

of our iniquities; and there, amidst bursting tombs, and reeling rocks, and earthquake shocks, and the indescribable sufferings of the cross that extorted the fearful cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27: 46), the question of sin and salvation was once and forever settled.

II. THE LOST ARE OFTEN MISGUIDED

I know how common, alas, it is for the anxious soul to be put upon a course of presumptuous and profitless *doing* in order to be saved; as when urged to enter into covenant with God to serve him; or to draw up a form of solemn self-surrender and self-dedication; or to be confirmed; or to be baptized; or to join the church; or to seek religion; or to give the heart unto the Lord as the means of inclining him to be gracious; or to keep on praying until he will be merciful and answer fervent and frequent supplications. Such advice is not the gospel, but the law, and you will never, never, obtain an intelligent and assured hope in this way. Under this law-preaching, it has come to pass that nearly every one who is awakened to consider the interests of eternity thinks of the blessed God as an unfeeling governor whose compliance with a request is to be won by the force of importunity; or as a stern judge whose favor is to be gained by eloquent appeals and tearful entreaties; or as a fickle and foolish father who is at length overcome by the persistent pleadings of a child to give what he is not disposed to grant.

Hence, we seldom find sinners coming at once to Christ after conviction, and, through an immediate and unquestioning faith in the testimony of his word, so promptly receiving a full and finished salvation as to understand the meaning of the Bible when it says, "We which have believed do enter into rest" (Heb. 4: 3), and "rejoice evermore" (1 Thess. 5: 16). Not only days, but generally weeks or months, and sometimes years, pass away while they are trying to be fit and to be good enough to come; and then, after making a profession

of religion, as they very properly call it, their whole subsequent life is apt to pass away in uncertain hopes and vague, unsatisfying conceptions of the entire subject. They imagine that to attain salvation they must climb as it were some steep and laborious ascent or plunge into some profound abyss, not remembering that "the righteousness which is of faith," which is received through faith, which is the result of faith, which is ours by faith, "speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above). Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead). But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach."

If the inquirer who reads these lines only knew how nigh salvation is to him this very moment, surely he would eagerly lay hold of it without the slightest delay. Nay, he does not have to lay hold of it; he has just to receive it in all its completeness. It is nigher to you, my friend, than the door, than any article of furniture in the room where you are sitting, than any object within your reach, for it is as nigh as your mouth and your heart. You are not asked to stir from your seat, to lift your finger, to move an eyelash, to wait a single second, but now, just now, and just as you are, to believe, and to enter straightway into everlasting life.

There is no need to plead with God to be merciful, for he is already merciful, and has given the most convincing exhibition of his mercy in the wonderful provisions he has made for your recovery from the dominion and ruinous consequences of sin. There is no need to beseech him to love you, for he already loves you, and has furnished the most touching manifestation of that love of which the mind of man or of an angel can conceive.

Two gentlemen were riding together, and as they were about to separate, one addressed the other thus: "Do you ever read your Bible?" "Yes; but I get no benefit from it, because, to tell you the truth, I feel I do not

love God." "No more did I," replied the other, "but God loved me." This answer produced such an effect upon his friend that, to use his own words, it was as if one had lifted him off the saddle into the skies. It opened up to his soul at once the great truth that it is not how much I love God, but how much God loves me.

This is indeed the great truth, "for God so loved the world (the guilty, sinful, ruined world) that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3: 16). "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4: 19); and if you attempt to reverse this divine order so as to love him first that he may love you in return, you will soon be involved in hopeless confusion and darkness. The devil would like to persuade you that God cannot love you as you are, and hence he is constantly suggesting to parents to tell their little children that God will not love them if they are naughty, but "he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8: 44). And when he whispers to your soul that you must do something, or get to be something, different from what you now are before God can love you, he is whispering a lie; for God loves you at this very instant, and sees you afar off, and yearns over you with unutterable tenderness, and longs to take you to his heart of love and make you happy forever.

III. NOTHING BETWEEN THE SINNER AND THE SAVIOUR

Who, then, puts the slightest barrier between the sinner and the Saviour? Not the Saviour himself, for his language is, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me" (Matt. 11: 28, 29): but you will observe that he does not bid us take his yoke until we first come, laboring and heavy laden with our sins or sorrows, nor does he expect us to learn until he first gives us rest. You will find upon examination that this is the order always laid down in the Word of God. Salvation is first bestowed as a free gift, and then service follows; privilege is first granted, and then responsibility

ensues; relationship with God as our Father is first established by grace, and then the affections of children are expected; our standing in Christ is first secured through faith in his blood, and then obligation is imposed.

There is no telling the amount of evil that has followed man's attempt to reverse this order, and I beg you to remember that as a sinner you have nothing, *nothing*, to do but to come to Christ as you are; by which I mean, you have nothing to do but to believe, upon the sure testimony of God's Word, that he is able and willing to save your soul, and to save it without delay. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (John 7: 37). In the eagerness of his desire to save, he arose from the sitting posture usual with Jewish teachers, and stood, that his voice might ring like a trumpet above the crowd, crying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me"—come, thirsty and needy, and not because he has done something to quench his thirst and satisfy his need.

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

There is a question just here I wish you to consider, and it is this: Are there many ways by which men are saved, or is there only one way? I know, if you accept the Scriptures as inspired, that you will reply, There is only one way; for it is written, "He that believeth on the Son (no matter who he is) hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son (no matter who he is) shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3: 36). This, then, prepares the way for another question: How was the dying thief saved? There are many who, in answering this question, seem to take

it for granted that he was a better thief than the other, who was not saved, but not so does the Word of God speak of him.

Matthew informs us that "the thieves also (that is, both of them), which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth" (Matt. 27: 44). Mark says, "They (that is, both of them) that were crucified with him reviled him" (Mark 15: 32). The fact is, when he was nailed to the cross he joined his guilty companion and the brutal crowd in heaping insults and reproaches upon the dying Saviour; but God determined to show what his grace can do, and hence flashed into his ruined soul conviction of sin which was the "Spirit's rising beam." Then follows the humble confession of guilt, and the sublime testimony concerning Jesus, that "this man hath done nothing amiss" (Luke 23: 41).

Truly there was little appearance of royalty about that thorn-crowned brow, and that bleeding back mangled by the cruel lash, and those hands and feet pierced with nails; but the poor thief had faith to say, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom" (Luke 23: 42). He had no time to get better; he had no time to make himself fit to come to Christ; he had no time to observe rites and ordinances; but he had time to *believe* that the meek Sufferer at his side was what he claimed to be, and to trust in him for some humble place in the kingdom which he *believed* that Sufferer would in due time establish on the earth, according to the Scriptures.

These Scriptures say, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 John 5: 1); and this is what the dying thief did, and it is all he did, when forth came the sweet assurance from the pallid lips of the Saviour mighty to save in death and through death, "Verily, I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23: 43); and a few hours later the ransomed sinner went his way, the first glad herald from earth to announce to the rejoicing multitude on high that the work of redemption was finished.

We are told that Paul and Silas were preaching in the city of Philippi, where a great uproar occurred as the result of a miracle wrought on "a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination." The preachers were seized, dragged before the magistrates, savagely beaten, and committed to prison, with a command to the jailer to keep them safely; "who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks." But the hand of violence could not touch the resurrection life they had received from the Saviour, nor could the stroke of suffering mar its happiness; and therefore at midnight they "prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them."

He who had sent them to Europe determined to plant the banner of the cross on this new continent, whether men would hear or forbear, "and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and every one's bands were loosed." The jailer, awakened by the tumult, naturally inferred that the prisoners had fled, and, knowing that he would be held accountable for their escape, was on the point of committing suicide, when Paul arrested his uplifted hand by calling with a loud voice, "Do thyself no harm; for we are all here."

