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HOW TO BE SAVED

By JOHN

APPLIED TO THE SAVINGS

THE

WISDOM OF THE

BY JOHN
REVISED BY
AND
LONDON

HOW TO BE SAVED;

OR,

The Sinner

DIRECTED TO THE SAVIOUR.

BY

J. H. B.



FORTIETH THOUSAND.

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HOW TO BE SAVED.

MY FRIEND:—

I have some things to say to you, richly worthy of your attention, and full of interest and happiness to you if cordially received.

By the help of the Divine Spirit, I propose to address you on the all-important subject of religion, and to tell you *how you may be saved*. I propose to address you in plain and simple language; for I have learned from my own experience that, notwithstanding the instruction we may have received in the family, in the Sabbath-school, and in the sanctuary, concerning the great truths of the Bible, when we come to feel a *personal* interest in those

truths, we need some one to expound unto us "the way of God more perfectly."¹

We may be convinced that in some manner we are to be saved by the Lord Jesus Christ, if saved at all, and that we are required to believe on Him; but *what* it is to believe on Him, and *why* we must believe on Him, and *how* we must believe on Him, and *when* we must believe on Him, are questions about which we may be entirely ignorant.

Nor should we be surprised at this ignorance; for the Scriptures tell us that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned;"² that is, they are discerned by the aid of the Holy Spirit. When, therefore, you hear ministers of the gospel say in the pulpit,

¹ Acts 18 : 26.

² 1 Cor. 2 : 14.

as they often do, "Come to Jesus," and "Flee to the cross, that you may be saved," I doubt whether you understand what they mean. This is figurative language, you observe; and I am sure that when I heard it, before it pleased God to convert my soul, it did not convey to my mind any definite idea of the precise thing which I was commanded to do in order to inherit eternal life.¹

I felt that I would be willing to seek Jesus, if He were only on the earth as He was eighteen hundred years ago; but I read in my Bible that He "is passed into the heavens,"² and I was constrained to cry out, like Job, "Oh that I knew where I might find Him! that I might come even to His seat! I would order my cause before Him, and fill my mouth with arguments."³ I felt that I would be willing to go beyond the sea, and to visit the city of Jerusalem,

¹ Mark 10 : 17.

² Heb. 4 : 14.

³ Job 23 : 3, 4.

and to kneel upon the very spot where the cross was erected, if it could be pointed out; but I was satisfied that this would not make me a Christian; and, so, many months passed away in perplexity and distress, because there was no one whom I met, to direct me to the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."¹

Now, I want to avoid, as much as possible, all this figurative language, and, in reliance upon the assistance of the Holy Spirit, to explain the plan of salvation so clearly that you will have reason to praise God through all eternity for permitting you to read this book.

¹ John 1 : 29.

PART I.

THE SINNER WITHOUT THE SAVIOUR.

BEFORE entering upon the discussion, I desire to call your attention to a few terms which are constantly found in the Bible, in connection with the subject of human redemption; because it is very important that you should know exactly what they mean.

The term *grace*, then, means the kindness of God towards the unworthy or undeserving.

The term *righteousness* means that which is conformed to the rule of right, or, in other words, that which meets the demands of the divine law.

The term *propitiation* means a sacrifice

offered to God to avert the punishment of sin, and to secure His favor.

The term *justification* means the declaring or the pronouncing a person righteous according to law; so that, instead of being condemned, he is pardoned, and accepted, and treated as if he were not guilty.

The term *faith*, in its simplest sense, means belief on testimony; that is, when any one makes a statement to you, and you believe the statement, you have faith in him who has made it, and in what he says. Such, I say, is the meaning of faith in its *simplest* sense; but, as you will see before finishing the book, *saving* faith includes not only the acceptance of Christ's testimony as true, but reliance upon Him as our Redeemer, and trust in the fulfilment of His gracious promises made to sinners.

There are also a few points which I hope it is not necessary to prove, and

which, for the sake of brevity, I must take for granted. I hope you believe in the existence of a holy, just, and merciful God. I hope you believe you have a conscience which enables you to distinguish between right and wrong. I hope you believe in the immortality of the soul, and in your accountability to our Creator and final Judge. I hope you believe the Bible to be the word of God, and, therefore, truthful. I hope that you feel some personal anxiety on the subject of religion.

Now, taking these things for granted, as I have said, the *first* important question that arises is the following :

WHY ARE YOU TROUBLED?

What has caused this disturbance of mind when you reflect seriously upon death, and the judgment, and eternity? Why are you uneasy and unhappy when you think of the Almighty, and of stand-

ing in His presence to receive a sentence which shall fix your unchanging destiny? Why are you not "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ,"¹ instead of being alarmed at the thought of His coming?

In answer to these questions, I reply that your anxiety is caused by a consciousness of sin, produced by the work of the Holy Spirit. Mark, by a *consciousness* of sin, and not by the mere fact that you are a sinner; for I suppose there are multitudes of sinners who are not troubled through months and years together, although they may be called to die at any moment, and to suffer a fearful punishment after death. They lie down upon their prayerless beds at night, and arise in the morning to engage in their daily business,

¹ Titus 2 : 13.

or to run the round of dissipation and vice, in undisturbed composure, and in total forgetfulness of their just exposure to the wrath of that God who "is angry with the wicked every day,"¹ and who "is a consuming fire."² "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: *God is not in all his thoughts.*"³

It is not, therefore, simply because you are a sinner that you feel anxious about your soul, but because you have been made *conscious* of your sinfulness,—because the Spirit of God is striving with you. Had He not come to convince of sin,⁴ you would be totally unconcerned about your soul; and you should realize His presence and His power, both to encourage you to persevere in your efforts to be saved, and to warn you of the fearful danger of grieving the Holy Spirit.⁵

¹ Ps. 7 : 11.

² Heb. 12 : 29.

³ Ps. 10 : 4.

⁴ John 16 : 8.

⁵ Eph. 4 : 30.

But a *second* question is here presented :

WHAT IS SIN ?

It is necessary to receive a distinct answer to this question, since, as I have shown you, it is the consciousness of sin which causes your fear and uneasiness. Some persons seem to think that sin cannot be defined nor understood. They seem to look upon it as a mysterious evil let loose to destroy the inhabitants of the earth, like some dreadful plague, whose ravages we behold without being able to tell what is the precise nature of the disease, how it originated, or how its progress may be checked. Surely such persons forget that the word of God shows us clearly what sin is, and explains its meaning in the simplest language. We find it written in the Bible, "Sin is the transgression of the law."¹ "Where no law is, there is no

¹ 1 John 3 : 4.

transgression.”¹ “Sin is not imputed,” that is, sin is not laid to our charge, and we are not treated as sinners, “where there is no law.”² “By the law is the knowledge of sin.”³ “I had not known sin but by the law.”⁴ “For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.”⁵

The apostle evidently means, by the language just quoted, that before he understood the nature and extent of the law he was satisfied with his state and at peace with himself; he did not *realize* that he was a sinner and in need of mercy; but when the commandment came, that is, when he obtained proper views of what God really requires of us, sin revived; he saw how vile he was, and he died; he became miserable, because he felt that he was guilty and undone. If you wish,

¹ Rom. 4 : 15.

² Rom. 5 : 13.

³ Rom. 3 : 20.

⁴ Rom. 7 : 7.

⁵ Rom. 7 : 9.

therefore, to become acquainted with your true character and condition, you must not compare yourself with sinful men around you, but with the holy law of God. If you have always obeyed all its precepts in thought, word, and deed, you are not a sinner; but if you have not obeyed them, you *are* a sinner, and a great sinner, because you have not only broken a great law and rebelled against a great God, but have also neglected and rejected Christ, the only Saviour of sinners. And, as we shall see after a while, a refusal to believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God is an offence so heinous that it includes, so to speak, all other offences, and fastens upon us the weight of a fearful condemnation.

It is true the Scriptures assert that our very nature, which we inherit from fallen Adam, is corrupt; for they declare that we are "*by nature children of wrath.*"¹

¹ Eph. 2 : 3.

Now, we say of tigers and panthers that they are *by nature* bloodthirsty and ferocious, or we say of lambs and doves that they are *by nature* gentle and timid; and in the same manner the Bible authorizes us to say of men, they are *by nature* objects of wrath, and, consequently, by nature sinful. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one."¹ "Behold," says the Psalmist, speaking not only for himself, but for us all, "I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."² "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."³

But my object in quoting these passages is not merely to convince you that your nature is depraved, important as it is that you should remember this truth: it is rather to fix your attention upon the actual sins which spring from our depraved

¹ Job 14 : 4.

² Ps. 51 : 5.

³ John 3 : 6.

nature as certainly as an impure stream flows from an impure fountain. In order to know whether you have been guilty of these actual sins, it is necessary, as I have shown, to know what the law of God requires at our hands; for keep in mind that "*sin is the transgression of the law.*"

This brings us, then, to the *third* question:

WHAT IS THE LAW OF GOD?

You must at once perceive my object in asking this question. It is to lead you to see yourself, to some extent at least, as God sees you, and to settle the solemn question whether you really need a Saviour, by showing you your true condition. I answer, then, that the law of God is the rule which He has revealed in His word for the government of our hearts and our conduct. What that rule requires we can easily learn from the Scriptures.

On a certain occasion when our Lord

was upon the earth, a lawyer said unto Him, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."¹

Now, you will observe that we are commanded to *love* God perfectly and without ceasing, and, of course, to obey Him perfectly and without ceasing, in thought, in word, and in act. We are also commanded to love our fellow-men as truly as we love ourselves, and to consult their interests, their comfort, and their welfare as truly as we consult our own.

