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STUDIES
IN THE
SCRIPTURES

“Search the Scriptures” John 5:39

EDITOR: Arthur W. Pink (1886-1952)

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Studies in the Scriptures appeared without interruption from 1922 to 1953, each issue including six to eight articles addressing a different topic in a series. While virtually unknown to the Christian world when he died, his writings continue to grow in their influence upon God's people around the world, through their clarity, careful exposition, and Christ-centeredness.

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STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES

“Search the Scriptures” John 5:39

EDITOR: Arthur W. Pink

A GOOD JUDGMENT

In certain respects, a good judgment and a good conscience may be said to be handmaids to each other, for a good conscience is one that is illumined by the understanding, and the understanding becomes further clarified as conscience properly performs her office. The intellectual and moral powers are reciprocal, for while the one provides light for the other, the latter tends to strengthen the former. It is a well-established fact that becoming conversant with divine things imparts vigour and breadth to the intellect. A good conscience is instructed by the Word, and therefore discerns between truth and error, so that “the voice of a stranger” (Joh 10:5) will not be followed. There is, therefore, clearness of vision, and if a person has a good conscience, it will cause him to act rightly. Thus, a good judgment is something more than a well-informed and balanced mind, which produces discretion in connection with practical matters—though that is certainly included, for we could not predicate it of an ignoramus. It is more a moral quality than a mental one, the capacity to estimate ethical values and not be imposed upon by shams. There is such a thing as *moral judgment*, which is vastly superior to what men term “common sense,” namely, a moral taste which savours the propriety or impropriety of things and persons.

“The understanding is the pilot and guide of the whole man, that faculty which sits at the stern of the soul; but as the most expert guide may mistake in the darkness, so may the understanding when it wants the light of knowledge” (from the Introduction to the Westminster Confession). Such indeed is now the case with the natural man, for the fall has so ruined his judgment and deranged his mind that he mistakes darkness for light and calls bitter sweet (Isa 5:20). Rightly did Bernard (1091-1153) say, “He that is his own teacher has a fool for his master.” Man cannot teach himself what he does not know, and of God and His will, he knows nothing by nature. Therefore, the dawn of wisdom is a consciousness of our ignorance and imbecility, so that we are made to distrust reason, and the heartfelt prayer goes forth, “Give me understanding” (Psa 119:34). That dawning of wisdom is

one of the effects of the new birth, for the unregenerate are “wise in their own conceits” (Pro 26:16), and have no perception of their dire need of divine teaching. So far from inheriting from Adam a good understanding, his descendants are utter fools, as the Scriptures plainly and repeatedly testify. And when God declares man to be a fool, we may be sure that he is so.

How low has sin brought us, for without a good understanding, we are quite unable to apprehend the things of God. We are in a state of complicated ruin, from which nothing but manifold grace will deliver us. God has to bestow upon us at least a measure of understanding before we are made conscious of our crass stupidity. But regenerated people soon become aware of this. A sense of their ignorance and a sight of their errors makes them teachable. They are afraid to lean unto their own understanding, and, therefore, seek wisdom from above, from Him that gives liberally to the poor in spirit, and upbraids not (Jam 1:5). Hence it is that we find David asking over and over again, “Give me understanding” (Psa 119:34, 73, 144, 169). That was what Solomon made request for (1Ki 3:9), and his counsel to us is, “with all thy getting get understanding” (Pro 4:7). Whatever else you fail to obtain, make sure of that. Spare no pains and use all legitimate means, and wait at Wisdom’s gates for it. Other gettings are for your body, this for your soul. They are only temporal, this eternal.

Thomas Manton (1620-1677) defined the uses of a good judgment as threefold. *To distinguish* and judge aright between things that differ, so that we mistake not error for truth, evil for good, things indifferent for things necessary. Many things are lawful which are not expedient. If it be important for our bodily good that we distinguish between wholesome food and harmful diet (however attractively served), much more is it for the soul to discriminate between what is profitable and what is injurious. *To determine and resolve.* After duty has been discerned, there must be determination of mind to perform the same, and to swerve not from it. In Acts 11:23, this is called “purpose of heart.” He who would please God has to set the bent and bias of his heart strongly upon so doing, “I said, I will take heed to my ways” (Psa 39:1). It is a firm and settled decision which sets the soul aworking. It is not so much men’s knowledge as their considered judgments which issue decrees to their wills. *To direct* or guide us in all our affairs. Many are comparatively wise in the generals who err sadly in particulars. Something more than a knowledge of God’s will is required, namely, wisdom to apply that knowledge in detail to all the varied circumstances of our lives.

Without good judgment, we are unable to make proper use of our intelligence and apply aright our knowledge to useful ends. Without it, non-essentials will be mistaken for fundamentals, and things indifferent for things unlawful. Without good judgment, we are incapable of discerning the design of God’s providential dealings with us, supposing He is treating us hardly and sternly, when in reality, He is seeking to turn us from folly. We have to be better instructed if we are not to misjudge the chastening hand of our heavenly Father. Without good judgment, we cannot distinguish between the promptings of our own spirits, the leadings of the Holy Spirit, or the beguilements of Satan. There is a vast variety of circumstances in our lives which call for prudence to deal with them properly. If our ways are to be suitably directed, we need not only a knowledge of God’s will, but also a spirit of discernment. A good judgment is essential if we are to recognize what best be-

comes the occasion, the place, the company we are in, so that we may know what is good, what is better, and what is best in all situations. There is a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to keep and a time to cast away, a time to keep silence and a time to speak (Ecc 3), but through folly we often act untimely.

A good judgment is indispensable because there is a subtle serpent and a deceitful heart ever seeking to ensnare us in the course of duty. The one by plausible temptations, suiting his baits to each of our appetites, the other by representing evil under the notion of good, and good under the notion of evil. Hence it is that we are bidden to understand what the will of the Lord is (Eph 5:17). All our sin is from ignorance and folly (Ti 3:3 and cf. 2Sa 24:10). Without good judgment, we can never obtain the mastery over our corruptions or know how to mortify our lusts, for the appetites need to be regulated by right reason, and good works performed in their proper place and manner. What harm has been done in Christian enterprises and in local churches because the leaders of the one and the officers of the other conducted themselves indiscreetly! How many sincere and warm-hearted believers are guilty of mischievous mistakes and of following foolish courses because they allow their emotions to run away with them. Hence, the apostle prayed, "That your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment" (Phi 1:9)—that our affections may be intelligently directed and our zeal be a prudent one.