Then conviction seems to have fastened on the man's conscience, and he was persuaded by the extraordinary events he had witnessed that the poor girl had unconsciously uttered the truth when she followed Paul and his companions for many days through the streets, crying, "These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation." Accordingly, "he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

This is a very earnest, but very plain and simple, question, and the answer is equally plain and simple. *Do?* Why do you ask about doing? You must *do* nothing but "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." As he was an ignorant

heathen who probably had never heard before of Jesus Christ, of course he needed instructions; "and they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house" (Acts 16: 32-34).

The way some men set forth what they call the gospel would require their hearers to spend about four years in college and three years in a theological seminary in order to be saved, and even then they could not be certain of their salvation. But God the Father says, "Now!" and God the Son says, "Now!" and the Bible says, "Now!" and the very depths of the sinner's guilty and ruined nature echo the cry, "Now." If he stays away from Christ trying to do something until he is as old as Methuselah, could such a thing be, at the close of nine hundred and sixty-nine years he will not be a step nor a hair's breadth nearer salvation than he was the moment of conviction; and on the other hand, the moment he is in Christ by believing on him he is as certainly and completely saved as he will be a thousand years afterward.

IV. IN CHRIST THE VILEST ARE CLOTHED IN RIGHTEOUSNESS

The fact is that *out of* Christ we have no worth or worthiness at all, do what we may; but *in* Christ the vilest of the vile are infinitely worthy, for they are clothed with the righteousness of God.

V. NOTHING BUT UNBELIEF BETWEEN THE SINNER AND CHRIST

Nothing, indeed, nothing but your unbelief, stands between you and an instant, complete salvation. You do not need to go up to heaven for it, for that would imply that Christ had not come down "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9: 26); nor are you required

to descend into the lower parts of the earth, for that would imply that Christ was not delivered for our offenses and "raised again for justification" (Rom. 4: 25) ; but the word is nigh thee, and so nigh that, without waiting an hour or a minute, without thinking of the past or the future, without stopping to look into the exercises of your mind, without tarrying to understand this doctrine or that doctrine, without pausing at regeneration, or repentance, or baptism, or anything else, you may immediately enter into life, eternal life, if you truly believe that "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Cor. 15: 3, 4).

What a glorious salvation, and what a precious Saviour! It is not by what we do, but by what he has done, we are saved, and hence in answer to your question, "What must I do?" let the sweet hymn answer:

Nothing, either great or small,
Nothing, sinner, no!
Jesus did it, did it all,
Long, long ago.

When he from his lofty throne
Stoop'd to do and die,
Everything was fully done—
Hearken to his cry—

"It is finished:" yes, indeed—
Finish'd every jot.
Sinner, this is all you need;
Tell me, is it not?

VII

BELIEF AND CONFESSION

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.—Romans 10: 9, 10.

I. BELIEF AND CONFESSION NOT CONDITIONS BUT CHANNELS OF SALVATION

It is said that soon after the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots, a French lady who had been in her service attempted to assassinate Elizabeth, Queen of England. Having been arrested while hanging about the court, she boldly announced her name and design, expressing regret that she had failed to accomplish her purpose. She was brought into the presence of Elizabeth, who said to her, "What, think you, is my duty upon the hearing of such a case?" "Do you put the question to me as a queen or a judge?" asked the prisoner. "As a queen," was the reply. "Then you should grant me a pardon," she answered. "But," inquired the queen, "what assurance can you give me that you will not abuse my mercy and attempt my life again? Should I pardon, it should be based upon conditions to be safe from your murderous revenge in future." "Grace fettered by precautions—grace that hath conditions—is no grace," exclaimed the woman; and history states that the remark so charmed Elizabeth that she immediately ordered her release, and bound her to her royal person ever afterward by the ties of fervent gratitude and devoted affection.

Whether this incident occurred precisely as here related may be called in question, but it admits of no doubt that "grace fettered by precautions—grace that

hath conditions—is no grace.” I am unwilling, therefore, to say that belief and confession are the conditions of salvation, because the word *condition* in popular use implies generally something done by one person or party on account of which another person or party does something promised or stipulated. Now, God has not promised or stipulated to give eternal life to the sinner *on account of* his belief and confession, but solely on account of the finished work of Christ. Belief and confession are requisites, or they are absolutely necessary, with those old enough to be responsible, in order to enjoy eternal life, but they are not conditions, for “grace fettered by precautions—grace that hath conditions—is no grace.”

I cannot consent, then, to speak of belief and confession as conditions of salvation, but rather as the means or channel through which salvation, devised in grace, accomplished in grace, and bestowed in grace, is received by the sinner, who is dependent on the Holy Spirit for every proper exercise of his mind, for every right emotion of his heart, and for every acceptable word of his mouth, from the first to the last stage of his religious experience. His ability both to believe and to confess Christ sincerely and truly is due, as we are plainly taught in the Scriptures, to the sovereign grace of God, and this ability is a divine gift, not a human work, “lest any man should boast.”

Confession, then, forms no part of the meritorious cause or reason of our salvation, but it is equally true that real belief will be sure to express itself in confession. Lazarus was not made alive because he came forth from the grave and appeared among men, but he came forth and appeared because he was made alive. Neither do we confess Christ with the mouth that we may have life, but because through faith we already have life. Nay, I will go further and assert that where the belief is intelligent and sincere it will manifest itself in confession as surely as the healthful life of a child will manifest itself in constant activity and joyous gambols.

II. WHAT IS IT TO BELIEVE AND CONFESS?

You will notice that confession is a personal thing: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus." It is not enough that you confess Jesus to be Lord, or the Lord of others, but *thy* Lord, thus acknowledging your individual obligation to him, and his divine sovereignty and rightful authority over *you* as redeemed by his blood and the object of his love. Confession, then, is the necessary result and external evidence of your personal faith in Christ, who came down from heaven to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and is now exalted "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (Eph. 1: 21).

Hence it is written, "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 12: 3); for no man can say this intelligently, and as the expression of his firm conviction, until he believes in Jesus as his divine and almighty Saviour; and no man can believe that the meek and lowly "carpenter, the son of Mary," was God manifest in the flesh, until he is enlightened by the Holy Spirit. "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every Spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every Spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God" (1 John 4: 2, 3).

What is it, then, to "confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus"? Let us suppose that you should say to some friend entering your room while reading this chapter, or to any number of persons assembled on any occasion, "I sincerely confess that Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified between two thieves was not what the world took him to be,—an impious impostor or weak fanatic,—but that he was the Son of God and the Saviour of men; and I joyfully acknowledge him to be my Lord, entitled to my faith, and worship, and obedience." This would surely be confessing him with the mouth, and this is so simple a child can understand it.

If a true Christian were in your presence, or in the presence of the whole human race, and a fitting opportunity should occur, he would gladly speak of Jesus as Thomas did when he said to the risen Saviour, "My Lord and my God" (John 20: 28), and he would carefully avoid the fearful sin of Joseph of Arimathea, who was "a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews" (John 19: 38), and who, in consequence of his unmanly fear, did nothing worthy of a disciple until compelled, after the Saviour's death, to confess him in an imperfect manner by begging of Pilate the privilege of burying the mangled body. There can be no difficulty, then, in understanding what is meant by confessing with the mouth the Lord Jesus, since it implies a readiness on your part on all suitable occasions to own him in his true character and relation to yourself as your Lord and Saviour.