This is the sum of the law's demands;

¹ Matt. 22 : 36-40.

and I do not think any one will say it requires too much of us, or that it requires any thing wrong. To love our glorious Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor supremely, and to love our fellow-beings as ourselves, is surely right; and if all men would do this, we should have a happy world indeed, even with its many trials and sorrows.

Inasmuch, then, as “the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good,”¹ and inasmuch as “the law of the Lord is perfect,”² it is *unchangeable*. Surely all must see that a rule of life which is holy, just, good, and perfect is not subject to change; and that it ought not to be changed, because, if its requirements are in themselves right, it is nothing more than right that we should conform to them. This law is the expression of God’s most righteous will, and hence of His *unalterable*

¹ Rom. 7 : 12.

² Ps. 19 : 7.

will concerning His intelligent and accountable creatures. It is a copy, so to speak, of the divine nature; and unless that nature ceases to be what it is,—unless the eternal throne of Jehovah crumbles into dust,—the law can never cease from demanding that we love the Lord our God with all the heart, and soul, and strength, and mind, and our neighbour as ourselves. “Think not,” says Christ, “that I am come to destroy the law; for verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”¹

Consequently, though we may be lost forever, for rejecting the only Saviour of sinners, we will be under as strong obligation to obey the precepts of the law as are the redeemed in Heaven; because our obligation to obey the moral law depends

¹ Matt. 5 : 17, 18.

upon our unchanging relations to God and to His government, and not upon duties that were designed to be temporary, like the ceremonial law of the Jews.

But another thing which we learn from the Bible concerning the law is, that it is "*spiritual*."¹ It demands the service of the heart; it takes knowledge of the secret thoughts of the mind, and all our least desires and purposes. It is not enough, therefore, that we aim to render an outward obedience to its precepts; "for God shall bring every work into judgment, with *every secret thing*, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."² "Out of the *heart* proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies;"³ and hence the pure and perfect law of God pertains as truly to the heart as to the external conduct.

¹ Rom. 7 : 14.

² Eccl. 12 : 14.

³ Matt. 15 : 19.

Let us take, as examples of all the rest, two of the precepts of the law which many persons suppose they have strictly observed.

The sixth commandment is, "Thou shalt not kill."¹ Now, the Scriptures prove that we may break this commandment without taking human life; for "whosoever *hateth* his brother is a murderer."² If, then, you have ever hated your fellow-man, although you may not have expressed the unkind and bitter feeling, it is clear that in the sight of God you are a murderer.

Again, the seventh commandment is, "Thou shalt not commit adultery;"³ and no doubt there are thousands of persons in this Christian land who would be shocked and offended if any one should dare to charge them with having broken this precept of the law. But let us hear what the

¹ Ex. 20 : 13.

² 1 John 3 : 15.

³ Ex. 20 : 14.

Lord Jesus declares concerning its precise meaning and extent. "I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."¹ So, then, while you may flatter yourself that in this respect at least you are blameless, remember, if the lust, the desire, has ever been excited, although you may not have whispered a single impure word, before God you are guilty. It would be easy to show that all the other precepts of the law extend to the *heart* as well as to the conduct, and, therefore, that a mere outward obedience is not sufficient to meet our obligations to Him "which searcheth the reins and hearts."² "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes; but the Lord pondereth the hearts."³

But there is another thing about this just, unchangeable, and spiritual law which

¹ Matt. 5 : 28.

² Rev. 2 : 23.

³ Prov. 21 : 2.

it greatly concerns you to know. It has a *penalty*, or it threatens punishment in case its holy precepts are disobeyed. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."¹ "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."² "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."³ "Sin hath reigned unto death."⁴ "The wages of sin is death."⁵ "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."⁶

It is clear, then, that the law of God has a penalty, and that this penalty is death. It would occupy too much of your time to quote the numerous passages which show what the Scriptures mean by the term "death" as the penalty of the law. If

¹ Ezek. 18 : 4.² Gal. 3 : 10.³ Rom. 5 : 12.⁴ Rom. 5 : 21.⁵ Rom. 6 : 23.⁶ James 1 : 15.

you are familiar with the Bible, you know that more is meant by the word than the separation of the soul from the body. You know that the ills and sufferings of the present life, that the loss of God's favour and image, and that endless separation from Him amid the pains of hell, make up this dread penalty which is inflicted as the punishment of sin. God "will render to every man according to his deeds; unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil."¹ "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: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction

¹ Rom. 2 : 6-9.

from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.”¹

“And these shall go away into everlasting punishment.”²

Oh, what a tremendous evil sin must be, when “the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,”³ can thus visit upon the sinner such tokens of His righteous displeasure!

But it should not surprise you to learn that there is a penalty annexed to the divine law; for without a penalty there can be no maintenance or enforcement of law. There may be advice or exhortation, but there can be no law in the sense in which I here use the term, as a rule of life to which God requires conformity, unless

¹ 2 Thess. 1 : 7-10.

² Matt. 25 : 46.

³ Ex. 34 : 6.

there is a penalty as well as a precept or command.

There are certain laws, for example, which are designed for our bodies, and if we violate them the penalty is sure to follow. If we thrust our hands into the fire, are we not burned? If a workman falls from a tall building to the ground, is he not injured? If a lamb, in its joyous gambols, leaps from a lofty precipice, will it not be mangled or crushed upon the rocks beneath? If a little child discovers a deadly poison which its mother has carelessly left within its reach, and swallows it, will not excruciating pain inevitably follow? There can be but one answer to such questions; for all must know the sad result of disregarding the laws that pertain to our bodies and our health. But why is this sad result? Does our kind heavenly Father take pleasure in beholding the sufferings and anguish of His creatures? Oh, no; but He

shows us continually that, although He is infinitely compassionate, He will not permit the rules which He has established to be broken, without inflicting the threatened penalty.

There are also laws which are intended to govern the mind; and the dreadful consequences of disobeying them may be seen in certain cases of insanity of a particular type. In looking at these unhappy persons in an asylum, and, in hearing their shrieks, or their more horrible laughter, one might think, Surely the God who "doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men,"¹ must at once put an end to so much misery. But not so. He knows that it is best to maintain these laws of the mind, and therefore permits the fearful penalty to be inflicted upon those who break them, until the proper remedies are employed to

¹ Lam. 3 : 33.

bring about the obedience which He requires.

It is to be expected, then, that the moral law of which I am speaking should have a penalty, because we can easily see that the character and government of God, and the interests of all intelligent beings, and, so far as we know, the good order of the entire universe, make it more necessary to uphold this great law than to uphold the temporary rules that are adapted to our physical and mental constitution.

But, whether you can understand the reason or not, it is useless and foolish to quarrel with *facts*; and it is the fact that the penalty for sin is death,—death temporal, death spiritual and death eternal; and that this is the penalty of a holy and immutable law, which requires us to love God supremely and to love our neighbour as ourselves.

There is but one other question of im-

mediate interest connected with this subject, to which I wish to call your attention, and it is the following:—

HAVE YOU BROKEN THE PRECEPTS OF THE LAW?

I might safely appeal to your own conscience to answer this question; but it is well to have also the testimony of the word of God upon a point so important. Listen, then, to a testimony which is certainly true. “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.”¹ “There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not.”² “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”³ “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive our-

¹ Rom. 3 : 10-12.

² Eccl. 7 : 20.

³ Rom. 3 : 23.

selves, and the truth is not in us.”¹ “For in many things we offend all.”² “Now, we know that whatsoever things 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.”³

Such is the uniform testimony of the Scriptures; and, if they teach any truth whatever, they set forth in the plainest and clearest language the sad truth that our nature is depraved, that the entire human race has fallen, that every one of us has sinned, that is, every one of us has broken the precepts of God’s most holy law and failed to meet its most righteous requirements.

What, then, my friend, is your real condition? Beyond all doubt, just this: having broken the precepts of an unchangeable

¹ 1 John 1: 8.

² James 3: 2.

³ Rom. 3: 19.

law, *you are exposed to its penalty*. There is no escape from this conclusion. And, so far as human reason can discover, there is no possible escape from a terrible and endless punishment. Think of it a moment. "Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth these things shall live by them."¹ But if the man fails to do the things required by the law, what then? Why, simply, we are forced to conclude, with the inspired apostle, "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."² "Cursed is every one that continueth not in *all things* which are written in the book of the law to do them."³ "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in *one point*, he is guilty of all."⁴ In the light of these passages, it is evident that we

¹ Rom. 10 : 5. ² Rom. 3 : 20. ³ Gal. 3 : 10. ⁴ James 2 : 10.

cannot be saved on account of any thing we can do; for every precept both of the Old and the New Testaments forms part of the divine law, and a curse is pronounced if we keep not *all* the precepts; we are guilty if we fail in a single particular.

· Most certainly, a law which convicts and condemns cannot at the same time acquit and accept us as righteous; for such a supposition involves an absurdity and self-contradiction. God promises eternal life on condition of perfect obedience to His commandments, and threatens death in case of disobedience. Now, I have before proved that you are guilty of disobedience; and, consequently, unless the penalty is in some way inflicted, the law is dishonoured, the divine government is overthrown, and all confidence in the divine character is destroyed.