How real, then, how great, is the need for each of us to pray daily, "Teach me good judgment" (Psa 119:66). That may be rendered "good taste," as in "O taste and see that the LORD is good" (Psa 34:8). As meats are savoured by their taste, so things by the judgment. A good taste in natural things appears in having the capacity to appreciate the excellence of style, the beauty of a poem, the harmony and melody of good music, the lights and shadows of a master painting. In connection with moral and spiritual things, it is the ability to admire and relish, enabling us to discern their excellence. The Hebrew word in Psalm 119:66 is rendered "behavior" in the heading to Psalm 34, for a man is "tasted" by his deportment. This is the great work of judgment—to reduce all our knowledge to practice—to order our behavior properly, to carry ourselves well in all relations, so that we are respectful to superiors, converse profitably with equals, have compassion on inferiors, do good unto all men. Love must not be exercised indiscriminately; justice is to be tempered with mercy; patience must not degenerate into sloth, nor temperance be pushed to the extent of self-injury.

Then, "Lift up thy voice for understanding" (Pro 2:3), for it comes not at the first call. But though this be God's gift, yea, we are exhorted, "Apply thine heart to understanding" (Pro 2:2). He bestows it only on those who labour for it, on those who employ themselves on the acquirement of the same. In Psalm 111:10, a "good understanding" is preceded by "the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom," for he who is influenced by that fear is moved to watchfulness and conscientious obedience. Again, we are told, "The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way" (Psa 25:9). It is those who are docile and tractable who realize their need of being divinely instructed and directed, and, therefore, do they submit their reason to the divine will. The meek are such as lie at His feet and say, "Speak, LORD, for thy servant heareth" (1Sa 3:10). A good judgment is formed by heeding the teachings of the Scriptures, which makes wise the simple (Psa 19:7). Therefore, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom" (Col 3:16).

Hosea 6:3 also applies here, “Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD.” Hebrews 5:14 intimates that it is the result of having our senses (conscience and mind) “exercised.”

EXPOSITION OF JOHN’S FIRST EPISTLE

32. *Lies and Liars (2:21-22)*

Once more there is a very close connection between our present verses and the two immediately preceding them—a point which the expositor requires to keep ever before him. There the line of demarcation is drawn between apostates (verse 19) and the anointed ones. Those who have an unction from the Holy One “know all things.” The scope and nature of their knowledge we have already explained: briefly, it consists of a saving and influential understanding of the truth. It was because he was assured that those to whom he wrote were experientially acquainted with Christianity, that John was persuaded they would heed the solemn warnings he was about to pen.

“I have not written unto you because you know not the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth” (vs. 21).

As Thomas Scott (1747-1821) well expressed it,

“When we are thus established in the great truths of the Gospel, we shall know that no lie is of the truth, and shall therefore disregard the eloquence, learning, ingenuity, and confidence of those who contradict the Bible; and be satisfied with opposing the express testimony of the truth itself to their well-varnished and ably defended falsehoods.”

1. It is by the knowledge of the truth that the Lord’s people *are able to discern whatever be contrary thereto*. As an old adage declares, “The line that shows itself to be straight, shows also what line is crooked.” “No lie is of the truth”; [a lie] [n]either springs from [the truth] or is according to [the truth], but the very reverse. Error often has a very plausible appearance, and by it multitudes are deceived. Not only is it propagated, frequently, by men of scholarship and seeming spirituality, but their lies are presented in most subtle and attractive forms, appearing to promote the glory of God and the good of souls—were it otherwise, the unwary would not be beguiled. Many a heresy seems to remove difficulties that perplex the thoughtful people of God, to solve doctrinal problems that are a real puzzle to them, to be favourable unto practical piety, and to give peace and happiness to those who accept the same. Nevertheless, if they are not foursquare with the truth, but really conflict with the same, they are falsehoods, and therefore worthless, pernicious, dangerous. No matter how fair the fruits they bear, how apparently excellent their “results,” they are to be rejected and shunned.

That declaration “no lie is of the truth” seems rather like a truism—something so self-evident as to need no stating. In reality it expresses a principle of deep moment. First, as S.E. Pierce (1746-1829) pointed out, “here we have expressed the transcendent excellency

of the everlasting Gospel: there is no darkness in it, there is no lie in it, there is no error [that] can arise out of it." Divine revelation is inerrant and flawless: "Thy Law [not only "contains" but] is the truth" (Psa 119:142). "Every word of God is pure" (Pro 30:5). There are indeed in it "some things hard to be understood," and not a little that is quite beyond our comprehension. It would be very strange were it otherwise, for the finite cannot comprehend the infinite. No amount of searching or inquiry by the keenest intellect can find out God to perfection, nor can it account for many of His ways or explain why He fore-ordained one unto salvation and not another, how the Eternal Three subsist in one essence, how the humanity of Christ never had a separate existence, but was from the first moment of its conception united to His divine person. These and other mysteries are to be reverently received, and humbly submitted to, for they are true—the mouth of the Lord has spoken them.

2. Second, this divine declaration "no lie is of the truth" ought to warn all those who profess to be called of God to preach, of their *solemn duty to be diligent in preaching* the preaching that the Lord bids them (Jon 3:2). "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it" (Deu 4:2). Otherwise, they are in grave danger of falling under that terrible indictment, "The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they speak unto you...the deceit of their heart" (Jer 14:14). "Christ is essential truth. His Gospel is so, in and throughout every part thereof. Therefore no one thing, sentence, or call it doctrine if you will, which differs one hair's breadth from that which the Lord hath delivered to His church...can be other than a lie" (Pierce).