III. BELIEVING WITH THE HEART

Let a few simple illustrations exhibit the difference between believing with the mind and believing with the heart; or rather let them show what is meant by believing both with the mind and heart. All belief in the first instance is necessarily an act of the mind, but there are some things we believe with the mind alone, and there are other things we believe with the heart also. We may believe that Alexander invaded Asia; that Hannibal crossed the Alps; that Julius Cæsar was assassinated in Rome; that John Milton wrote *Paradise Lost*; that the sun is ninety-five millions of miles distant from the earth; that light travels with the velocity of more than one hundred and ninety thousand miles in a second; but we do not believe these facts with the heart.

If a friend should inform you that he had received a letter from England announcing the disposition by will of an immense estate without giving the name of the heir, you would probably believe him, but you would believe him with the mind only, because the news could

be of no personal interest to you. But if he should proceed with his information and declare that you yourself are the heir to whom this estate immediately descends, you would then believe with the heart, provided wealth seems to you, as it does to many, a most desirable object.

You might doubt whether such good news could be true; but if there was no room to question the credibility of the statement, you would believe it with more than your mind, because your heart would be at once summoned to rejoice. A criminal under sentence of death might believe the testimony of his jailer that a certain man had been elected governor during the period of his imprisonment, but he would believe it only with the mind. If, however, the jailer should go on to tell him that this newly elected governor had extended to him an unconditional pardon, and that he was at liberty to leave his dungeon, he would believe the second statement both with the mind and the heart.

When absent from your home a correspondent might relate many ordinary occurrences that had transpired after your departure, and you would doubtless believe the statements, but only with the mind. If, however, a letter or telegraphic dispatch should at length be received announcing the sudden death of your child, or the one who was dearest to you on earth, you would know what is meant by believing with the heart as well as with the mind.

Now, when you say that you believe God raised Christ from the dead, the question is not whether you believe it as you believe that Oliver Cromwell was once Lord Protector of England or that George Washington was the first president of the United States, but are you glad that God raised him from the dead? Do you see in his resurrection the crowning proof and overwhelming demonstration of the fact that he is indeed the Saviour of lost men, and your Saviour? Do you see in it in connection with his death the only way of escape from the dreadful curse of the violated law of God, and the

only ground on which you can build your hope of immortal glory?

IV. BELIEF DETERMINES DESTINY

I beg your careful, undivided attention to what follows, because *belief* is the turning-point in the destiny of your soul. I shall quote passages with which you are probably familiar, but nevertheless I ask you to read them, and to read them again and again, until their full meaning is received "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Cor. 2: 4). It will give you some idea of the importance of the truth we are now to consider when you are informed that the words *believe* and *faith* occur about *five hundred times* in the New Testament.

Our Lord's first recorded conversation with an inquiring sinner was about the necessity of belief; all his discourses and miracles were directed to the point of inducing men to believe in him; and after his resurrection, we hear him saying to his disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not (whether he is or is not baptized) shall be damned" (Mark 16: 15, 16). Accordingly, the Apostles went forth, and everywhere, and among all classes of men, Jew and Gentile, rich and poor, educated and illiterate, moral and immoral, in answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" their reply was, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16: 31).

When Jesus spoke so kindly to the fallen woman at the well of Samaria, seeking in matchless grace and wisdom to draw her to himself, she said at length, perhaps with a dim consciousness of the truth stealing like the gray dawn into her opening mind, "I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he" (John 4: 25, 26), and obviously it was the belief of this statement which saved her soul. No further con-

versation ensued between them; but instantly receiving as true his own word that he was the Messiah, or Christ, she left her waterpot, and in the joy of her heart announced to every one she met that she had found the Saviour.

Another instance of salvation through belief of the same truth occurs in the account of the man who was born blind, to whom our Lord gave sight. Although the person of Christ was unknown to him, yet he boldly defended his character against the sneers of the Pharisees, and accordingly was cast out of the synagogue, or excommunicated. "Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him" (John 9: 35-38). It is perfectly obvious that the truth here believed in order to salvation was nothing more than this, that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God, and therefore the proper object of worship.

V. WHAT IS INVOLVED IN BELIEVING?

But you at once perceive that no one can really believe this without also believing that he died in the manner and for the object set forth in the Sacred Scriptures. It would be absurd and self-contradictory to believe upon the testimony of these Scriptures that he is the Son of God, and at the same time to deny in the fact of the same testimony that he died upon the cross, and died as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1: 29). "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20: 28). "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26: 28). "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8: 3).

The Bible is full of such texts, for its great design from the third chapter of Genesis onward to the close is to proclaim our deliverance from sin and its dreadful consequences through the death of God's only begotten and well-beloved Son. It is impossible, therefore, to believe in the heart that he is the Son of God without also believing that he died, not by accident, not by the uncontrolled vindictiveness of his enemies, not as an example, for then his example was thrown away, since none of us are called to die upon the cross under the hidings of God's face, but that he died as the *sin-bearer* and divinely-appointed substitute of his people, who was made to be sin for them in that fearful hour when from his breaking heart and pallid lips ascended the mournful cry of desertion.

The question, then, is just this: Do you sincerely believe that he died to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself? If you do, you are a saved person, and saved now; and if you were to ask me how I know, I would reply, I know it upon precisely the same testimony that tells me Jesus is the Son of God. He who declares by the Holy Spirit in his blessed word that when the fullness of the time was come he "sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law" by being made a curse for them, still further declares that the belief of this truth is salvation; and we have as much authority for believing one statement as the other.

And now what renders assurance doubly sure is the fact that Jesus, who lived and was crucified, rose again, and was thus "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1: 4). If God himself had not connected the forgiveness of your sins and eternal life with your belief of what he says in the Bible concerning the person, the death, and the resurrection of his Son, you could not be blamed for remaining in anxiety and fear as to your salvation. But after he has so distinctly stated that if you believe in your heart that he raised the

Lord Jesus from the dead, you shall be—not may be, nor hope to be, no *shall be—saved*, a moment's doubt of your pardon and acceptance is a grievous dishonor to him who is too holy to tell a lie, too good to trifle with your eternal interests.

When the multitude listened to Peter and the other apostles preaching on the day of Pentecost, they heard of the person, the death, and the resurrection of Christ, but they did not at once hear that the belief of the testimony which had been delivered in their presence was the simple and yet sure way of receiving life. Hence for a little while they were greatly perplexed and troubled, being convicted of sin, but seeing no way of escape from ruin, until they were told of the remission of sins in immediate connection with the name of Jesus, who had been preached to them; and believing that he had put away sin, they that gladly received the word were baptized, and rejoiced.

And now, my friend, “if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved”; and if the world, the flesh, or the devil asks you how you know you are saved, reply by looking up to Jesus, at the right hand of the Father, and boldly exclaim, “He said it.” Surely he *has* said it in the “word of God, which liveth and abideth forever” (1 Peter 1: 23), and who shall gainsay it?

You are authorized to believe this very moment that he bare your sins in his own body on the tree; and if he bare them in his own body, they cannot be found on you. You are commanded to believe that he put away sin, root and branch, by the sacrifice of himself; and if he put it away, it can no longer be upon your conscience. You are entreated to accept as true the testimony of God that he died for our sins according to the Scriptures—not according to our feelings, or deservings, but according to the Scriptures—and he who believes this may *know* upon that same testimony that he is saved.

Faith is a very simple thing,
Though little understood;
It frees the soul from death's dread sting
By *resting* in the blood.

Faith is not what we *feel* or see,
It is a simple *trust*
In what the God of love has said
Of Jesus as "the Just."

VIII

THE BELIEVER'S SAFETY

For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.—Romans 10: 11.