You must, then, at once see the folly of attempting to escape this righteous penalty

by any efforts of your own, and of meriting, by any goodness of your own, the favour of Him who is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity,"¹ who "is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent."² The difficulty is, you are "condemned already."³ If, therefore, you were able to cease from sin while reading these words, your future obedience could not atone for your past innumerable transgressions; for you would be doing nothing more than your duty, which you ought to have discharged all the time. But the fact is, you can never cease from sin by relying upon your own strength. Even those who have been most sincere in striving to overcome sin have been constrained to cry out, "The good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. Oh,

¹ Hab. 1 : 13.

² Num. 23 : 19.

³ John 3 : 18.

wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?”¹ What, then, can *you* do, poor sinner? Nothing, absolutely nothing, to make yourself better. You are helpless, “sold under sin,”² “led captive by Satan at his will,”³ and must, therefore, turn away from yourself, if you would obtain deliverance from this state of guilt and of misery.

And now let us review for a moment the ground over which we have passed.

First. It was taken for granted that you have some anxiety or fear when you think about God, and death, and the judgment, and eternity.

Second. It was shown that this anxiety of mind is produced by a consciousness of sin, resulting from the gracious work of the Holy Spirit.

Third. It was proved that “sin is any

¹ Rom. 7 : 19, 24.

² Rom. 7 : 14.

³ 2 Tim. 2 : 26.

want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God," and that it is peculiarly aggravated by our neglect of the only Saviour of sinners.

Fourth. It was seen that the law, which requires us to love God supremely and our neighbour as ourselves, is unchangeable; that it is spiritual, and that it has a dread penalty.

Fifth. It was established beyond dispute that you and all men have disobeyed the precepts of this law, and are, therefore, exposed to its penalty.

What, then, can be done? What plan can human wisdom devise to escape the fearful consequences of sin? "Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee? I the Lord have spoken it, and will do it."¹ That God, "with whom is no variableness,

¹ Ezek. 22 : 14.

neither shadow of turning,"¹ hath declared that sin shall be punished; we have sinned, grievously sinned, sinned every day and every hour and every minute of our entire lives; and hence, without help from on high, and help extended in a way that shall meet all the demands of the law, we must soon enter the world of the lost, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."²

It may seem hard and cruel in me to say these things, and to lead you on, step by step, to a conviction of your own wretchedness and danger. But, my friend, a sick man must be made to know and *feel* that he is sick, before he will take the remedies which the physician prescribes. And so you must be made to know and *feel* that your "heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,"³ that your "carnal mind is enmity against God, not subject

¹ James 1 : 17.

² Mark 9 : 44.

³ Jer. 17 : 9.

to the law of God, neither indeed can be,"¹ and that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God,"² before I can hope to do you much good.

Mark, I do not say that all men must have these feelings to the same extent, or that you must have them to the last degree and until you are thoroughly unhappy. No, I am very far from saying this; but I do say, you must *so* realize your sinfulness and helplessness that you will not trust for salvation in your own goodness, or in your own efforts, or in any created strength. If you can be persuaded to rely at once, gently and quietly, upon the promises of an Almighty Saviour, so much the better; but if not, then you must be persuaded by "the terror of the Lord,"³ and driven, if need be, to the very borders of despair.

For this reason I have been preaching

¹ Rom. 8 : 7.

² Heb. 10 : 31.

³ 2 Cor. 5 : 11.

the law instead of the gospel to you. I have been trying to *shut you up*, as the apostle says, to the only hope, to the only plan by which sinners can be saved, that when Christ is revealed, as He will be in the remainder of this little book, you may joyfully "receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation, as He is freely offered to you in the gospel."

After all, then, although my language may seem to you cold and unfeeling, it is the language of love; for it is the language used by the God who pities you "like as a father pitieth his children;"¹ it is the language used by the Lord Jesus Christ, who yearns over you with unspeakable tenderness; it is the language used by the Holy Spirit, who is now influencing you, and who so graciously offers to renew your nature, and to make you meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light.

¹ Ps. 103 : 13.

The sacred writers, you will observe, reasoned in the manner which I have feebly attempted to follow. They constantly dwell upon the nature and extent of the Divine law, in order to convince men of their ruin, and then to direct them to the Saviour. They argue that "if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But, before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith."¹

This naturally leads us to consider, in the next place, the Saviour's work for the sinner.

¹ Gal. 3 : 21-24.

PART II.

THE SAVIOUR'S WORK FOR THE SINNER.

Now, an examination of the Scriptures will convince you that the work of Christ stands directly related to the law about which I have been writing; "for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."¹

The difficulty in the way of your salvation, remember, is the fact that you have broken the precepts of a holy, spiritual and unchangeable law, and are, therefore, justly exposed to its dreadful penalty. How to remove this difficulty is a question which

¹ Gal. 2 : 21.

human wisdom can never answer. But let us see what the word of God says concerning the plan of redemption devised by infinite love.

“When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.”¹ “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”²

The apostle does not assert, you observe, that the law is in itself weak or insufficient; but it is inadequate through the flesh,—that is, on account of our corruption or sinful condition. Again, he writes, “Now the

¹ Gal. 4 : 4, 5.

² Rom. 8 : 3, 4.

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; for there is no difference; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood.”¹

There are many such passages in the Bible; and they show most clearly, in the first place, that Christ came into the world to work out a righteousness for us; that is, to meet the demands of the divine law, and, therefore, to do that which God will approve and accept in our behalf.

They show, in the second place, that, in order to work out this righteousness, He

¹ Rom. 3 : 21-25.

must *redeem* us; that is, procure our deliverance from the curse of the law to which we were exposed, by the payment of a ransom.

They show, in the third place, that, in order to pay this ransom, He became a *propitiation*; that is, a sacrifice, to avert the punishment of sin and to secure the favour of God in a manner consistent with His holy character and with the requirements of His immutable law.

They show, in the fourth place, that, in consideration of Christ's suffering, God can pardon us, and, on account of what He did, God can justify us, and treat us as if we were righteous, or as if we had never sinned.

When a man charged with crime is justified in an earthly court, it is because the charges against him are not proved; and he is acquitted because he is held to be innocent. Well, what personal innocence is to

us before an earthly tribunal, the righteousness of Christ is before the high court of heaven. A sentence of acquittal is pronounced in our favour, not because we are innocent, nor because the charges are not proved, but because of what Jesus Christ has done to meet the demands of the law.

You may remember the story which is told in ancient history of Æschylus, a celebrated Greek poet. It is said that he was arrested, tried, and condemned for a capital crime, and was about to be put to death. It is further said that his brother, who had distinguished himself in the service of his country, and had lost his hand in a battle with the Persians, turned to the judges and raised his mutilated arm, without saying a word. So affecting was the sight, and so great their obligation to the hero, that they at once released Æschylus,—not, you will notice, on account of any thing he had done

to merit their favour, but on account of what his brother had done.

I do not assert that this historical incident precisely illustrates the work of Christ in our behalf,—for the brother of the poet had done nothing to satisfy the claims of the law which condemned Æschylus to death; but if the judges could acquit the latter on the ground of sympathy with the former, and because of their admiration for his patriotic exploits, how much more will Jesus Christ secure the acquittal of the believer, when He raises His once pierced hands before the eternal throne and pleads that He Himself has satisfied the claims of justice!

But a still better illustration of the work of Christ in our behalf is furnished in the life of Charlotte Elizabeth. It is there recorded that this eminently pious and useful lady undertook to raise and to teach a poor deaf and dumb boy, who was called Jack.

He was at first extremely ignorant and unpromising; but, by the blessing of God upon the labours of his devoted teacher, he became a remarkably bright and happy Christian. "He has told me," writes Charlotte Elizabeth, "that, when he had lain a good while in the grave, God would call aloud, 'Jack!' and he would start, and say, 'Yes, me,—Jack.' Then he would rise, and see multitudes standing together, and God sitting on a cloud, with a very large book in His hand,—he called it 'Bible book,'—and would beckon him to stand before Him, while He opened the book, and looked at the top of the pages, till he came to the name of John B——. In that page, he told me, God had written all his 'bads,'—every sin he had ever done; and the page was full. So God would look, and strive to read it, and hold it to the sun for light; but it was all 'No, no, nothing, none.' I asked him, in some alarm, if he had done

no bad. He said yes, much bads; but when he had first prayed to Jesus Christ, *He* had taken the book out of God's hand, found that page, and, pulling from the palm of His hand something which he described as filling up the hole made by the nail, had allowed the wound to bleed a little, passing His hand down the page, so that, as he beautifully said, God could see none of Jack's bads, only Jesus Christ's blood. Nothing being found against him, God would shut the book, and there he would remain standing before Him till the Lord Jesus came, and, saying to God, 'My Jack,' would put His arm around him, draw him aside, and bid him stand with the angels till the rest were judged."

The poor boy meant that, though he had no righteousness of his own, the righteousness of Christ would be reckoned as his, and God would accept him because of what

the Saviour had done to meet and satisfy the claims of the law.

Let us look a little more closely at the work which He performed, in order to understand precisely what He did to accomplish our redemption. We read, then, that

CHRIST OBEYED THE PRECEPTS OF THE LAW.

He "was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners."¹ He "did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth."² "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb *without blemish and without spot.*"³ His testimony concerning himself was, "I do always those things that please my Father."⁴ Turning to the Jews, on a certain occasion, He said to them, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?"⁵ and, although they had watched

¹ Heb. 7 : 26. ² 1 Pet. 2 : 22. ³ 1 Pet. 1 : 18, 19.

⁴ John 8 : 29.

⁵ John 8 : 46.