3. Third, "no lie is of the truth" was *a word of warning* against and an exposure of the method employed by those who seek to seduce the saints. It tells us that sophistries¹ and frauds are not necessary in order to support or propagate it. There is no deceit in the Gospel, and there should be none in the handling of it. It requires no fleshly help, and cannot be advanced by cunning and trickery. Alas, how few there are who really believe that unless the truth itself, under the blessing of God, convicts and converts men, nothing else will. Because they lack faith in the power of truth itself, preachers resort to all sorts of carnal devices to render their message more palatable to the unregenerate, and those devices are nothing more than lying deceits, dishonest arts. The lure and love of popularity is too strong to resist for those who seek the praise of men rather than the approbation of God. Such preachers think less of the Author of the Word than they do of rendering it acceptable to the carnal mind. Recourse is had to abstruse philosophies, displays of oratory, histrionics, or musical attractions and worldly allurements, rather than the plain and faithful preaching of the truth itself.

"For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but...as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ" (2Co 2:17), declared the beloved Paul. A most solemn proof is that of how early the Gospel was corrupted, and a portent of how extensively this evil was to spread among the professed servants of God and expounders of the truth. The word "corrupted" signified adulterated: the mixing of it with a foreign element. Few indeed preserve the purity of the truth, and fewer still preserve its holy balance or proclaim it in its

¹ **sophistry** – argumentation that is intentionally deceptive.

fullness and entirety. Too many have sought to conciliate opposers by blunting the sharp edges of the Spirit's sword. They deliberately explain away the most distasteful aspects of divine revelation. Others resort to dishonest exegesis or attempt to "harmonize" the teaching of Holy Writ with the hypotheses of "science falsely so called" (1Ti 6:20). But the faithful minister is "sincere"—open, above board, without guile. Sent of God, he speaks in His name and conducts himself as in the divine presence, and refuses to stoop to any form of a lie in order to commend the truth.

Said the apostle again, We "have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (2Co 4:2). The apostle disdained his own wisdom, discarded all artifices to win the esteem of his hearers, refused an appeal to the traditions of men, declined to mingle anything human with his divine message. He abjured and abhorred all dishonest tricks. His sole aim was to show himself approved unto God, and therefore he declared the whole of His counsel, keeping back nothing that was profitable. Even the winning of souls was made entirely subordinate to preaching the truth in its purity. He therefore used great plainness of speech, and sought to humble and not to flatter, directing his message to the conscience rather than to the intellect or the emotions.

"The veracity of God, and not the reasonableness of any doctrine, is the ground of our faith. It is the work of the Gospel to cast down reasonings against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought unto the obedience of Christ" (Reformed Presbyterian Testimony).

4. Fourth, taking the verse as a whole, its last clause points an *important practical lesson*. The apostle addressed himself unto the saints with the confidence that they would readily accept what he was writing to them, that they would—like himself—detest and refuse error. That confidence shows that men's reception or rejection of the truth turns mainly upon the state of their hearts. Sufficient evidence must indeed be advanced to carry conviction, but if the heart be right, then the mind readily perceives the force of the evidence; whereas if the heart be wrong—prejudiced—no amount of evidence will satisfy it. "Convince a man against his will, and he is of the same opinion still," says the old proverb. It is the perversity of the will, which so often blinds the judgment; let that be properly disposed, and the understanding will function properly. If any doctrine of Scripture be hated, no demonstration of its verity by a hundred proof texts will be of any avail—unless God removes the enmity. On the other hand, if the Word be received "with all readiness of mind," and the Scriptures searched daily whether these things be true (Act 17:11), assurance of them will soon be ours.

This deeply important practical lesson was inculcated by Christ when He declared, "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness" (Mat 6:22-23). The eye has no light of its own, but is merely the receptacle thereof, and the actions of the body are directed by the illumination it admits. The "eye" is here a figure of the understanding, and by its light conduct is regulated: "as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Pro 23:7). A "single" eye has but one object—God, the pleasing and glorifying of Him. At re-

generation the heart is renewed and its vision rectified, the eye of faith is divinely opened, the understanding is spiritually illumined, and God becomes its all-absorbing object. In consequence, light is seen in God's light (Psa 36:9), and all the faculties of the soul come under its benign² influence. A spirit of discrimination follows, so that the child of God discerns between the voice of Christ and that of a false shepherd (Joh 10:4-5), and by his spiritual judgment he distinguishes between truth and error, loving and heeding the one, eschewing and refusing the other.

But since the children of God be spiritually illumined and able to discern between the truth and error, why are there such differences of belief among them? In fact, there is far more agreement than disagreement—but why not entire unanimity? Because God is sovereign and bestows varying measures of light. But why should anyone who has the Holy Spirit for his teacher cling to or imbibe any error? Because of indwelling sin; the counter-acting of the intellectual effects of the fall, like the nullifying of its moral effects, is not perfected in this life. Yet that is to our shame, and in no wise excuses us. There is nothing but light and truth in God's most holy Word, and everything in it is expressed accurately. But alas, we do not receive our views wholly therefrom, nor are our minds so brought under the power and spiritual influence of the same as for its contents to be fixed in our understanding exactly as they are in the Scriptures. "No lie is of the truth": error springs not therefrom, but from the darkness and sinfulness of our minds. Human depravity, acted upon by Satan, disposes men to put a false gloss³ on one passage, to wrest another, and to receive false doctrine.

If we would avoid a lie, we must neither give heed to the reasonings of men upon the Word, nor put our own interpretation upon it. Instead, we are to "hold fast the form of sound words" (2Ti 1:13), expressing truth in our minds and with our lips precisely as it is formulated in Scripture. Our first concern should ever be a seeking to know the mind of the Spirit therein; and our second, to receive it meekly without any cavil or attempt to evade it's meaning. It is men's wrangling over the Word and altering the mode of God's expression that leads so many into error, and renders them still more susceptible to Satan's lies. The most effectual way to be preserved from false doctrine and practice is to accept God's Word at its face value, to believe all that the Lord has spoken. "It should ever be our study and prayer, the utmost aim and bent of our minds, to have the truths of God received into our minds and stated in our understandings exactly as they are in the Word; for there they are expressed as they are in God" (S.E. Pierce). Alas, men prefer their own reasonings and statements thereon, and then turn to the Word to support them.

"Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son" (verse 22).