A young minister was in the habit of visiting an aged Scotch woman in his congregation who was familiarly called "Old Nanny." She was bedridden and rapidly approaching the end of her "long and weary pilgrimage," but she rested with undisturbed composure and full assurance of faith upon the finished work of Christ. One day he said to her, "Now, Nanny, what if, after all your confidence in the Saviour, and your watching and waiting, God should suffer your soul to be lost?"

Raising herself on her elbow, and turning to him with a look of grief and pain, she laid her hand on the open Bible before her, and quietly replied, "Ah, dearie me, is that a' the length you hae got yet, man? God," she continued earnestly, "would hae the greatest loss. Poor Nanny would but lose her soul, and that would be a great loss indeed, but God would lose his *honor* and his *character*. Haven't I hung my soul upon his 'exceeding great and precious promises'? and if he brak' his word, he would make himself a liar, *and a' the universe would rush into confusion.*"

I. *Whosoever* BELIEVETH SHALL NOT BE ASHAMED

"The Scripture saith," or, in other words, God saith in the Scripture, "whosoever believeth on him (that is, on Christ) shall not be ashamed." Mark the vast extent of this blessed declaration, "whosoever believeth." The word "whosoever" goes like the light over the entire surface of our globe, and includes within the ample and urgent invitations of the gospel every member of the

human race. There are many who fear that they do not belong to the elect, or that they are not embraced in the plan of redemption, and hence they long to have some direct and personal evidence of the willingness of God to forgive and save *them*, but surely there is here full warrant for the faith of every sinner.

If a wealthy and benevolent gentleman were to advertise that *whosoever* applied at his residence before a certain day should receive a valid title to a valuable piece of property, you would not refuse to apply because he had not mentioned your name in the advertisement. If you were traveling on a railroad with a number of passengers, and the conductor should announce that *whosoever* is going to the place you are anxious to reach must leave the train at the next station, you would not retain your seat and be carried away from your destination because he did not call out your name.

II. WHOSOEVER *Believeth* SHALL NOT BE ASHAMED

But to make this point still clearer you will observe it is said, "Whosoever *believeth* in him." There is a difference between believing a person and believing *in* or *on* a person. The former implies that we accept his statements as true without going farther, but the latter implies that we trust *in* or rely *on* him. If a man of undoubted veracity were to inform us of something which he had witnessed, but of which we ourselves had no personal knowledge, we would believe him; but if he should promise to confer upon us a favor which we greatly desired to receive, we would confide *in* him or depend *on* him to fulfil his promise.

Now, the salvation held out to us in the gospel does not consist merely in the belief of certain doctrines, but belief in a person. Peter and the other apostles, in defending themselves before the Jewish council, said, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repen-

tance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5: 30, 31). He showed himself alive to his disciples, "after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts 1: 3); and when he had "led them out as far as to Bethany" (Luke 24: 50), and had given his final commands, "while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight" (Acts 1: 9).

It is not, therefore, a dead but a living Christ which speaks to us in his word, and in whom we are urged to trust. From his exalted seat at the right hand of the Father he sees you now while reading these lines, and if it were best, he would instantly descend from heaven and stand before you in personal, visible form. So full of sympathy is his heart of love, and so deep his concern for your salvation, that the sight of your burdened soul would arrest his attention, I think, even if engaged in making a new world, and bring him once more to the cross, could his death a second time avail more fully to deliver you from the condemnation and curse of God's violated law.

III. WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH *Shall Not Be Ashamed*

"Whosoever believeth on him *shall not be ashamed.*" He shall not be ashamed to confess him with the mouth, for the "righteous are bold as a lion" (Prov. 28: 1), and the saints of old "through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouth of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword; out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens" (Heb. 11: 33, 34).

Nor shall he be ashamed "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 1: 7, 8). The solemn language of our Lord does

not apply to him: "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8: 38).

The foundation of his safety is laid on the finished work of Christ, and is guarded by the infinite power, the eternal purpose, and the immutable promise of Jehovah. Nothing, therefore, in this world or in the world to come can blight his hopes or defeat his aspirations. "If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. 8: 31-34).

In this most interesting and comforting passage the Holy Spirit first gives us to understand that God is for us, and hence triumphantly asks, Who can be against us? He then asserts that God's love for us is so great that he spared not his own Son, though he must endure the sorrow and shame, the deep humiliation and terrible agonies, of Gethsemane and Calvary, and makes this the proof of our Father's willingness to bestow upon us freely all things necessary to secure the end of so much suffering, since the greater gift includes the less. He then challenges the universe to bring the slightest charge against those whom God himself has justified. He then mentions the death of Christ, which was in the room and place of our death, because of our offenses; and, as if this were not enough, he tells us of his resurrection, which is the unanswerable demonstration of our complete justification; and, as if this were not enough, he points to him at the right hand of God head over all things to the church, and swaying the scepter of supreme sovereignty; and, as if this were not enough, he bids us

listen to the ever-prevalent intercession of One who could say even upon the earth, although despised and rejected of men, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me; I knew that thou hearest me always" (John 11: 41, 42). "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am" (John 17: 24).

IV. DOUBT DISHONORS GOD

There are thousands of Christians who, on the pretense of humility, make a merit of doubting their salvation, but in the light of such statements as you have just read the faintest shadow of doubt is seen to be a grievous dishonor to God. If doubts are becoming to those who are believers, God is a liar, but if God speaks the truth, how should we look upon our doubts, and how should we regard ourselves for calling in question his clear and oft-repeated testimony?

But you may reply, your difficulty does not lie in this direction. You firmly believe, you say, that God speaks the truth, but you doubt your acceptance, you doubt whether you are saved, because your faith is so weak, and your love is so cold, and your feelings are so variable, and there is so much evil in you, and you make so little progress, or none at all that you can perceive, in holiness. Now, it is not for man to decide whether you are or are not a believer in Christ, but I do confidently affirm that these things have nothing whatever to do with the ground upon which God makes peace with the sinner, though they may have much to do with our enjoyment of peace.

When Jehovah in infinite grace redeemed Israel from Egyptian bondage; what was the ground of their peace and the precise cause of their deliverance? It was not their goodness in any respect; for they were certainly no better by nature nor by practice, for aught we are told, than the Egyptians, and there was nothing to recommend them to the divine mercy but their utter wretchedness. "The children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by rea-

son of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob" (Ex. 2: 23, 24).

But before he could deal with them in manifested love he must first deal with their sins in manifested righteousness. Their lives were forfeited by reason of their iniquities, and the judgment must descend: but in the tenderness of God's compassion for his covenant people it descended upon the head of a divinely appointed substitute. They were commanded to slay a lamb, and to take the blood—"for the blood is the life" (Deut. 12: 23)—and to strike it on the two side-posts and on the upper door-post of their houses. "And the blood," it is added, "shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt" (Ex. 12: 13).

The blood made all the difference that existed between the Israelites and the Egyptians, for it was a token that the sentence of death had already been executed in the behalf of those within the blood-sprinkled houses, because it had fallen upon their representative and substitute. The slightest doubt of safety, therefore, on the part of an Israelite sheltered behind those red door-posts, would have been the same as saying that Jehovah is a liar.

He had said, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you," and this ought to have been enough: it was enough for all who believed his word. Some of them may have complained that their faith was so weak, and their love was so cold, and their feelings were so variable, and there was so much evil in them, and so little progress in holiness, that they could not see the evidences of their salvation. But this was not the question. God did not say, "When you see the evidences," but, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." He did not say, When I see your strong faith, your ardent love, your happy feelings, your victory over the evil of your nature, your rapid

growth in holiness, I will pass over you, but When I see the blood, I will pass over you. It was not the blood and something else, but it was the blood by itself, the blood which God provided, that formed the ground of their safety and their redemption.