Him with the keenest interest, and had eagerly sought some ground of accusation against Him, not one of them dared to say that He had ever been guilty of the slightest wrong. Pilate, the Roman governor, before whom He was tried, asked His enemies, "What evil hath He done?"¹ and said, openly, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person."² "I find no fault in this man."³ Such is the testimony of those who put Him to death; while He Himself declared, a short time before His crucifixion, that "the Prince of this world," the evil one, "cometh, and hath nothing in me;"⁴ that is, nothing that he can claim as his own, nothing that he suggested, nothing that he loves to see, nothing that is even in sympathy with sin.

In short, the Lord Jesus never did a thing through the whole of His earthly ex-

¹ Matt. 27 : 23.

² Matt. 27 : 24.

³ Luke 23 : 4.

⁴ John 14 : 30.

istence which He ought to have left undone; He never left undone a thing which He ought to have done; He never uttered an improper word; and the heavenly purity of His soul was never tarnished with a single unhallowed purpose or desire. In other words, He perfectly obeyed the precepts, and all the precepts, of the divine law, in thought, in speech and in action, and He obeyed them in the very nature that had disobeyed them. He possessed human nature; He was truly a man, in every respect like unto one of us, save that He had no sin. As a man, He loved God with all His heart and soul and strength and mind, and He loved all other men as Himself. The law, therefore, in its precepts, was honoured and satisfied by His spotless obedience, and it could not require any more strict conformity to its commands, or any higher righteousness; for He was holy as God is holy.

But the Scriptures not only declare that Christ, in human nature, rendered a faultless obedience to the precepts of the law. They also declare that

CHRIST SUFFERED THE PENALTY OF THE LAW.

I do not mean by this that He endured the whole penalty as we must have endured it had He not undertaken the work of our salvation; for, as I have already shown, *eternal* death was part of the penalty. I mean, however, that He so endured it as to meet the ends of the law,—to satisfy fully the claims of divine justice,—and, hence, to open up a way by which the holy God can consistently justify the ungodly.

We read in history that, in early times, Zaleucus, who was ruler and lawgiver among the Locrians of Southern Italy, made a law forbidding adultery. The penalty which he threatened for this crime was the loss of *both* eyes. It is said that

his own son was among the first to violate the law, and that the father sternly refused to grant the prayers of the people to remit the punishment. He dearly loved his son, but was determined to maintain the law and sustain his government. To do this and spare his son, he adopted the plan of putting out one of his own eyes and also *one* of his son's. Now, can you not see that the object of the law was accomplished,—that the end for which it was ordained was as well secured,—nay, that it was secured even in a better manner than if the precise and entire penalty had been inflicted upon the son? The great object of the lawgiver was fully accomplished, and the community received a deeper impression of his inflexible purpose to preserve the rectitude of his character and the honour of his government than they would have received had the exact measure of the threatened punishment been meted out to the son.

While, then, it is true that the Lord Jesus Christ did not endure the penalty of *eternal* death, it is also true that, considering the dignity of the sufferer, He met the demands of the law, and satisfied the claims of divine justice, as fully as if the whole race of mankind had been shut up forever in the world of woe.

Remember that He was the brightness of His Father's glory, and the express image of His person, upholding all things by the word of His power.¹ "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."²

Keeping in view, therefore, that the

¹ Heb. 1 : 3.

² Phil. 2 : 6-8.

Scriptures everywhere assert that He was very God as well as very man, possessing all divine attributes,¹ names and titles,² performing divine works,³ and worthy of divine worship,⁴ you will be prepared, I hope, to believe that His sufferings not only indicated amazing condescension, but were of infinite value.

You are doubtless familiar with the fact that He made his first appearance among men in a stable. You also doubtless know that King Herod sought His life while an infant, and that after His earthly parents had returned to their own country from Egypt, whither they had been forced to flee, He grew up in the despised town of Nazareth, and was called "the carpenter,"⁵ and "the carpenter's son."⁶ At length, when "He came unto His own, His own

¹ Col. 2 : 9.

³ Col. 1 : 16.

⁵ Mark 6 : 3.

² Isa. 9 : 6.

⁴ Heb. 1 : 6.

⁶ Matt. 13 : 55.

received Him not.”¹ He was as a root out of a dry ground, having no form nor comeliness, and when He was seen, there was no beauty that He should be desired. He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and the people hid as it were their faces from Him. He was despised, and they esteemed Him not; but esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.² He was the “friend of publicans and sinners,”³ and was so poor in this world’s goods that He Himself said, “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head.”⁴

We read that He frequently withdrew from the multitudes which followed Him, to engage in secret prayer, and that He “continued all night in prayer to God,”⁵ as if oppressed by a burden of sorrow

¹ John 1 : 11.² Isa. 53 : 2-6.³ Matt. 11 : 19.⁴ Matt. 8 : 20.⁵ Luke 6 : 12.

from which He could find no relief except in communion with His Father. The apostle tells us that in the days of His flesh He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death;¹ and the terrible sufferings of soul and body which He knew awaited Him were endured to a certain extent all the time He was upon the earth, because they seemed to be ever present to His mind.

Thus, at one time He exclaimed, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!"² At another time, when certain Greeks came to Philip, saying, "Sir, we would see Jesus," He seemed to hail their coming as a pledge of the ingathering of all nations; but while His Spirit was exulting in the bright prospect of enlargement for His glorious king-

¹ Heb. 5 : 7.

² Luke 12 : 50.

dom, He suddenly cried out, as if some fearful vision had swept before Him, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour."¹ On still another occasion, He and His disciples "were in the way, going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them; and they were amazed; and as they followed they were afraid."² There must have been something very extraordinary in the appearance of the meek and lowly sufferer to excite this fear in His chosen and intimate companions.

"And He took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto Him, saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn Him

¹ John 12 : 27.

² Mark 10 : 32.

to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles; and they shall mock Him, and shall scourge Him, and shall spit upon Him, and shall kill Him; and the third day He shall rise again.”¹

Towards the close of His life, the shadows of these mysterious sorrows grew darker, and His anticipations of them became more painful. At length, after instituting a sacrament in which bread and wine were used to represent His body bruised and His blood shed for the remission of sins, He went with His disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and, taking with Him Peter and James and John, He “began to be sorrowful, and very heavy. Then saith He, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And He went a little further, and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O

¹ Mark 10 : 32-34.

my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. And He cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?"¹ "And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly; and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."²

One of His disciples betrayed Him for thirty pieces of silver; another bitterly denied that he had ever known Him; and they all forsook Him and fled.

Thus, being alone in His anguish, He was seized by the multitude and dragged to the bar of the high-priest, where, after a hurried trial, He was condemned to death, and spit upon, and buffeted, and treated with shameful indignity. The next morning, early, He was taken into the pre-

¹ Matt. 26 : 37-40.

² Luke 22 : 44.

sence of Pilate, the Roman governor, who reluctantly confirmed the sentence of death, and, after ordering Him to be severely scourged, a crown of thorns was placed upon His head, a cross was laid upon His shoulders, and He was led away to be crucified.

Now, I desire you to notice particularly that our Lord was not sustained in His dying agony, as the humblest of His followers have since been in the conflict with death. *They* have marched to the rack, to the cross and to the stake with the air and tread of conquerors, while songs of victory broke from their lips and bright smiles beamed from their faces; but nothing like this marked the bearing of the Sinless One on His way to Calvary. He walked with faint and weary step beneath His heavy burden, until unable to carry it longer; and when, at length, He was nailed to the fatal wood, between two thieves, a sudden mid-

night darkness veiled the sky, and a cry of loneliness and of anguish pierced the gloom like a wail of despair:—"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"¹

You may think that I have dwelt at unnecessary length upon the sufferings of the Redeemer; but I regard it as most important for you to be deeply impressed with the fact that the only Holy Being that ever lived upon the earth was also the greatest of sufferers.

He, the Prince of life,² the Lord of glory,³ who possessed absolute control over His life, so that He could say, "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself,"⁴ "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sickness,"⁵ was sorely tempted of the devil,⁶ endured the rude contradiction of sinners,⁷ received the hatred and contempt of the

¹ Matt. 27 : 46.² Acts 3 : 15.³ 1 Cor. 2 : 8.⁴ John 10 : 18.⁵ Matt. 8 : 17.⁶ Luke 4 : 2.⁷ Heb. 12 : 3.

world in return for all His goodness,¹ and, while reproach was breaking His heart,² was shut out from the light of His Father's face, as if He had been guilty of unpardonable sins and deserved to be forsaken of God and man.

And, now, why was this? Had not God said, concerning the righteousness which is of the law, "that the man which doeth these things shall live by them"?³ And had not Christ done them all, without disobeying in the slightest particular the least of the divine commands? Had not God said, "The soul that *sinneth*, it shall die,"⁴ and, "The wages of *sin* is death"?⁵ How could it be, then, that the Son of God, who knew no sin, was a sufferer through the whole of His earthly existence, and met at last a most cruel and shameful death? Surely it was a death that must have dishonoured

¹ John 7 : 20.

² Ps. 69 : 20.

³ Rom. 10 : 5.

⁴ Ezek. 18 : 4.

⁵ Rom. 6 : 23.

the character of the Almighty, and overturned His throne, and destroyed the very foundations of His government, if no explanation had been given of it in the word of truth.

But let us see what is said in the Scriptures concerning this most remarkable death. "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. For the transgression of My people was He stricken. His soul shall make an offering for sin."¹ "Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself."² "The Son of man came to give His life a ransom for many."³ "Scarcely for a righteous man

¹ Isa. 53.

² Dan. 9 : 26.