The Greek Interlinear and the Revised Version render it "Who is the liar," not because any specific one is in view, but because the reference is to those who are guilty of the greatest falsehood of all. Who is the liar of all liars? John does not wait for a reply, but at once furnishes the answer: he that repudiates the Messiah, the Anointed of God—he is outstandingly the cheat of men, the false prophet, the imposter. Here then is the link between

² **benign** – gracious; kind.

³ **gloss** – deceptive interpretation.

the two verses: when the apostle said, “no lie is of the truth,” he had particularly in view the antichrists or seducers of souls who were propagating that which was flatly contrary to the Gospel, and as far removed from it as darkness is from light. As Erich Haupt (1841-1910) pointed out, “‘No lie is of the truth’ seems so clear and self-evident as to require no explanation; but however plain theoretically, it very little governs the conduct of many professing Christians,” and therefore John is still more specific and amplifies his abstract aphorism⁴ with a concrete example.

“*Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?*” Once again we find “the apostle of love” refuses to mince words. He calls things by their right names. Love for Christ and fidelity unto the saints required that he declare plainly what their enemies really were. “Such was his zeal for the truth, he makes no scruple of calling such by this term who would dare pronounce an untruth, let their profession and quality be what they might. We have had instances of this before: If any would venture to say they had fellowship with God, whilst they walked in darkness, he is bold to pronounce this to be a lie (1:6). If any professed they had no inward sinfulness, he declares this to be self-deceit; and it is also willful lying, and truth was not in such (1:8). If any professed himself to be in Christ, and lived carelessly, paying no regard to the Lord’s commandments, he pronounces such an one a liar (2:4). So here, having appealed to those unto whom he wrote concerning the truth of sound doctrine, and that no lie is of the truth, he goes on to express more fully what he had in his eye and would bring forward” (Pierce).

Note well the particular test here applied, the standard by which preachers are to be measured: namely, the person of Christ—the liar is the one who denies Him. Christ is Himself the Truth, and therefore anyone who disowns Him is a false prophet. If we form false conceptions of Him, we cannot rightly apprehend any part of the truth.

“The denial of Christ is the greatest of all sins. To deny Him is not merely to turn away from a truth, but is the forsaking of the truth. And to change the centre is to alter the whole circumference. If, then, Christ is not the centre of our life, no part of our life can be right. To break with Christ, therefore, is to part with truth, and of all lies, that which denies that Jesus is the Christ is the greatest” (L. Palmer).

*“What think ye of Christ is the test,
To try both your state and your scheme;
You cannot be right in the rest
Unless you think rightly of Him.”*

The denial that Jesus is the Christ was the fearful and fatal sin of the Jewish nation. They rejected the claims of Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah promised in the Old Testament Scriptures: “He came unto his own, and his own received him not” (Joh 1:11). In so doing, they sinned against the clearest light and fullest evidence. All the predicted marks were found in Him, but they were blinded by prejudice—from false teaching, their own conceits, and worldliness. He was the true light, but they, through their blindness, perceived it not: “For this people’s heart is waxed gross...their eyes they have closed” (Mat 13:15).

⁴ **aphorism** – a brief and concise statement of truth or opinion.

But to deny that Jesus is the Christ has yet both a deeper meaning and wider scope. It is necessary for us carefully to consider exactly what is connoted by "the Christ." It means "The Anointed," and as Robert S. Candlish (1806-1873) pointed out, "This appellation marks not only a certain relation to the Jewish Scriptures, but also, and still more, a relation to God, whose Christ He was." This raises the question, For what was He anointed?

During the Old Testament economy, prophets, priests, and kings were set apart to their several offices by being anointed with oil. Therein they foreshadowed the Redeemer, who was the "Christ," or Anointed One, from the moment of His birth (Luk 2:11) until His death (Rom 8:34). In this official character the Lord Jesus proclaimed Himself at the very beginning of His public ministry: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised...And he began to say unto them, This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luk 4:18, 21). The blessed Spirit had anointed Him to be the Prophet, Priest, and King of His people, and it is to designate Him as bearing these offices that He is called "Christ." He was owned as such by His disciples (Joh 1:41; 4:29) and by God (Act 2:36). Thus, to receive or reject Jesus as the Christ has respect to all His offices, and consequently to all the blessing that we may obtain or forfeit by accepting or refusing Him.

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JOSHUA

84. Indolence, Part 2

Not a very appealing title for an article! Quite so, but the Bible does not flatter human nature, nor should God's servant do so. However unpleasant, realities should be faced, and not shunned or denied. But, though our theme be unattractive, it is surely a timely one. Does not indolence stare us in the face on every side? Is there not a spirit of sloth and apathy apparent in all classes? Has there ever been such a generation as ours for loathing work and loving pleasure? The expression "organized labour" has become almost synonymous with "the shirking of duty". It is a holding out of the nation to ransom in order to extract the maximum amount of money for the minimum expenditure of energy. On the other hand, any fair-minded man who is really acquainted with the social and economic conditions which prevailed a century ago must acknowledge that, because of the merciless greed of far too many employers, labour was virtually forced to organize itself to secure bare justice. But human nature being what it is, the pendulum has now swung to the opposite extreme, so that, in many cases, the employer can no longer obtain a fair day's work for a fair day's pay.

As the Lord God informed man at the beginning, one of the consequences of his falling into sin was, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground" (Gen 3:19). A sentence from which men have sought to escape by their "labour-saving" devices, generally to the promotion of indolence, the impairing of health, and often the loss

of life. Yet, it is a mistake to suppose that all work has been entailed by the fall. Not so. In his sinless condition, man was put into the garden of Eden “to dress it and to keep it” (Gen 2:15). Whereas work was then a pleasure and easy, now it is distasteful and burdensome—never more so than in our day, when shorter hours and bigger pay is the demand—much of the pay being spent not in wholesome recreation, but in injurious dissipation. And how few there are who realize and recognize that this manual and industrial blight is traceable to a spiritual and *religious evil*. As we have pointed out more than once, social conditions are the repercussions of ecclesiastical ones. The state of the world is largely a reflection of the state of the churches. As the breakdown of parental authority in the home was preceded by lack of discipline in the assembly, the disregard of law in the state by the jettisoning of God’s Law by the pulpit, so the apathy of artisans is but a shadowing forth of the indolence of the majority of professing Christians.