During that frightful night of destruction there may have been fathers and mothers who, hearing the shrieks of the terror-stricken Egyptians, caught their first-born to their hearts in inexpressible anxiety, but if so, their fear was a most ungenerous and unworthy suspicion of the God of their salvation, for they were as secure from harm as the power and purpose and promise of the Almighty could make them.

V. THE BLOOD OF JESUS IS THE GROUND FOR THE BELIEVER'S SAFETY

"The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1: 7). "In whom we have (not hope to have, nor try to have, nor shall have, but *have*) redemption through his blood" (Eph. 1: 7). "Much more, then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. 5: 9).

It is the blood, then, not example, nor influence, nor power, but the precious blood of Christ alone, that forms the ground of the believer's safety. It is not the blood and something else—the blood and our estimate of it, the blood and our thoughts about it, the blood and our feelings—but the blood by itself which was poured out upon the cross more than nineteen hundred years ago; and if you believe that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth you from all sin, according to the testimony of God's Word you are saved. God is infinitely satisfied with it; and if you are satisfied, there can be no further cause of controversy between you and him. His own dear Son, who knew no sin, was made to be sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

He took our place under the law with all its dreadful consequences that we might be exalted to his place in

heaven with all its unspeakable blessedness. He was cast out of his Father's presence as evil that we might stand in his Father's presence without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. He bore the curse which we merited that we might receive the blessing which he merited. He drank the cup of wrath which was pressed to our lips that we might drink of the fountain of the Water of Life freely. He endured the condemnation which was due to us that we might obtain the justification which was due to him. He went down into the jaws of death that were ready to devour us that we might rise to a rapturous immortality. He was regarded and treated as sin that we might be regarded and treated as righteousness, and that the righteousness of God. Blessed Saviour! eternity will be too short to speak thy praise.

VI. THERE ARE OTHER PROOFS OF THE BELIEVER'S SAFETY

In addition to all that has been said, it is well to consider for a moment the believer's new nature as another proof of his perfect safety. The Saviour says, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3: 3); and the Spirit says, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 John 5: 1). "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3: 26). "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1: 4).

Of such passages I can only repeat what was said about the believer being called "righteous" in the Bible. God does not treat him merely *as if* righteous, but he *is* righteous. So God does not speak of him *as if* born again, but he *is* born again. He is as truly "born of God," "born of the Spirit," and made a "partaker of the divine nature," as he is born of man, born of the flesh, and made a partaker of the nature of his earthly parents. There are many who compare the adoption of Christians mentioned in the Scriptures with the adoption which takes place among men, but there is a wide difference.

With men, children are transferred to a family to which they do not belong by birthright, and treated *as if* they had been born in the household that now shelters them; but God adopts his own children, having first made them "partakers of the divine nature" by the power of his Spirit through faith in the promises of his word. Hence it is written, "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom. 8: 15).

No man can say to God, "Abba, Father," unless he is born again by believing that Jesus is the Christ; and when the unregenerate mumble the words, "Our Father which art in heaven," they offer a worship not a whit more intelligent or acceptable than the prostration of the native African before his fetish. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked" (Gal. 6: 7); for "he that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him" (John 5: 23).

To this must be added the work of the Holy Spirit; and in glancing at it you need to be guarded at the outset against two errors into which many sincere believers are led to their own disquietude and distress. The first arises from the common mistake of seeking amid the fruits of the Spirit for the ground of peace. It can never be found there. It is not the Spirit's work *in* us, but Christ's work *for* us, that delivers us from condemnation and places us on the heavenward side of the cross beyond judgment; and it is only by looking at Christ's finished work instead of the Spirit's unfinished work that we can find perfect repose of conscience and heart.

The second error arises from the still more common mistake of thinking, or, at least, of practically acting, about the Spirit as if he came on occasional and uncertain visits to the believer, in place of knowing that he abides with us forever. Many Christians are continually singing and praying, "Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly dove," but he is already come. They may say they know this, and do not intend to intimate that he is really absent

from them, but it is very important to avoid the use of language that does not express the precise truth on such a subject. Owing to the constant employment of incorrect language, even admitting a correct knowledge lying back of it, it has come to pass that multitudes are guilty of the fearful sin of regarding the Spirit rather as an influence than as a divine person, and multitudes more look upon him as a cloud moving about from one church to another, or visiting some sections of the country with his refreshing presence, while other sections are necessarily left during his absence parched and desolate.

When our Lord was about to take his departure from the earth he said to his disciples, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14: 16, 17). "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own" (1 Cor. 6: 19)?

The sealing, then, with the Holy Spirit, not only marks the believer as God's property, but renders him perfectly secure, and is the "earnest of our inheritance," part of the inheritance already bestowed, as a divine guarantee that all the rest will be given in due time, "for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. 11: 29). The Spirit, who abideth with us forever, who is in us, and who seals us unto the day of redemption, is never taken from us; and we would be far more profitably engaged if, instead of praying and singing, "Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly dove," we laid to heart the solemn admonition of the Sacred Scriptures addressed to Christians, "Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4: 30). What we are called to do is to judge ourselves according to the word of Truth, and to put away all that the word shows us is a grief to the Holy Spirit: "For if we

would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (1 Cor. 11: 31, 32). It is a sweet truth that the Lord judges and chastens his children not to condemn them, but to reclaim them from their wanderings; and the moment they repent of the evil into which they have been betrayed the Spirit again manifests the blessedness and energy of his presence. That Spirit never withdraws from true believers, and his permanent abode in their hearts becomes therefore the sure pledge of their salvation.

The moment we are in Christ by believing on him, God says we are sanctified—not shall be, nor try to be, nor hope to be, but "Ye are sanctified." Not only is it true that the justice of the satisfied law brings no accusation against us, but the holiness of the law finds no spot nor stain upon us; no, not the slightest. We are "clean every whit"—as clean as the blood of Christ and the will of God can make us. When we receive the Saviour by faith we do not receive a divided Saviour, but "Christ is all, and in all" (Col. 3: 11). He is wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, and sanctification no less than everything else the soul needs. It is forgetfulness or ignorance of this blessed truth that leads so many sincere believers to doubt their safety, and opens the way for Satan to cast the shadows of a deep gloom along the path of their pilgrimage. They are seeking for comfort in a gradual sanctification instead of an offered sacrifice—in a progressive work of holiness in them instead of an accomplished work of redemption already done for them. They will never find it thus. On the other hand, they will surely discover that the "flesh" is always the "flesh," and that the "old man" will be deceitful and desperately wicked to the end of the journey. But when we put on the "new man" our place and portion are in the heavenlies, and our position before God is perfect in every respect, for "we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 5: 20).

The practical results of this perfect sanctification will be more and more perfectly developed in the sight of men, and shine more and more unto the perfect day; but it is the happy privilege of the Christian to know that by the one offering of Christ he is perfected forever as already sanctified, and therefore, whatever conflicts and defeats he may meet on the way, it is still true that "whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."

I hear the words of love,
I gaze upon the blood,
I see the mighty Sacrifice,
And I have peace with God.

'Tis everlasting peace,
Sure as Jehovah's name;
'Tis stable as his stedfast throne;
Forevermore the same.

ASSURANCE OF FAITH

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.—Romans 10: 13.

Next to the inquiry, "What must I do to be saved" (Acts 16: 30)? perhaps the most important question is, "How may I know I am saved?" But important as is this question, there are probably in the Christian churches very many who have never seriously pondered it, and there are certainly very many more who are wholly unable to meet it with an intelligent and satisfactory answer.