³ Matt. 20 : 28.

will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”¹ “*Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures.*”²

“He is the propitiation for our sins.”³ “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.”⁴ “Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree.”⁵ “He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”⁶

Now, if language can be used to set forth any truth whatever, these passages, and many others like them which could be quoted, plainly teach that Jesus Christ made a real and proper satisfaction for sin. He not only obeyed the precepts of that

¹ Rom. 5 : 7, 8.

² 1 Cor. 15 : 3.

³ 1 John 2 : 2.

⁴ Gal. 3 : 13.

⁵ 1 Pet. 2 : 24.

⁶ 2 Cor. 5 : 21.

holy law which all mankind have violated, but He suffered the penalty of the law to which all mankind was justly exposed. "He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."¹ "And having made peace through the blood of His cross,"² and "blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, He took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross."³

Thus it was He satisfied the claims of divine justice. He magnified the law and made it honourable.⁴ He answered *all* its demands upon His people. He confirmed its high and holy character. He upheld the government of God. He exhibited the attributes of His Father in the most dazzling, and at the same time the most subduing, light; for it is only in His person and work that "mercy and truth are met

¹ Heb. 9 : 26.

² Col. 1 : 20.

³ Col. 2 : 14.

⁴ Isaiah 42 : 21.

together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.”¹

In this finished work, therefore, it is evident that He sustains to those who trust in Him the relation of a substitute or “surety;”² that is, one who engages to meet the obligations of another and to pay his debt. Suppose that I owed you a large sum of money which I was unable to pay. Suppose you had power to put me in prison and to keep me there until the debt was discharged. Suppose I had a friend who should come to you and say, “Here is the money which my friend owes you; I will pay it for him.” Now, do you not see that the moment you accepted this money I must be released from indebtedness and confinement,—not on account of any thing I had done to pay the debt, but on account of what my surety had done in my stead?

¹ Ps. 85 : 10.

² Heb. 7 : 22.

Paulinus, Bishop of Nola in the fifth century, is said to have expended his immense estate in redeeming from captivity his countrymen who had been enslaved by the Goths when they overran the empire. After his resources had been entirely exhausted, a poor widow came to him with the sad story that her only son, upon whom she depended in her old age, had been carried captive to Africa. Paulinus at once left his home, and, having found the young man, entered into an agreement with his master that he would take his place and become a slave in order to secure the return of the son to his mother. He undertook to meet the obligations of the captive, and actually obeyed and suffered for him and in his room, for the purpose of redeeming him from servitude.

This is what Jesus Christ, the divine, eternal and coequal Son of God, proposes to do for those who believe in Him. He

offers to take their place, and to discharge all their indebtedness to the law, that they may be redeemed from its curse and restored to fellowship with God. He, and He alone, can do this; and hence the apostle says, "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."¹ "There is now *no* condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus;"² but, on the other hand, as I have sufficiently proved, and in the very nature of the case, there is nothing but condemnation to them which are not in Christ Jesus.

But a question of unspeakable importance here arises, to which I ask your special attention. To whom are these gracious offers addressed, and for whom does the work of Christ as a surety avail?

Let the Bible answer this question, as it

¹ Acts 4 : 12.

² Rom. 8 : 1.

answers all the other questions which have been asked in the course of our argument.

“Christ is the end of the law for righteousness *to every one that BELIEVETH.*”¹

Mark, Christ is the end of the law,—that is, He fulfils the law,—He satisfies its demands,—He removes its penalty,—in behalf of every one that *believeth*, and, of course, in behalf of the believer alone. We are led, then, to the conclusion that faith in the Saviour is necessary to salvation.

¹ Rom. 10 : 4.

PART III.

THE NECESSITY OF FAITH IN THE SAVIOUR.

IN the first recorded interview between our Saviour and an inquiring sinner, an account of which you may read in the third chapter of John, we find that, after showing Nicodemus the necessity of the new birth, or of being renewed by the Spirit, our Lord explains how this great change is brought about, and how men are to be saved. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever *believeth* in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever

believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”¹ And the chapter closes with these words:—“He that *believeth* in the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”²

In accordance with these solemn and positive announcements at the beginning of His ministry, the great aim of His discourses and His miracles was to induce lost men to believe in Him. When those who listened to His preaching asked 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.”³ When the sick and the suffering came to Him for relief, He required of them nothing but faith as the condition upon which He would grant their requests. “If

¹ John 3 : 14–16. ² John 3 : 36. ³ John 6 : 28, 29.

thou canst *believe*, all things are possible to him that believeth.”¹ “He that *believeth* in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.”²

In accordance, too, with such statements, which constantly fell from His lips during His personal ministry, He commands His ambassadors everywhere, and to the end of time, to set forth the doctrine of faith in Him as necessary to the salvation of lost men. After His resurrection from the dead, and just before His ascension to heaven to sit down at the right hand of God, He gave this commission 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 shall be damned.”³

When, therefore, the apostles went out

¹ Mark 9 : 23. ² John 11 : 25, 26. ³ Mark 16 : 15, 16.

among all nations to proclaim the glad tidings, and a convicted sinner came to them, saying, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" they replied, "*Believe* in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."¹ And when they wrote epistles to the various churches, the theme upon which they loved to dwell, and which you will find pervades all their letters, was still faith in Christ. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."² "This is His commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ."³

You need not be surprised, then, to learn that *unbelief* is a grievous sin. It is more than an intellectual mistake: it is a dreadful crime, and will be punished as such. "He that believeth not is condemned already, *because* he hath not believed in the

¹ Acts 16 : 31.

² Rom. 5 : 1.

³ 1 John 3 : 23.

name of the only begotten Son of God.”¹ Our Saviour, in explaining to His disciples the work of the Holy Spirit in connection with human redemption, declares that He will first convince the world of sin. But of what sin? Why, the sin of unbelief, as the chief sin,—as the source of all other sins:—“Of sin,” he says, “*because they believe not on me.*”² Unbelief, among other enormities to which it leads, dares to insult the Majesty on high, by denying, or, at least, by slighting, all that He has said and all that He has done for our salvation. “He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son.”³ Hence it is written, “The *unbelieving*, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which

¹ John 3 : 18.

² John 16 : 9.

³ 1 John 5 : 10.

burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.”¹ The fact that those who reject the Lord Jesus Christ are classed with such vile company clearly shows the dreadful nature of the sin of unbelief, and conclusively proves that while you retain this sin you cannot possibly be saved, however amiable and moral you may be in your own estimation or in the estimation of your friends.

Faith, therefore,—faith in Jesus Christ,—is plainly the turning-point in the destiny of your soul. The question which you ought to ask is not concerning your past life, nor concerning your fitness to be a Christian, nor concerning the temptations to which you may be exposed in the future, nor concerning difficult doctrines in the Bible, nor concerning hypocrites in the church; for these things have nothing to do

¹ Rev. 21 : 8.

with the great business immediately before you. The only question for you to consider now is the following:—Do you place that faith in Christ which the Bible so positively declares is essential to your deliverance from the condemnation of the law, and without which “it is impossible to please God”?¹ If you do, it shall be well with you in life, in death and in eternity. If you do not, “the wrath of God” still “abideth on you.”

In order to answer this great question with satisfaction to yourself, it is important that you should clearly understand

WHAT IS MEANT BY FAITH IN CHRIST.

In its simplest sense, as I said at the beginning of the discussion, faith is belief upon testimony; and that saving faith includes, also, reliance on Christ as our Re-

¹ Heb. 11 : 6.

deemer, and trust in the fulfilment of His gracious promises made to sinners. Most of the knowledge which we possess we obtain through faith,—that is, through belief of what we read, or of what some one tells us. For example, you never saw General Washington, the first President of the United States; and yet you are as fully convinced that he lived as if you had personally known him. Why are you so thoroughly convinced that there was such a man? Simply because you have testimony to establish the fact which you cannot doubt any more than you can doubt your own existence.

It may be you never saw the city of Rome, in Italy; but you are perfectly sure there is such a city; and, if business or pleasure called you to visit it, you would leave your own country feeling certain of beholding this renowned capital of the Roman Empire, unless some unexpected pro-

vidence interrupted your journey. The testimony in this case you do not think of calling in question even for one moment.

It is probable that you have never determined for yourself the size and distance from the earth of the sun and the moon, and the various planets belonging to our solar system; and yet, I presume, you accept without hesitation the testimony of practical astronomers upon this subject.

The truth is, God has so constituted us that we are bound to receive and to act upon credible testimony with as much confidence as we rely upon the evidence of our own senses. If a person whom you had known from your childhood, and whom you knew to be strictly truthful, were to come to you while reading these words and say that a building had just fallen and buried beneath its ruins a very dear friend of yours, would you not believe him, and would you not rush to the scene of the

disaster in a state of excitement and grief? You would not only accept his testimony as true, but his testimony would control the feelings of your heart and govern your conduct.

But if this person, who had never deceived you, and had never jested, should make a distinct and solemn promise that he would do for you on a certain day something for which you were exceedingly anxious, would you not expect the fulfilment of the promise? Would you not rely on him to be as good as his word? Would not the bare promise impart to you a feeling of relief and of pleasure? I am sure it would, and simply because you believe that he is able and willing to do what he says he will do. Let us suppose that you are in business, and, owing to sudden reverses, find yourself unable to pay a note which is about due. You go to this person, who has heretofore aided you when in need,

and ask him to lend you the necessary amount. He replies, "I am sorry I cannot do it, but my own obligations require the use of all the money I can command." You turn away in distress and perplexity, not knowing where to apply for assistance. But suppose the next morning after this interview your old and tried friend comes to your place of business, and says, "Since our conversation yesterday, I have unexpectedly made arrangements by which I can let you have the money you want; and if you will come to my office at eleven o'clock to-day I will give you a check for it."