It is true that perfection has never been found among the Lord’s people, yet, a relative healthiness and vigour *have* frequently marked them. But during the past century, there has been a steady and noticeable deterioration in spirituality and a sad decline in practical godliness. Power has diminished, love has cooled, less and less of the fruit of the Spirit, and works of righteousness have been produced. Instead of “always abounding in the work of the Lord” (1Co 15:58) (rendering universal obedience unto Him), the majority of those bearing the name of Christ were “at ease in Zion” (Amo 6:1). Instead of going forth to meet the Bridegroom with lamps trimmed and burning, the wise virgins, equally with the foolish ones, slumbered and slept (Mat 25:1-5). Instead of running the way of God’s commandments (Psa 119:32), too many sat still, waiting for God to “apply” the promises to their hearts. Instead of engaging in aggressive evangelism, most of the churches petted and pampered their own members. Instead of contending earnestly in the world for the Faith (Jud 1:3), other churches turned aside to bitter wrangling and profitless contentions among themselves. The Lord’s cause languished, and Satan was well pleased.

Among the contributing causes which have produced and promoted a generation of spiritual sluggards may be mentioned the following. First, the slackness of preachers. An ever-increasing number of men who sought a soft and easy job were attracted to the ministry, and few indeed burned the midnight oil in their studies, and spent themselves in the service of Christ. Second, unfaithful preaching, where there was an entirely one-sided emphasis—a concentrating upon blessings and privileges, and a neglecting of duties and obligations, a magnifying of the gifts of divine grace, but a minimizing of the requirements of God’s holiness. Third, the inculcation and encouragement of a spirit of fatalism, through failing to preserve the balance of truth between God’s sovereignty and man’s responsibility, between human ability and accountability, with the result that a race of do-nothings was produced—waiting for God to give them more grace, instead of using what He had already bestowed. Fourth, being too readily discouraged by the difficulties in the tasks assigned by God, walking too much by sight rather than faith, their zeal abating because they could perceive so little fruit produced. It is not without good reason that the Holy Spirit repeated in 11 Thessalonians 3:13 the exhortation of Galatians 6:9, “Be not weary in well doing”!

“And there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes, which had not yet received their inheritance” (Jos 18:2). Why was this? Because some divine decree had

blocked the way? Because “God’s time” for them to do so had not yet arrived? No indeed, from a very different cause. It was due to their own indifference. The immediate sequel makes it very evident that there was no unwillingness on God’s part. The indisposition was in them. Thus, this statement is more than an explanatory reference, namely, a word of reproach. In view of what is recorded in Jos 15:63 and 16:9-10, we see how infectious is the spirit of sloth. The evil which affected Judah and Ephraim had spread to the remaining tribes. “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (Gal 5:9), more especially so where the leaders are involved. When the principal tribes of men be dilatory, those of lower rank will quickly emulate them. These tribes were heedless of their privileges, too unconcerned to avail themselves of their advantages.

“And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, How long are ye slack to go to possess the land, which the LORD God of your fathers hath given you?” (Jos 18:3). Thus did their leader reprove them for not bestirring themselves and securing their portions of Canaan. Such a reproof supplies confirmation of our remarks on the previous verse. It was due entirely to their own laziness, and not to anything in God, that they were not yet in happy possession of their possessions. True, the language of Joshua did not signify that those tribes could have occupied their portions before the same had been assigned them by the lot, but rather that they were to blame for not applying to the high court of Israel for the same. They had witnessed the allotments of the other two and a half tribes, yet had been too unconcerned to ask for theirs. This laxity was not confined to a single tribe, but had, like a dry rot, spread through the body politic. Not only is such an evil very contagious, but, when it has gripped a person or people, it cannot be easily and quickly thrown off, as Joshua’s “How long?” shows.

How like the vast majority of modern church members were those Israelites! They had crossed the Jordan and set foot in Canaan, but they had become slack and failed to make their own the fair prospects before them. In like manner, countless thousands make a profession, join the Church, and, imagining that their sins have been forgiven and their souls delivered from the wrath to come, are satisfied with their case and complacently rest on their oars. They make no conscience of mortifying their lusts, no serious efforts to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord, no progress in the Christian life. They are drones, yea, stumbling-blocks to those who seek to be diligent in making their calling and election sure. They are deceived by Satan. Persuaded that they were saved some time in the past, they delude themselves into thinking that, however slack they be in resisting the devil and overcoming the world, they are eternally secure. They shirk the cross, yet imagine the crown is sure. They engage not in the good fight of faith, yet suppose they have laid hold of eternal life. They do not make the pleasing and obeying of God their daily concern, yet think to obtain the reward of the inheritance.

The fatal mistake made by so many is to think that, once assured their names are written in heaven, they may, with complete safety to themselves, lapse into a state of utter carelessness. Whereas, so long as he remains in this world, the Christian is required to “continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel” (Col 1:23), to take heed that there be not in him an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God, and be on his guard against being hardened through the deceitfulness of sin (Heb 3:12-13), to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling (Phi

2:12), and to hearken unto the solemn warning of Christ, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luk 9:62). It is he who "endureth unto the end" that shall be saved (Mat 24:13), and not those who yield to their lusts and tempt Christ (1Co 10:10, 7-9). Christians are called upon to build up themselves on their most holy faith (Jude 1:20), and that is a work which demands labour and industry. "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom 8:13).

"How long are ye slack to go to possess the land?" (Jos 18:3). No longer meeting with any open opposition, they had settled down to rest, though more than half of Israel had not yet obtained their inheritance. Those Israelites were "too well pleased with their present condition, liked well enough to live in a body together, had no mind to be scattered abroad. The spoil of the cities they had taken served them to live plentifully for the present, and they banished the thoughts of time to come. They were slothful: it may be they wished the thing done, but had no spirit to set about it or move toward the doing of it, though it was so much for their own advantage. The countries that remained to be divided lay at a distance, and some parts of them in the hands of the Canaanites. If they go to take possession of them, the cities must be built or repaired, they must drive their flocks and herds a great way, and carry their wives and children to strange places: and this will not be done without great care and pains, and breaking through hardships" (condensed from Matthew Henry, 1662-1714). Again, we say, how we like unto their religious descendants. More than fifty per cent of professing Christians fail to fix their affections on things above and continually set themselves to the appropriation and enjoyment of them.