I. BELIEVERS OUGHT TO SEEK ASSURANCE

Such indifference to the interests of the soul on the part of unbelievers does not surprise us, for they are "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2: 1); but surely it should cause profound astonishment to find that there are multitudes claiming to be "the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3: 26) who are contented to travel on their way to eternity without knowing whither they are journeying.

What would you think of a man hurrying along a highway if he were to inform you that he was escaping from a city doomed to destruction; and on being asked where he was going he should quietly reply, "I do not know; sometimes I am not without hope that I am going to a place of safety, but generally I have too much reason to fear that the road I am pursuing leads to fearful suffering and a terrible death; and really, I can tell you nothing about it"? You would justly suspect the sincerity or the sanity of such a man, and yet his supposed reply indicates precisely the state of thousands who pro-

fess to believe that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of man" (Romans 1: 18).

They say they have listened to the voice of love warning us "to flee from the wrath to come" (Luke 3: 7), but whether the road they have taken will conduct them to the unutterable horrors of that wrath, or to the ineffable glories of heaven, they confess is a matter of doubt, or at best of vague conjecture. It is the height of presumption, they think, for one who is perplexed with the cares and pressed by the engagements of worldly business to be confident of salvation, and they imagine that the assurance of forgiveness can be attained only by a privileged number who devote their undivided time to religious meditation and study and prayer.

Hence, in answer to the question, "How may I know that I am saved?" they will either remain silent or reply that we can never know it unless we are conscious of superior holiness and of fervent love for God, and of unceasing fidelity in his service. In other words, they make the reply to the question depend upon something done *by* us, instead of the work done *for* us by the Saviour; whereas the reply contained in the blessed gospel is very simple, for it is written, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

The word "Lord" here refers, as stated in the previous chapter, to Jesus Christ, who "died for our sins according to the Scriptures," and "rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15: 3, 4). A few years after his ascension his followers began to be termed Christians, and they are described by an inspired Apostle as "all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1: 2).

To call upon the *name* of the Lord is a Hebrew form of speech denoting the Lord himself, and it signifies, therefore, to call upon Christ, who, "when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. 1: 3). It is obvious, how-

ever, that we cannot truly call upon him unless we believe in him, but if we sincerely believe in him as our Saviour, we may *know* upon the best evidence possible—that is, upon his own infinitely trustworthy testimony—that heaven is certain, because he has said, “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

II. ASSURANCE RESTS UPON TESTIMONY

All the knowledge we possess is derived from consciousness, or from the evidence of our senses, or from testimony; and the knowledge we gain from testimony may be entitled to as much credit as that which we obtain from consciousness or the evidence of our senses. We are conscious, for example, of certain thoughts and emotions, and we say without hesitation we *know* they really came into our minds and hearts.

Most of the knowledge we possess is derived from testimony, but still it is knowledge, and not conjecture, nor guessing, nor supposition, nor surmise. All our knowledge of past events in the history of the world is due entirely to testimony; all our knowledge of present events that are occurring on the face of the earth beyond the narrow range of our own observation is due entirely to testimony; all our knowledge of the discoveries made in various departments of science as the result of patient thought and careful investigation is due, in most instances, entirely to testimony; and yet we do not hesitate to rely upon it with the utmost confidence. We are so constituted that we are compelled to believe the testimony of competent witnesses—that is, witnesses who know whereof they affirm, and whose word is worthy of credit.

If a thousand such witnesses should declare that they had visited some place of which we had never heard before, we could no more doubt their statement than we could call in question the evidence of our sight. Nay, if one man of spotless reputation communicates to us a fact that fell under his personal observation, we are pre-

pared to assert that we *know* it to be true simply and singly upon our faith in his veracity. Every day we are gaining knowledge in this manner from intercourse with friends; and if, on repeating information thus obtained, it should be disputed, we would regard the denial as an insult to ourselves or to those from whom we received the statement.

Visiting a member of the church recently who is rapidly approaching the eternal world, she told me that her distressing cough had deprived her of sleep during the previous night, and that she was suffering greatly. My reply was, "Cheer up! for you will soon be where 'there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain' " (Rev. 21: 4). "Oh," she exclaimed, with touching anxiety depicted on her face, "if I only knew that! How can I know it?" "Suppose," I answered, "when I leave your house, I meet an acquaintance who asks, 'How is Mrs. S..... today?' I tell her that you coughed nearly all night and feel very bad. She then says, 'How can I know that?' What should I reply?" "You would inform her," she answered, "that I told you." "Precisely so, and God tells you in his Word that if you believe on his dear Son you shall certainly be saved. If I can believe you without a moment's hesitation, will you not believe the blessed God?"

My object in this story is to show that we may *know* that of which we have no evidence either from consciousness or from our own senses, merely upon credible testimony. It is in this way the believer *knows* he is saved. He knows it upon the sure testimony of God, who can neither deceive nor be deceived, and who, "willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath" (Heb. 6: 17-19).

The testimony of the eternal Jehovah is more worthy all generations combined, and he has given both his of credit than the testimony of the entire human race of promise and his oath to save with an everlasting salva-

tion every soul that trusts in Jesus Christ. "How, then, does the believer *know* that he is saved?" He knows it because God has said and sworn that we shall come off "more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8: 37). "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself" (Heb. 6: 13); and—glory to his name—he still lives to swear by himself, "to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all" (Rom. 4: 16). Observe, the promise might be *sure* to all the seed.

You cannot *feel* that the Saviour was born in Bethlehem of Judea, and that he suffered on Calvary, for this occurred more than nineteen hundred years ago; but you can *know* it upon the unimpeachable testimony of God. And so you are not called to *feel* that you can be saved in order to obtain assurance of salvation, but to *know* it upon the sworn testimony of God revealed in his word; or, to put it in another way, you cannot know that you are saved because you feel it, but you will feel it because you know it.

It is my earnest desire and effort to turn your thoughts entirely away from yourself to the Saviour, for it is the most melancholy business that can engage even a redeemed sinner to be probing into his own soul to find some assurance that he is saved. You can never find it there, but only in the word; and, thank God! Having once seen it in the word, you can see it every day and every hour, and as often as you read and believe what Jesus says.

Nor is this assurance the privilege exclusively of ministers or of a favored few who have made higher attainments in holiness than the common crowd can ever hope to reach, but it is the privilege of every one without exception who believes the testimony of God's Word addressed alike to all. The merchant plunged in the noisy whirl of trade; the mechanic working at his bench,

the professional man in the wearisome routine of his daily duties; the wife and mother harassed with the anxieties and cares of her household; the child of affliction bowed under the burden of a well-nigh insupportable sorrow,—may all rejoice in this cheering assurance, and *know* by simply and sincerely believing God that they are forever saved. Christ died for one as much as another of his people, and “he that believeth on him is not condemned” (John 3: 18), no matter what may be his circumstances in life. To believe this is to know that we are saved.

III. ASSURANCE CANNOT REST UPON CONDUCT

The objection, however, may be here raised that the real point of the difficulty is not yet reached. It will be admitted, some are ready to reply, that the true believer may know he is saved; but the question is, How can he know he is a true believer? Is he not compelled, in the nature of the case, to look at his own heart and life before he can be assured of his interest in the blood of Christ?

The fact is, assurance does not depend upon our conduct, but our conduct greatly depends upon our assurance. Let no one infer from this that it matters not how a Christian lives, for whatever gives the slightest encouragement to sin; whatever leads any to suppose that the least iniquity in the soul or life is a little thing; whatever tends to dampen the ardor of a fervent aspiration to be perfectly conformed to the will of God,—is utterly contrary both to the letter and the spirit of the gospel. Its solemn language is, “As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Peter 1: 15, 16).