Now, what is the ground or the reason for the satisfaction and delight with which you would receive this announcement? Clearly, your faith in the man. You would believe that he *could* lend you the money, that he was *willing* to do it; and, inasmuch as he had promised to do it, that he *would*

do it; and, hence, by simply believing what has been said to you, your mind is relieved of all anxiety concerning the payment of the note.

Let us, again, suppose that your business calls you to a distant city. On reaching it you conclude to walk from the railroad-station to the hotel, rather than wait for the crowded omnibus. After walking a long distance, you begin to fear that you have lost your way. Night is coming on, and at length you are completely bewildered, and look around to seek direction. Some one passing by offers to guide you to the hotel. It is probable that you would not follow him without suspicion and misgiving. You do not know him. You do not know, in the first place, whether he is acquainted with the streets of the city; and, in the second place, you do not know whether you can trust him. You cannot feel quite sure of his designs, especially if it is too dark to

distinguish his features; and perhaps the thought will flash across your mind that he intends to lead you to some lonely spot in order to rob or murder you. But suppose, in the course of the conversation, you discover the man to be an old friend residing in the city, whom you have not seen for years, but of whom you have often heard as a most benevolent and excellent gentleman. Upon this discovery, and upon his renewed assurance that he would conduct you safely to your lodgings or to his own residence, it is certain you would experience an instant sense of relief, and confidently follow wherever he might lead.

Now, how do you account for this sudden change in your feelings? Why, clearly, it is owing to the faith you have in your guide. You may not be conscious of reasoning about the matter; but there will be a kind of reasoning going on in your mind, nevertheless. You will believe that he *can*

do what he promises; that he is *willing* to do it; and, *therefore*, you will trust him, and accompany him gladly, even along the most gloomy and forbidding streets.

So, then, if a man in whom you have faith seriously relates something of which he claims to have personal knowledge, you will accept what he says as true; and if he seriously makes you a promise you will certainly and confidently rely upon him to fulfil that promise.

And now let us apply this to the question of your salvation. I have already taken it for granted that you believe the Bible to be the word of God, and, consequently, that it is true. Well, you read in this inspired book a great many historical statements concerning various nations and individuals. The impression produced by these statements will not greatly differ, perhaps, from that produced by reading accounts of similar providential dealings in a

history of the United States, or of England, because you do not feel that you are personally and intimately affected by them.

But you also read that "the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God,"¹ where "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever."² "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."³ "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."⁴ If you really believe these solemn declarations, and feel your own sinfulness, the unavoidable result will be anxiety and fear.

In your distress, you turn to other portions of the Sacred Scriptures, and read, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."⁵ "He is able also to save them to

¹ Ps. 9 : 17.

² Rev. 14 : 11.

³ Heb. 9 : 27.

⁴ Heb. 10 : 31.

⁵ 1 Tim. 1 : 15.

the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.”¹ “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.”² “Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk, without money and without price.”³ “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”⁴ “And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”⁵

There are many such precious invitations and assurances in the blessed word of God, setting forth the ability and the willingness of Christ to save sinners,—nay, to save *you*, even though you are the chief of sinners. You may be the chief of sinners, but you can be no worse; and it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that He

¹ Heb. 7 : 25.² 1 John 1 : 7.³ Isa. 55 : 1.⁴ Matt. 11 : 28.⁵ John 6 : 37.

came to save the vilest of the vile. Now, if you believe this, why are you not rejoicing in hope of the glory of God? If Jesus Christ *came* to save you, and declares that He *can* save you, and that He *desires* to save you, and that He *will* save you, provided you but trust Him, surely you ought to believe Him this very moment, and lift the song of praise for His amazing grace.

But you may say, "I do not know whether the Saviour means me; and, although I desire to believe on Him, I cannot tell whether I really believe, or whether I am deceived."

If this is the state of your mind, a question which I am about to ask may assist you in understanding Christ's feelings towards you, and your feelings towards Him. I desire you to be entirely honest with yourself, to examine your heart thoroughly, and to answer the question truthfully and

intelligently, since it may reveal your real condition, and, I trust, bring immediate peace to your anxious soul.

Now, the question I wish to ask is this: Suppose Christ should suddenly appear before you while reading these words, and you knew it was Christ the Lord, just as you know your most intimate friend. Suppose He should raise His hand, and say, with His own voice, "Son, daughter, thy sins be forgiven thee. I died that thou mightest live. I am able to save, I am willing to save thee. I do not desire thy death. I am not indifferent to thy welfare. I have come from heaven to give thee personal assurance of my interest in thy happiness. Just as thou art, without waiting even one moment, I offer to save thee, if thou wilt but trust me. I am to pronounce the destiny of all men; and I now promise that when thou shalt stand before my judgment-seat I will not say,

Depart from me, but, Come, blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for thee from the foundation of the world.”

If the Lord Jesus were to make such declarations as these directly to *you*, while standing visibly in your presence and looking upon you, *would you believe Him?* Would you be satisfied? Would you rely upon Him to fulfil His promise? Are you so much in earnest about your salvation that you would trust Him at once, and be willing even *now* to become His disciple, asking nothing, wanting nothing beside His own divine word to impart a hope of final blessedness? Stop and think before reading further. Think seriously. I ask, again, would you believe these promises, if made personally to you by the gracious Redeemer?

Oh, if you would, then you may believe; for He *does* make these promises in His word, and He makes them as truly, as

directly, as sincerely, to *you* as though you were the only sinner on the earth, or as though He stood visibly in your presence. He hath said, "*Whosoever* believeth shall not perish, but have eternal life."

He might commission an angel to convey to you the assurances of His power to save, and of His tender concern for your soul; He might engrave the declarations of His grace upon tables of stone for your special benefit; He might write His sweet invitations in a letter and send them in that form; but what would be the use of all this, when He has already addressed you, and addressed you personally, in His glorious gospel? If you believe not His earnest and solemn words found in the Bible, neither would you "be persuaded though one rose from the dead."¹

Faith, then, in the first place, is to be-

¹ Luke 16 : 31.

lieve that what Jesus Christ says in His word is true; and, in the second place, it is to rely upon Him to fulfil His promise to save your soul.

It is, therefore, as simple and easy to exercise faith in Christ as it is to believe that what an earthly friend tells you is true, or as it is to trust in an earthly friend to do what he says he will do. Nay, it ought to be far easier, because an earthly friend *may* change, or *may* be unable to execute his purpose; but "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever,"¹ and "doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and there is none that can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou?"² When He who is "mighty to save"³ offers to deliver you from sin and hell, there should be on your part a prompt

¹ Heb. 13 : 8.

² Dan. 4 : 35.

³ Isa. 63 : 1.

and heartfelt acceptance of the offer, and a calm, unshaken reliance upon Him to secure your salvation.

You are not to make yourself worthy of the offer in any respect or in any degree; for self-righteousness is at the bottom of all these efforts "to get fit to come," and pride is at the bottom of all this apparent humility that keeps the soul away from the Redeemer. There is no promise in the Bible to those who are good enough to come, for "they that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."¹ There is no promise for to-morrow; but "behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation."²

Several years ago, a missionary among the Indians was visited by a proud and powerful chief, who had been deeply convicted of sin by the Spirit of God. The

¹ Matt. 9 : 12.

² 2 Cor. 6 : 2.

savage, while trembling under a sense of his guilt, like a great many civilized persons, was unwilling to take the water of life freely, and hence offered his wampum to avert the dreaded punishment. The man of God shook his head, and said, "No, Christ cannot accept such a sacrifice!" The Indian went away, but, unable to rest beneath the frowns of his Maker, came back, and offered his rifle, and the skins he had taken in hunting. The missionary again said, "No: Christ cannot accept such a sacrifice." The wretched sinner withdrew, but the Spirit gave him no peace, and he returned once more, to offer his wigwam, his wife, his children, and all that he had, if he could only find pardon and eternal life. The missionary was compelled to say, "No: Christ cannot accept such a sacrifice." The chief stood for a moment, with his head bowed, as if on the verge of despair, and then, raising his streaming eyes

to heaven, his heart poured itself forth in a cry of unreserved surrender and consecration, "Here, Lord, take poor Indian too!"

Yes, my friend; and this is the position to which you must come, if you would experience the joy of pardoned sin, and "the peace of God which passeth all understanding."¹

You are not to have love for Christ first, and then believe; you are not to repent first as much as you think you ought to repent, and then believe; you are not to strive first for good feelings, and then believe.

You have nothing to do with the past; you have nothing to do with the future; you have nothing to do with the secret things of God; you have nothing to do with false professors of religion; you must not wait for some particular kind of experience which you would like to have, or for more

¹ Phil. 4 : 7.

feeling, or until your prayers are more fervent. If He were to give you the feelings you want, or grant you the experience you wish, before believing in Him, you see how certain it is that you would rely, not upon Him, but upon your feelings and experience, as the ground of comfort.

This refusal to believe until you can feel more, or pray better, or experience a greater love for God, is the work of Satan, seeking to divert your mind from Christ, and, without being conscious of it, is only self-righteousness : it is simply a reliance upon something you can do.

All you have to do now is with Christ.