And Joshua said, "Give out from among you three men for each tribe, and I will send them, and they shall rise, and go through the land, and describe it according to the inheritance of them; and they shall come again to me" (Jos 18:4). Once more, we see that there was a human side, as well as a divine one, to this important transaction. This detail also serves to illustrate, and in a clear definite manner, the important truth that the fact of God's sovereignty (in the "lot") does not set aside the exercise of human responsibility. *They* were required to discharge their moral agency and act intelligently. Alas, how many hyper-Calvinists have sought to excuse their apathy by perverting and sheltering behind the divine decrees! How fearfully deceitful is the human heart in persuading not a few that they are displaying a commendable spirit of humility and meekness in "waiting God's time" before they act, when, instead, they are guilty of shirking their duty. There is a terrible amount of humbuggery under a seemingly pious guise. There is no unwillingness on God's part to give. The unwillingness to seek and take is always on our side. Then, let us be honest, and place the blame where it belongs.

Joshua did not wait for a reply from the people to his reproving question. "How long are ye slack?" but at once set them upon their duty. In the injunction which he gave them, we may perceive again that blessed *balance* which marks all the ways of God and of His servants when directed by Him—in this instance, between the exercise of *their* freedom and the discharge of their responsibility (in "give [or "choose"] out from among you three men for each tribe") and the acting of *his* authority, "and I will send them." The spiritual lesson for us, therein, is that the Christian is not to engage in any self-appointed tasks, but be directed in his service by the authoritative instructions of the antitypical Joshua. Their

leader did not take it upon him to appoint the different individuals who were to serve in this matter, but left the selecting of them to the tribes, but when chosen, *he* gave them their commission. The same principle is to be observed under Christianity, “Look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint [by setting them] over this business” (Act 6:3).

Though Joshua set these men to work, yet it was far from being either a difficult or an unpleasant task which he assigned them. “They shall rise and go through the land, and describe it according to the inheritance of them; and they shall come again to me. And they shall divide it into seven parts: Judah shall abide in their coast on the south, and the house of Joseph shall abide in their coasts on the north. Ye shall therefore describe the land into seven parts, and bring the description hither to me, that I may cast lots for you here before the LORD our God” (Jos 18:4-7). It was virtually an appeal to their cupidity, a stirring of them up to recognize their advantages and privileges. It was a project by which they might behold for themselves what a goodly inheritance God had given them. By thus surveying the same, they would obtain a better knowledge of what awaited them, and then they would be more disposed, to bestir themselves and take possession thereof. If the believer’s faith were more occupied with the “far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2Co 4:18), then he would be less dispirited by his “light affliction, which is but for a moment” (2Co 4:17). They were not to encroach upon the portions of Judah and Joseph, but rather to confine their attention unto what was available to them. Thus, a spirit of covetousness was disallowed.

“And the men went and passed through the land, and described it by cities into seven parts in a book, and came again to Joshua to the host at Shiloh. And Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the LORD and there Joshua divided the land unto the children of Israel according to their divisions” (Jos 18:9-10). Aroused from their stupor, shamed by their leader’s rebuke, they performed his bidding. As he had given them orders (Jos 18:4, 8), they delivered the results of their commission, not to their tribes, but to himself—just as the disciples made their report unto Christ (Luk 10:17), and as each of us must yet render an account unto Him (Rom 14:12). From this incident it seems clear that while the relative positions or general locations of the tribes were determined by the “lot,” yet the proportion of land assigned to each one was decided (in some measure) by other considerations—as Joshua 17:17-18 shows, the lot did not preclude the exercise of individual enterprise and industry to improve the same—as everlasting glory is sure to all the redeemed, yet the degree thereof will be decided by their own zeal and fidelity.

THE DOCTRINE OF HUMAN DEPRAVITY

12. Its Remedy, Part 3

God’s choice of the person who was to be the Restorer of His honour, the Vanquisher of Satan, the Victor of death, and the Deliverer of His fallen people, was one that naught

but omniscience itself had made. Who but One endowed with infinite wisdom had ever thought of selecting His only begotten Son for such a fearful undertaking? For Christ, as God, is one of the eternal Three who was offended by sin, and from whom men had revolted. They were His avowed enemies, and, of Him, they deserved infinite woe. Who, then, had conceived *of Him* as one who should set His heart upon depraved wretches, who should exercise infinite love and pity toward them, should be willing to provide an all-sufficient remedy for all their ills? But when that choice *was made*, insurmountable difficulties seemed to stand in the way of its realization. How was it possible for a divine person to enter the place of ruined sinners, to come under the law and render perfect obedience to it, and so work out a perfect righteousness for those who had none? And how could it be possible for the Holy One to be made a curse, for the Lord of glory to suffer the penalty of the broken law, for the Beloved of the Father to experience the fires of divine wrath, for the Lord of life to die? Such problems as those had for ever baffled all created intelligences. But divine wisdom found a solution.

First, the manifold wisdom of God ordained that His dear Son should be constituted the last Adam, that as He made a covenant of works with the first man who was of the earth, so He would make a covenant of grace with “the second Man,” who is the Lord from heaven. That as the first Adam stood as the covenant head and federal representative of all his posterity, so the last Adam should stand as the covenant Head and Representative of all His seed. But as the first Adam broke the covenant of works and brought ruin upon all those he acted for, so the last Adam should fulfil the terms of the covenant of grace, and thereby secure the everlasting felicity of all on whose behalf He transacted. Accordingly, a covenant was entered into between the Father and the Son, the Former promising a glorious reward upon the Latter’s meeting all the conditions thereof. That wondrous transaction is referred to in Psalm 89:3-5, “I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto [the antitypical] David [which means “the Beloved”] my servant, thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah. And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O LORD: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints.” That passage, like Proverbs 8, takes us back to the eternal counsels of God, for Psalms 89:19 declares, “Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty”—fully able to accomplish My vast and gracious designs.