But the calling here does not depend upon the holiness, although the holiness depends upon the calling. The divine order is, first faith and then works; first grace and then government; first privilege and then responsi-

bility; first relationship and then affection; first life and then activity; first salvation and then holiness. "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children" (Eph. 5: 1); but mark, *as dear children*; and the exhortation is based upon the fact stated in the preceding verse—that "God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4: 32).

So you will find that all the exhortations addressed to the disciples of Jesus in the New Testament take it for granted that faith is already exercised; that grace is already received; that privilege is already enjoyed; that relationship with God as the Father of believers is already established; that life is already bestowed; that salvation is already secured. They are not asked to pray, and work, and give, and be holy, in order to be saved, but because they *are* saved; and salvation is not made to hang upon their discernment of themselves as true believers, but upon their discernment of Christ as the only and all-sufficient Saviour.

It is nowhere written in the Bible, Believe that thou art a believer, and thou shalt be saved, but, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16: 31). It is nowhere said, He that believeth himself to be a believer hath everlasting life, but, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John 3: 36). Do you ask, then, how you may know that you are a believer? I reply, You cannot know it by looking at yourself, but only at the Saviour who speaks to you in his word. If a friend of undoubted veracity were to tell you of something that had occurred within his personal knowledge, you would not think of your own heart and life to find out whether you believed him, but only of his unspotted reputation for truthfulness.

IV. ASSURANCE MUST REST WHOLLY ON WHAT CHRIST HAS DONE

Surely you *know* whether you believe that he lived here below, and died upon the cross, and arose from the grave, and ascended up to heaven; and whether he lived,

and died, and arose, and ascended, as the Saviour of all who believe that thus he put away sin; and if you so believe, you may *know* that you are a child of God, because it is written, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 John 5: 1).

You have already confessed with the mouth that this Jesus is your Lord—or you are only waiting a suitable opportunity to confess him—and you do sincerely believe that God raised him from the dead for the justification of all his people; and hence you may *know* that you are delivered from the wrath to come, because it is written, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Romans 10: 9). You *know* whether you are trusting in him alone for salvation, or whether you expect to enter heaven on the ground that you are good, or on the ground that you have joined the church, or on the ground of something else you are doing; and if you can truthfully say that your trust is in Jesus and in none but Jesus, you may *know* that you have passed out of death into life, because it is written, "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life" (John 6: 47).

The question here is not whether you are a sinner, for it is certain that you are a sinner, and that you will remain a sinner as long as you live, but it is simply this, Do you believe that Christ is your Saviour? If you do, although the flesh is still in you, "ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit" (Romans 8: 9). In other words, although you are a sinner, you are not a sinner; and if you say this is a contradiction in terms, so it is a contradiction in terms to say that you are mortal and at the same time immortal, and yet both statements are strictly true.

As the great Bacon has described the believer in one of his striking Christian "paradoxes and seeming contradictions," "He hath within him both flesh and Spirit, yet he is not a double-minded man; he is often led captive

by the law of sin, yet it never gets dominion over him; he cannot sin, yet can do nothing without sin." Or, to quote a far higher authority, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1: 8); but the same Apostle says, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John 3: 9). "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened." If the Christian had not leaven in him, he could not be told to purge it out; and yet the very reason assigned for purging it out is that he has not leaven.

The truth is, our "old man" is essentially corrupt, but our "new man" which is created in Christ Jesus is essentially holy; and the moment we are in him by faith alone, twenty things are said of our sins. First, they are *blotted out* (Isa. 43: 25); second, they are *borne by another* (1 Peter 2: 24); third, they are *cast behind God's back* (Isa. 38: 17); fourth, they are *cast into the depths of the sea* (Micah 7: 19); fifth, they are *washed away with cleansing blood* (1 John 1: 7); sixth, they are *covered* (Romans 4: 7); seventh, they are *finished* (Daniel 9: 24); eighth, they are *forgiven* (Col. 2: 13); ninth, they are *not beheld* (Num. 23: 21); tenth, they are *not imputed* (Rom. 4: 8); eleventh, they are *not remembered* (Heb. 8: 12); twelfth, they are *pardoned* (Micah 7: 18); thirteenth, they are *passed away* (Zech. 3: 4); fourteenth, they are *purged* (Heb. 1: 3); fifteenth, they are *put away* (Heb. 9: 26); sixteenth, they are *remitted* (Acts 10: 43); seventeenth, they are *removed* (Psalm 103: 12); eighteenth, they are *subdued* (Micah 7: 19); nineteenth, they are *sought for and not found* (Jer. 1: 20); ~~twentieth~~, they are *taken away* (Isa. 6: 7).

The believer in Christ may *know* upon the sure testimony of God that all this is true as it respects both the sin of his nature and the sins of his life; and hence the believer may *know* in the same way that he is saved.

V. EVIDENCES OF CONVERSION ARE NOT THE BASIS OF ASSURANCE

But it may be asked whether there are not certain evidences of conversion found in the Scriptures. Undoubtedly there are, but they are not given that we might derive from *them* the assurance of salvation. It was never intended that we should receive assurance by believing ourselves to be Christians, but by believing that Christ is our all-sufficient Saviour.

Look at any of the evidences of regeneration mentioned in the Bible, and a moment's reflection will convince you that they were not designed to furnish assurance for which so many sad hearts are longing and striving. Take, for example, the text, "Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God" (1 John 4: 7). This cannot give assurance, for there is not a Christian in the world whose love does not fall far below the measure of his desire and his duty.

Take the text, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (1 John 3: 14). This cannot give assurance, for there is no test to decide who are the brethren, and no standard to determine how fervent our love must be, or how far it must extend in covering the faults of those who claim to be Christians.

Take the text, "He that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him" (1 John 3: 24). This cannot give assurance; for every true Christian, unless deluded by Satan, will confess that he fails to observe them in many particulars; that when he would do good evil is present with him; and that "no mere man, since the fall, is able, in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God; but doth daily break them, in thought, word, and deed." Whatever purpose, therefore, these evidences may serve, it is a self-righteous and fruitless task to look to them for assurance.

Still, it may be urged that we are commanded to examine ourselves. But not, I reply, to discover whether

we are Christians. In the first passage where this command is given the context plainly shows that the examination refers only to the question whether the disciples of Christ were pursuing a course of conduct unbecoming those who came to the Lord's table. "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup" (1 Cor. 11: 28). The question of personal salvation is not at all involved; but they were exhorted to examine their ways, and put from them, as the dear children of God, detected evil; "for if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" (1 Cor. 11: 31).

In the second passage we read, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith" (2 Cor. 13: 5), but here again the context clearly shows that the question under discussion was about the Apostle's right to exercise his high office, and not at all about personal salvation. "Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me," he says, "examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith"; for the fact that they were in the faith was conclusive proof that Christ had owned his ministry, and therefore that he was not an impostor in claiming to be an apostle.

Self-examination as conducted to attain the ends for which it is usually urged is the most painful and profitless exercise that can engage the soul, and I would confidently appeal to the experience of every conscientious and intelligent Christian to testify whether this is not true. If you expect to get assurance in this way, you might as well expect to get health by looking at disease, to get light by looking at darkness, to get life by looking at a corpse. Self-judgment is quite another thing, and daily should we consider our ways: not to find a ground of assurance, but to confess and forsake all that is evil as judged by the Word of God.