The first thing you have to do,—the only thing you have to do,—wherever you may be, while reading these words,—at home or abroad, standing or sitting, in health or in sickness,—is, *now*, just *now*, and *as you are*, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Believe that He came to save you; believe

that He can save you; believe that He is willing to save you,—that He desires to save you; believe that He offers to save you; and, at once, without delay, without doubt, without hesitation, trust in Him to do what He promises to do.

Give up your pride and your efforts to make yourself better; and, committing your guilty soul and all its interests into the hands of Christ, exclaim from the heart,—

“ Here Lord, I give myself away :
’Tis all that I can do.”

I tell you, heaven and earth shall pass away sooner than your soul shall be lost.

Do this, and you will obtain the peace for which you sigh, and the love which you desire to feel, and the other graces and joys which spring out of this act of childlike faith as naturally as a stream springs from its fountain-head.

Then shall you know in your own experience of the doctrine taught in this book,

and faith will be to you "the substance," the ground or confident expectation, of "things hoped for," and "the evidence," or clear proof and demonstration, "of things not seen."¹

I only wish, in conclusion of what I have to say about faith, to call your special attention to the terms or condition of salvation, as set forth in Romans, tenth chapter, verses sixth to thirteenth:

"The righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise: Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down from above: or, Who shall descend into the deep? that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead. But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the

¹ Heb. 11 : 1.

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. For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. For *whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*"¹

Here, you will observe, the apostle asserts that there is no difficulty in coming to Christ, and no reason for delay or preparation. "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Now, then, call upon Him in prayer,—call upon Him sincerely,—call upon Him as a helpless, perishing sinner,—and He has pledged His eternal word to save you.

¹ Rom. 10 : 6-13.

PART IV.

ENCOURAGEMENTS TO BELIEVE IN THE SAVIOUR.

BUT, for fear that some anxious sinner who has read thus far may still fail to trust in Christ, I cannot lay down my pen without briefly setting forth a few of the encouragements to believe in the Saviour.

Remember, then, in the first place, that the Saviour's work is all-sufficient for every want of the soul. He does not need your assistance in any respect; for, if you are saved "by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."¹ According to the prediction of the prophet, He hath brought in "everlasting righteous-

¹ Rom. 11 : 6.

ness,"¹ and, "being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him."² He has answered, then, all the demands of the law for time and for eternity, and hence "ye are complete in Him,"³ "who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."⁴

What is the use, therefore, of waiting? You cannot supplement His work; you cannot improve upon it. "It is finished;"⁵ and finished for you as a sinner, and because you are a sinner. But "If righteousness come by the law,"—that is, by your own obedience and efforts,—"then Christ is dead in vain."⁶ You must be saved, if saved at all, wholly by Christ. And why not be saved *now*? You cannot see Him, but He can see you, and offers this moment to pardon, to bless, to cause all things to work together

¹ Dan. 9 : 24.

² Heb. 5 : 9.

³ Col. 2 : 10.

1 Cor. 1 : 30.

⁵ John 19 : 30.

⁶ Gal. 2 : 21.

for your good, to care for your future as well as your present, to guide you with His counsel, and afterwards to receive you to glory.¹

Why not believe Him this very moment, and trust your salvation into His keeping?

“If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”²

Surely your cause will be safe in such hands. He is not only an advocate who is perfectly familiar with the case to be tried,—He is not only deeply interested for His client,—but He is a righteous advocate; that is, He Himself has satisfied the claims of the law, and pleads, as the ground of your acquittal, His own spotless righteousness, in the merits of which the guilty sinner can approach with boldness the throne of Jehovah.

Hence it is written, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”³ Not only, then, the faithful-

¹ Ps. 73 : 24.

² 1 John 2 : 1.

³ 1 John 1 : 9.

ness of God to His promises, but the *justice* of God, requires the forgiveness of the sinner who asks for pardon in the name of Jesus. As justice demands the punishment of all who are not represented by Christ, so it demands the acceptance of all who *are* represented by Him. As there is nothing *but* condemnation to those who are *out* of Christ, so there is *no* condemnation to them who are *in* Christ.

What possible advantage, then, can you gain by delay? Clearly, none; and if you stay away for years, you must at last be saved, if God will bear with you, just as you may be saved to-day, by simply relying upon the Lord Jesus Christ to fulfil His promises made to sinners.

Remember, in the second place, the unspeakable tenderness of the Saviour. When He was upon the earth, thousands of the sick, the suffering, and the wretched were brought unto Him, and He healed

them all. Do you read that He ever refused to grant a blessing to any that asked Him? On two occasions, at least, of which we are informed by the Evangelists, the people crowded around Him after the sun was set; and, although He was subject to our bodily infirmities, and was doubtless exhausted from the constant labours of the day, He did not complain that He was weary,—He did not close His ears against the cries of want and sorrow.

Among the vast multitude of the diseased whom He restored to health, it is almost certain that there were some who had brought their calamities upon themselves by their vices,—it is almost certain that among them were found some who were vile and altogether unworthy; and yet the compassionate heart of Jesus was moved with pity for all of the afflicted, and He listened to the entreaties of the meanest of them. Is He not as kind and sympathizing in heaven as He was upon earth? Do not fear

to approach Him as you are; for He has declared that He will by no means cast you out.

He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."¹

Beholding Jerusalem, the scene of His sufferings, and the residence of His bitterest enemies, He wept over it, and said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"²

Who can read these affecting declarations without being persuaded that the Saviour is in earnest when He offers to save even the chief of sinners, and to save them not because of their merits, but because of His infinite love?

Oh, He *is* in earnest; and, as another proof of His tenderness, remember, in the third place, that He has already sent His Holy Spirit to your heart. If you have

¹ 2 Pet. 3 : 9.

² Matt. 23 : 37.

any sorrow for sin, any desire to be saved from the power and pollution of sin, that desire has been excited by the Spirit of God.

The reason why you are thus concerned about your soul, while thousands around you are indifferent, is not because you are better than others, but because the Third Person in the adorable Trinity has drawn nigh to you upon a mission of heavenly grace and love.

This Divine Person, whose office it is to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment,¹ who renews our nature,² who sanctifies the soul,³ who guides into the truth,⁴ who is the Author of all gifts and graces, of all right desires and affections,⁵ and upon whom we are entirely dependent in receiving the benefits of Christ's redemption, even He is striving with you, my friend. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God;"⁶ for if "he that despised Moses' law died without mercy, under two or three wit-

¹ John 16 : 8.

² John 3 : 5.

³ 1 Peter 1 : 2.

⁴ John 16 : 13.

⁵ 1 Cor. 12 : 11.

⁶ Eph. 4 : 30.

nesses : of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith He was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"¹

“ Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, *To-day* if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.”² Yield promptly to the drawings and follow the leadings of this Divine Friend, who can work in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure,³ and whom your heavenly Father is more willing to bestow upon them that ask Him than any earthly father is to give good gifts to his own children.⁴

The Spirit has come, not to mock nor to deceive you, nor to inspire vain hopes ; but in all sincerity, and in amazing condescension, He offers to lead you to Christ for pardon and peace and eternal life. Entreat

¹ Heb. 10 : 28, 29.

² Heb. 3 : 7, 8.

³ Phil. 2 : 13.

⁴ Luke 11 : 13.

Him to impart the gift of faith *now*, and to abide with you forever. Entreat Him to be your counsellor and guide along the whole journey of life. Entreat Him to enlighten your understanding, that you may understand the Scriptures; to renew your will, that you may choose that which is well-pleasing to God; to elevate your affections to divine and eternal things, and to cause you to walk worthy of your high vocation.

Then, whatever perils or afflictions may lie before you, “the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, shall be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: *receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.*”¹

¹ 1 Pet. 1 : 7-9.

PART V.

EVIDENCES OF HAVING ACCEPTED THE SAVIOUR.

BUT it may be of service to you, in entering upon the Christian life,—which I hope you have fully determined, by the grace of God, to pursue,—to call your attention to a few of the scriptural evidences of having accepted the Saviour.

I say *scriptural* evidences, because many persons are seriously misled, or, at least, kept for a long time in darkness and distress of mind, by reason of looking for the evidence of their conversion in the experience of others, instead of looking for it in the Bible. I have known even a few ministers of the gospel to err, as it seemed to me, in

unconsciously making their personal experience a sort of rule by which many of their hearers would be apt to judge themselves; and, because they did not have precisely the same experience they heard from the pulpit, they would fall into despondency and doubt concerning their state. Now, the fact is, no two Christians have exactly the same religious experience, any more than they are exactly alike in features, in mental peculiarities, in habits, or in history. All true Christians are united to the Lord Jesus Christ by the one act of faith; but up to the moment of exercising faith the dealings of the Holy Spirit with them vary greatly. All true Christians find the burden of guilt roll from the soul only at the cross; but each is conducted along his own peculiar path in order to arrive at the cross.

Let it not concern you, therefore, to find that your experience does not correspond in every particular to that of other Chris-

tians, but rather compare your feelings and your purposes with the emotions and the aims of the children of God, as described in the Holy Scriptures.

The first evidence, then, I wish to mention, as revealed in the word of truth, is *obedience to the precepts of Christ*. “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.”¹ “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.”² “And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”³

There can scarcely be any room for mistake or for deception here, so plainly has the Saviour stated the test of our true condition. If we keep not His commandments, and *all* of His commandments, so far as we know them, our hope of heaven is vain, no

¹ John 14 : 21.

² John 15 : 14.