That covenant of grace was a mutual compact which was voluntarily entered into between the Father and the Son, the One promising a rich reward in return for the fulfilment of the terms agreed upon. The Other solemnly pledging Himself to carry out its stipulations. Many are the Scriptures which speak of Christ in connection with the covenant. In Isaiah 42:6, we hear the Father saying to Him, “I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will... give thee for a covenant of the people.” In Malachi 3:1, Christ is designated “the messenger of the covenant” because He came here to make known its contents and proclaim its glad tidings. In Hebrews 7:22, He is designated “a surety of a better covenant,” in Heb 9:15, “the mediator of the new testament,” while in Heb 13:20, we read of “the blood of the everlasting covenant.” In that covenant, the Son agreed to be the Head of God’s elect, and do all that was required unto the divine glory and the securing of their eternal blessedness. To that, reference is made in “His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (2Ti 1:9)—a federal relation, then, sub-

sisted between Christ and the Church, though the same was not made fully manifest until He became incarnate. It was then that the Son was appointed unto the mediatorial office, when He was “set up” or “anointed,” when He was “brought forth” from the everlasting decree (Pro 8:23-24), and given a covenant subsistence before the triune God.

It was proposed and freely agreed upon that the Beloved of the Father should take upon Him the form of a servant and be made in the likeness of sin’s flesh. Accordingly, when the fullness of time was come, He was “made of a woman,” taking a human spirit and soul and body into perpetual union with Himself. As the body of Adam was supernaturally made out of the virgin earth by God’s immediate hand, so the body of Christ was supernaturally made out of the Virgin’s substance by the immediate operation of the Holy Spirit. So, too, the union of soul and body in Adam shadowed forth the hypostatic union of our nature with the Son of God, so that He is not two persons in one, but one Person with two natures, those natures not being confounded, but each preserving its distinctive properties. Well did John Owen (1616-1683) remark, “His conception in the womb of the Virgin, as unto the integrity of human nature, was a miraculous operation of the divine power. But the prevention of that nature from any subsistence of its own, by its assumption unto personal union with the Son of God, in the first instance of its conception, is that which is above all miracles, nor can be designated by that name. A *mystery* it is, so far above the order of all creating or providential operations, that it wholly transcends the sphere of them that are most miraculous. Herein did God glorify all the properties of the divine nature, acting in a way of infinite wisdom, grace and condescension.”

He, who was the Lord of all, and owed no service or obedience to any, being in the form of God and equal unto Him (Phi 2:6), descended into a condition of absolute subjection. As Adam deliberately forsook the place of complete submission unto God, which was proper to his nature and suited unto God, aspiring after lordship, so the Son of God left that state of absolute dominion which was His by right, and took upon Him the yoke of servitude. The Son’s descent involved far greater humiliation unto Himself than did the glory of that ascent unto which the first man aspired in his pride. As others have shown, this self-abasement of the Lord of glory unto an estate of entire subjection is referred to by the apostle in Hebrews 10:5, where Christ is heard saying “body hast thou prepared me.” Those words are an explanatory paraphrase of “mine ears hast thou opened”—margin “digged”—in Psalm 40:6—which, in turn, looks back to Exodus 21:6, where a statute was appointed to the effect that one who voluntarily gave himself up to absolute and perpetual service signified the same by having his ear bored with an awl. Thus, Hebrews 10:5, in the light of Psalm 40:6 and Exodus 21:6, imports that Christ’s body was prepared for Him with the express design of His absolute service unto God therein.

By His assumption of human nature, not only was Christ fitted to render subjection unto God, but He became qualified to serve as *Mediator* between God and men (1Ti 2:5). For it is required that a mediator be related unto *both* of the parties he would reconcile, and be the equal of each of them—*thus*, an angel would not be qualified for this office, since he possesses neither the divine nor the human nature. It was necessary for Christ to be real *man*, as well as God, in order to perform the work of redemption. The former so that He should be susceptible of suffering, qualified to offer Himself as a sacrifice, be capable of dying. So, too, the assumption of human nature fitted Christ to be *the substitute* of His

people, to act not only on their behalf, but in their room and stead—actually to take their law-place and render full satisfaction thereto by obeying its precepts and enduring its penalty. But that, in turn, required that He be their Surety and Sponsor. That is, be so related to them legally and federally that He could fittingly serve as their Substitute. As there was a federal and representative oneness between the first Adam and those he stood for, so there must be a like oneness between the last Adam and those for whom He transacted. That as the guilt of the former was charged to the account of his posterity, so the righteousness of the Latter might be imputed unto all His seed.

Yet the truth concerning the position which the Son of God took is not fully expressed by the above statements. It is not sufficient to say that He became their Surety and Substitute, but we must go farther back and ask, “What was it that rendered it meet that He *should serve* as the Sponsor of His people before their offended Lawgiver and Judge?” And the answer is, “*Their covenant union.*” Christ served as their Surety and Substitute because He was one with them, and, therefore, could He, and did He, assume and discharge all their liabilities. In the covenant of grace, Christ had said to the Father, “I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me” (Heb 2:12-13). Most blessedly is that explained in what immediately follows, “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same,” and, therefore, is He not ashamed to call them brethren. *Federation* is the root of this amazing mercy, *identification* the key which unlocks it. Christ came not to strangers, but to His “brethren.” He assumed human nature, not in order to procure a people for Himself, but to secure a people already His (Eph 1:4; Mat 1:21).

Since a union has existed between Christ and His people from all eternity, it inevitably followed that when He came to this earth He took upon Himself their debts, and now He has gone to heaven, they must be clothed (Isa 61:10) with all the rewardableness of His perfect obedience. This is very much more than a technicality of theology, being the strongest buttress of all in the walls of truth which protect the Atonement, though it is one of the most frequently and fiercely assailed by its enemies. Men have argued that the punishment of the Innocent *as though* He were guilty was an outrage upon justice. In the human realm, to punish a person for something when he is neither responsible nor guilty is, beyond question, unjust. But that objection is invalid and entirely pointless in connection with the Lord Jesus, for He voluntarily entered the place and lot of His people in such an intimate way that it could be said, “For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one” (Heb 2:11). They are not only one in nature, but are also so united in the sight of God and before His law as to involve an identification of legal relations and reciprocal obligations and rights. “By the obedience of one shall many be made [legally constituted] righteous” (Rom 5:19).