It may, however, occur to the reader that there are numerous passages in the Scriptures which warn us against the danger and deception of apostasy. Want of space forbids an examination of these passages, but with-

out going into details, it is sufficient to state that Scripture cannot contradict itself; and having already shown by the abundant testimony of the Holy Spirit the safety of the believer in Jesus, it is certain that the same Spirit cannot teach a directly contrary doctrine.

Such passages, which are often wrested from their proper meaning by those who are "unskilful in the word of righteousness" (Heb. 5: 13), are sometimes given to expose hypocrites, and sometimes to put true Christians on their guard "against the wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6: 11), but never to shake the confidence of the believer. "To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi" (Phil. 1: 1) (the home of the redeemed and rejoicing jailer) the inspired Apostle writes, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2: 12, 13). In other words, God had worked salvation *in* them, and now they were commanded to work it *out*—to work, not *for* salvation, but *from* salvation already received; to work, not *for* life, but *from* life already bestowed. And if anything can arouse us to ceaseless activity, to sustained enthusiasm, to practical holiness, and to personal love in the service of our Divine Master, it is the knowledge of the fact that through his pitying grace and precious blood he has freely, fully, and forever saved us. Then we will understand the deep meaning of the words,

I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all,
And Jesus Christ is my all in all.

Then we can say, in the confidence and joy of a simple faith, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim. 1: 12).

"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his

glory, with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen" (Jude 24, 25).

Can it be right for me to go
On in this dark, uncertain way?
Say "I believe" and yet not know
Whether my sins are put away?

Not know my trespasses forgiven,
Until I meet him in the air!
Not know that I shall get to heaven
Until I wake and find me there!

Oh, crush this cruel unbelief;
These needless, shameful doubts remove;
And suffer me no more to grieve
The God whom I do really love.

REVIEW

I

QUESTIONS

- Why is conviction for sin necessary in order to salvation?
- What agency is used to convict of sin?
- Prove that the Jews were lost.
- Why must we believe that all men are lost?
- Show that sin involves utter ruin.
- Explain the meaning of the statement that "a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit."
- Justify the saying, "Ye must be born again."

CHAPTER OUTLINE

- I. THE JEWS AS A PEOPLE WERE UNDER CONDEMNATION
- II. ALL MEN ARE LOST WITHOUT CHRIST
- III. SIN INVOLVES UTTER RUIN
- IV. A CORRUPT TREE CANNOT BRING FORTH GOOD FRUIT
- V. MAN MUST BE BORN AGAIN

II

QUESTIONS

- Is it enough that a man is sincere?
- Discuss the suggestion that "The Jews were sincere but they were lost."
- State the relation between beliefs and conduct.
- Is man conscious of responsibility for his actions?
- What does the judgment of mankind say as to our responsibility for our beliefs?
- Show that physical laws hold man responsible for his beliefs.
- Justify the statement that the constitution of the human mind declares man's responsibility for his beliefs.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

- I. THE JEWS WERE SINCERE BUT THEY WERE LOST
- II. IF NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR BELIEFS, THEN NOT FOR CONDUCT
- III. THE TESTIMONY OF CONSCIOUSNESS
- IV. THE JUDGMENT OF MANKIND
- V. MAN IS HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS BELIEFS BY THE PHYSICAL LAWS OF HIS BEING
- VI. THE CONSTITUTION OF THE HUMAN MIND

III

QUESTIONS

What is righteousness?
 Prove that ignorance of God's righteousness is fatal.
 Why cannot good character and conduct save?
 Show that a better righteousness than our own is needed.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

- I. WHAT IS RIGHTEOUSNESS?
- II. IGNORANCE OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS IS FATAL
- III. GOOD CHARACTER AND CONDUCT CANNOT SAVE
- IV. A BETTER RIGHTEOUSNESS THAN OUR OWN IS NEEDED

IV

QUESTIONS

What is meant by the statement that Christ is the *end* of the law?
 Discuss the statement that Christ is the end of the *law*.
 Just what is the significance of the suggestion that *Christ* is the end of the law?
 Show that our need is perfectly met in Christ.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

- I. CHRIST IS THE *End* OF THE LAW
- II. CHRIST IS THE END OF THE *Law*
- III. *Christ* IS THE END OF THE LAW
- IV. OUR NEED IS PERFECTLY MET IN CHRIST

V

QUESTIONS

Does salvation come by doing or believing? Why?
Why must we observe the whole law if we seek salvation by law?
Why will not observing the law henceforth suffice?
Make it clear that the church cannot save.
Why must we be born again?

CHAPTER OUTLINE

- I. DOES SALVATION COME BY DOING OR BELIEVING?
- II. IF WE SEEK SALVATION BY THE LAW, WE MUST OBSERVE THE WHOLE LAW
- III. OBSERVING THE WHOLE LAW HENCEFORTH WILL NOT SUFFICE
- IV. THE CHURCH CANNOT SAVE
- V. WE MUST BE BORN FROM ABOVE

VI

QUESTIONS

How would you justify and defend the proposition that "Christ fully satisfies the law"?
Discuss briefly the statement that "the lost are often misguided."
Why is there nothing between the sinner and the Saviour?
Show how in Christ the vilest are clothed in righteousness.
Prove that there is nothing but unbelief between the sinner and the Saviour.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

- I. CHRIST FULLY SATISFIES THE LAW
- II. THE LOST ARE OFTEN MISGUIDED
- III. NOTHING BETWEEN THE SINNER AND THE SAVIOUR
- IV. IN CHRIST THE VILEST ARE CLOTHED IN RIGHTEOUSNESS
- V. NOTHING BUT UNBELIEF BETWEEN THE SINNER AND CHRIST

VII

QUESTIONS

Show that belief and confession are channels rather than conditions of salvation.

What is it to believe and confess?

Illustrate the difference between believing with the mind and the heart.

Why does belief determine destiny?

What is involved in believing?

CHAPTER OUTLINE

- I. BELIEF AND CONFESSION NOT CONDITIONS BUT CHANNELS OF SALVATION
- II. WHAT IS IT TO BELIEVE AND CONFESS?
- III. BELIEVING WITH THE HEART
- IV. BELIEF DETERMINES DESTINY
- V. WHAT IS INVOLVED IN BELIEVING?

VIII

QUESTIONS

What is the significance of "whosoever" in "Whosoever believeth shall not be ashamed"?

Indicate the significance of "believeth" in this statement.

Say something as to the significance of "shall not be ashamed."

Show how doubt dishonors God.

Discuss the statement: The blood of Jesus is the ground for the believer's safety.

Suggest "other proofs" of the believer's safety.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

- I. *Whosoever* BELIEVETH SHALL NOT BE ASHAMED
- II. WHOSOEVER *Believeth* SHALL NOT BE ASHAMED
- III. WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH *Shall Not Be Ashamed*
- IV. DOUBT DISHONORS GOD
- V. THE BLOOD OF JESUS IS THE GROUND FOR THE BELIEVER'S SAFETY
- VI. THERE ARE OTHER PROOFS OF THE BELIEVER'S SAFETY

IX

QUESTIONS

Why should believers seek assurance?

Show that assurance rests upon testimony.

Why cannot assurance rest upon conduct?

Prove that assurance must rest wholly on what Christ has done.

Why are not evidences of conversion the basis of assurance?

CHAPTER OUTLINE

I. BELIEVERS OUGHT TO SEEK ASSURANCE

II. ASSURANCE RESTS UPON TESTIMONY

III. ASSURANCE CANNOT REST UPON CONDUCT

IV. ASSURANCE MUST REST WHOLLY ON WHAT CHRIST HAS DONE

V. EVIDENCES OF CONVERSION ARE NOT THE BASIS OF ASSURANCE