³ 1 John 2 : 3, 4.

matter what our profession may be, no matter what church we may join, no matter what religious ceremonies we may observe. On the other hand, if we keep His commandments, we need not express ourselves, as so many Christians do, in a doubtful manner in regard to our conversion; for “hereby we *do know* that we know Him.”

Neither need we be thrown into doubt by our own imperfections; for, as the Holy Spirit has told us, in many things we offend all.

If we desire, aim, and strive to keep His commandments, and do not willingly, deliberately, and persistently do what our Lord has forbidden, or wilfully neglect to do what He has required; if we take sides with God against sin, and long to be free from it,—not only from open and outward sin, but from secret and inward sin,—that we may be perfectly conformed to the character of our Saviour; if, with the Psalmist, we can

say, "Oh that my ways were directed to keep Thy statutes! The law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver. Therefore I esteem all Thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way,"¹ then we have decisive and reliable evidence that our faith is saving and true, even though it may not be triumphant and assured.

The principle which controls the believer in thus striving to obey all the precepts of Christ may be readily understood. Not only does his nature, which is renewed by the Spirit, relish holiness for its own excellence and beauty, but he is filled with love to the Redeemer, who has done and suffered so much for him; and love always excites the desire to please the person whom we esteem.

An incident is related in the memoir of Philip Doddridge that illustrates the power

¹ Psalm 119 : 5, 72, 128.

of this principle. It is said that a man of whom he had known nothing previously was arrested, tried, and condemned to death for murder. Something in the case excited the special interest of Mr. Doddridge in behalf of the friendless prisoner; and, at considerable trouble and expense, he succeeded in establishing his innocence beyond doubt. Overwhelmed with gratitude for the efforts of his benefactor to save him from a felon's death, he exclaimed, on one occasion, "Every drop of my blood thanks you; for you have had compassion on every drop of it. You are my redeemer in one sense, and you have a right to me. If I live, I am your property, and I will be a faithful subject."

So the Christian feels, and so he ought to feel, towards the Lord Jesus, who has saved us from eternal death at the cost of His own life. "We love Him, because He first loved us."¹ "The love of Christ constrain-

¹ John 4 : 19.

eth us ; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead ; and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.”¹ “What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”²

A second evidence of genuine faith laid down in the Bible is *love for the brethren*. “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.”³ If, therefore, you find that you love Christians *as* Christians, and *because* they are Christians, you may not only express the hope that you have been born again, but you may *know* it. There are,

¹ 2 Cor. 5 : 14, 15. ² 1 Cor. 6 : 19, 20. ³ 1 John 3 : 14.

however, many anxious inquirers and young converts who are seriously troubled when this scriptural evidence of regeneration is presented to them. They are acquainted with persons who are not Christians whom they tenderly love; and perhaps they are acquainted with professors of religion for whom they do not feel any peculiar affection; and hence they are apt to doubt the genuineness of the work of grace in their own hearts.

Now, you should remember that you are not required to feel any repugnance or coldness towards your unconverted friends; neither is the ground upon which love for the brethren rests congeniality of natural tastes and disposition. It is a higher and holier ground than this,—which a simple illustration may enable you to understand, and at the same time to perceive the state of your own feelings.

There formerly lived, in one of our West-

ern States, a gentleman and lady who lost by death their only child,—a bright and beautiful little girl. The mother seemed to be almost broken-hearted, and her health rapidly declined under the burden of her mighty sorrow. Her husband, hoping that she would be benefited by leaving home, induced her to spend a few months in travelling. During their temporary stay in an Eastern city, they visited an orphan asylum, and found the children assembled in a large room of the building to engage in some of the exercises of the institution. At first the bereaved mother looked upon the delightful scene with the same sadness and indifference she had exhibited through the entire journey; but suddenly her eye resumed its former brightness, and the blood came again to her pale cheek, as, eagerly pointing to one of the orphans, she exclaimed, “Oh, I must have that child,—I must have that child for my own.” The

superintendent was standing near, and inquired why that one child out of scores around her had excited such special interest. "Because," she replied, with deep emotion, "she is the very image of my own lost little Mary."

This, then, is the reason why you will love the brethren. It is because they bear the image of your beloved Lord; and wherever you behold that image, no matter among what denomination of Christians it may be found, if you are a Christian you will certainly love it, and find your heart going out to him on whose character and life it is impressed. "Every one that loveth Him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of Him."¹

The third and last evidence of true faith which I will mention as presented in the Scriptures is a *change of views, affections, purposes, and habits*. "If any man be in

¹ 1 John 5 : 1.

Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”¹

Here, again, I have known persons to trouble themselves needlessly. They say they are not conscious of any marked change, and, therefore, cannot hope that they have been born again. They say that for years, and perhaps even from childhood, they have been anxious about their souls, and cannot remember the time when they were not more or less concerned with regard to religion. They have prayed, and read the Bible, and listened attentively to the preaching of the gospel, and sometimes *almost* trusted that they loved the Lord Jesus.

Now, I desire to say, for the comfort of such persons, that probably they have for a long time possessed *faith*, without the *assurance* of it. It is certain, at least, that they have been under the restraining and

¹ 2 Cor. 5 : 17.

governing influence of the Holy Spirit; and the work of grace is carried on so quietly and gradually within them, they must not expect those marvellous and overwhelming manifestations of divine power in their conversion of which they have heard in the case of a few others. Some of the brightest Christians it has ever been my privilege to meet could not tell the day, nor the month, nor the year when the great change took place; and the Bible furnishes instances in which persons were regenerated in early childhood, and sanctified from the womb. It is not by visions, neither by raptures, but "by their fruits ye shall know them;"¹ and I trust the evidence we are now considering will excite joy, and not terror, in more than one sad heart.

The Scriptures declare that the "carnal" or unrenewed "mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God,

¹ Matt. 7 : 20.

neither indeed can be," and "they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh."¹

It follows, therefore, that the unregenerate man leaves God out of view in his plans and aims. He does not like even to think about Him; and whatever amiability, or kindness, or friendship he exhibits towards his fellow-men would be as fully manifested though he did not believe in the existence of a Divine Being.

Hence, it is as proper to say of the brutes that they are virtuous or religious, because they exhibit love for their young and affection for each other, as it is to say of such a man that he is virtuous or religious while practically declaring "there is no God."²

But if he becomes a sincere believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, he is filled by the spirit of adoption with such filial reverence for his neglected Maker that he is enabled

¹ Rom. 8 : 5, 7.

² Ps. 14 : 1.

to cry, "Abba, Father."¹ Once he lived only to advance his temporal interests, and to secure the riches, the honours, and the pleasures of this world; but now he feels that "the friendship of the world is enmity with God,"² and looks "not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."³ Once he gloried in his possessions, or in the admiration of men; but now he can say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."⁴ Once the Bible was a sealed book to him, and the precious messages of a Saviour's love were thrown aside for the news of the day, or for an idle tale of fiction; but now he can say, "Oh, how I love Thy law!

¹ Rom. 8 : 15.

³ 2 Cor. 4 : 18.

² James 4 : 4.

⁴ Gal. 6 : 14.

How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth.”¹ Once the prayer-meeting and the honest preaching of the truth were distasteful or wearisome to him; but now he can exclaim, “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.”² “For a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.”³ Once he turned his back upon the Lord’s table in heartless indifference, or cruel contempt; but now he joyfully confesses Him before men, and with gratitude obeys His dying command, “This do in remembrance of me.”⁴

And so I might go on, if necessary, to enumerate the peculiar feelings of the “new creature;” but enough has been said, no doubt, to indicate the greatness and the

¹ Ps. 119 : 97, 103.

² Ps. 122 : 1.

³ Ps. 84 : 10.

⁴ Luke 22 : 19.

reality of that change which is expressed in the Scriptures by the phrases, "Ye must be born again,"¹ and "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."²

It is a fact plainly stated in the word of God, and confirmed by the experience of the most devoted Christians, that once we "were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past we walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."³

It is also a fact just as plainly revealed in the Scriptures, and just as fully confirmed by the experience of true Christians, that saving faith in the Lord Jesus worketh by

¹ John 3 : 7.

² Col. 3 : 3.

³ Eph. 2 : 1-3.

love;¹ that it purifieth the heart;² that it overcometh the world;³ that it causes the believer to recognize his Master's claims upon him as His property, the purchase of His blood;⁴ that it leads him to present his body a living sacrifice,—holy, acceptable to God,—which is his reasonable service;⁵ and that it raises his conversation to heaven, “from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.”⁶

If, therefore, you discover that it is your chief aim in life, and your fixed purpose, by the help of God, to glorify Christ, you are undoubtedly a Christian. Notwithstanding the temptations to which you are exposed, and the remaining corruptions of your na-

¹ Gal. 5 : 6.² Acts 15 : 9.³ 1 John 5 : 4.⁴ 1 Cor. 6 : 20.⁵ Rom. 12 : 1.⁶ Phil. 3 : 20, 21.

ture, and the sharp conflicts you may endure, you have certainly exercised faith, and are certainly united to the living Saviour, as the branch is united to the vine.

“Then let your songs abound,
And every tear be dry;
You’re marching through Immanuel’s ground
To fairer worlds on high.

Only see to it that, “leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, you go on to perfection,”¹ “abstaining from all appearance of evil,”² cheerfully surrendering, for the sake of your Lord, every custom, amusement, or fashion that is even of doubtful expediency,³ and making it the fixed habit of your life, “whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, to do all to the glory of God.”⁴

¹ Heb. 6 : 1.

² 1 Thess. 5 : 22.

³ 1 Cor. 10 : 23.

⁴ 1 Cor. 10 : 31.



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