It was required from the Surety of God’s people that He should not only render a full and perfect obedience to the precepts of the Law, and thereby provide the meritorious means of their justification, but that He should also make full satisfaction for their sins by having visited upon Him the curse of the Law. But, before that penalty could be inflicted, the guilt of the transgressors must be transferred unto Him. That is to say, their sins must be judicially imputed to Him. To that arrangement, the Holy One willingly consented, so

that He who “knew no sin” was legally “made sin” for them (2Co 5:21). God laid upon Him the iniquities of them all, and then the sword of divine justice smote Him (Zec 13:7), exacting full satisfaction. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission. The blotting out of transgressions, procuring for us the favour of God, the purchase of the heavenly inheritance, required the death of Christ. That which demanded the death sentence was the guilt of our sins. Let *that* be removed, and condemnation for us is gone for ever. But how could guilt be “removed”? Only by its being transferred to another. The punishment due to the Church was borne by her Surety and Substitute. God charged upon Him all the sins of His elect and proceeded against Him accordingly, visiting upon Him His judicial wrath.

How marvelous are the ways of God! As death was destroyed by death—the death of God’s Son—so sin by sin, the greatest that was ever committed—the crucifixion of Christ—putting it away as far as the east is from the west. Because God imputed the trespasses of His people unto their Surety, He was condemned that they might be acquitted. Christ took upon Him their accumulated and incalculable debt, and, by His discharging the same, they are for ever free and solvent. By His precious blood, all their iniquities were expiated, so that the triumphant challenge rings out, “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect?” (Rom 8:33). Throughout His life and by His death, Christ was repaying and repairing all that injury which the sins of the Church had done unto the manifestative glory of God. God now remits the sins of all who truly believe in Christ, because deity has received a vicarious but full satisfaction for them in the person of their Substitute. Through Christ, they are delivered from the wrath to come. Necessarily so, for God’s acceptance of the Lamb’s sacrifice obtained the eternal redemption of all for whom it was offered. Just as a dark cloud empties itself upon earth and then melts away under the rays of the sun, so when the storm of divine judgment had exhausted itself upon the cross, our sins disappeared from before God’s face, and we are received into His everlasting favour.

Wondrous as was the work that the incarnate Son performed *for* His people, yet something more was still needed in order to provide a *complete* remedy for their complicated ruin, for *that* covered only the *legal* aspects of their woe. A miracle of grace required to be wrought *in them* in order to make them experientially meet for everlasting glory. Yea, such is absolutely indispensable to fit them to commune with God in this life. His elect need to be quickened into newness of life, their enmity against God destroyed, their darkness dispelled, their wills freed, their love of sin and hatred of holiness rectified. In a word, they must experience a thorough change of heart, a principle of grace be communicated to them, and them made new creatures in Christ. That miracle of grace is performed by the Holy Spirit in those who are “by nature the children of wrath, even as others” (Eph 2:3). But how little is this realized today. Insistence thereon has well-nigh disappeared from the modern pulpit, even in those who pride themselves upon being orthodox. The work of the Spirit *in the saving of sinners* has no place in the creed of the average church-goer, and where it be nominally acknowledged, it possesses no real weight and exerts no practical influence.

In the majority of places where the Lord Jesus is still formally owned as the only Saviour, the current teaching is that He has made it *possible* for men to be saved, but that they themselves must decide whether or not they *shall* be saved. And thus, the greatest of all God’s works is left contingent on the fickle will of men as to whether it be a success or a

failure. Narrowing the circle to those places where it is still held that the Spirit has a mission and ministry in connection with the Gospel, the general idea prevailing is that, when the Word is faithfully preached, the Spirit convicts men of sin and reveals to them their need of a Saviour. But beyond that very few are prepared to go. The popular view is that the sinner has to *co-operate* with the Spirit. That he must yield himself to His “striving,” or he will not and cannot be saved. But such a pernicious and God-insulting concept repudiates two cardinal facts. To affirm that the natural man is capable of co-operating with the Spirit is to deny that he is “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph 2:1), for a dead man is powerless to do any good. While to say that the specific operations of the Spirit in a man’s heart and conscience are capable of being so resisted as to thwart His endeavours is to deny His omnipotence.

The solemn and unpalatable fact is, my reader, that were the Spirit of God to suspend His operations, not a single person on earth would savingly benefit from the redemptive work of Christ. The natural man is such an enemy to God and so obstinate in his rebellion that he dislikes a holy Christ, and remains opposed to *His* way of salvation until his heart be divinely renewed. That criminal darkness and delusion, which fills every soul wherein sin reigns, cannot be removed by any agent but God the Spirit—by His giving a new heart and enlightening the understanding to perceive the exceeding sinfulness of sin. There are indeed thousands of people ready to respond to the fatal error that sinners may be saved *without* throwing down the weapons of their warfare against God—who receive Christ as their Saviour, but who are unwilling to surrender to Him as their Lord. They would like His rest, but they refuse His “yoke,” without which His rest cannot be had. His promises appeal to them, but for His precepts they have no heart. They will believe in an imaginary Christ who is suited to their corrupt nature, but they despise and reject the Christ of God. Like the multitudes of old, they are pleased with His loaves and fishes, but for His heart-searching, flesh-withering, sin-condemning teaching, they have no appetite. Naught but the miracle-working power of the Spirit can change them.

“Man is utterly and entirely averse to everything that is good and right. ‘The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be’ (Rom 8:7). Turn you all Scripture through, and you will find continually the will of man described as being contrary to the things of God. What said Christ in that text so often quoted by the Arminian to disprove the very doctrine which it clearly states? What did Christ say to those who imagined that men would come *without* divine influence? He said, first, ‘No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him’ (Joh 6:44); but He said something more strong—‘Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life’ (Joh 5:40). Herein lies the deadly mischief: not only that he is powerless to do good, but that he is powerful enough to do that which is wrong, and that his will is desperately set against everything that is right. Men will *not come*; you cannot force them to by all your thunders, nor entice them by all your invitations. Until the Spirit draw them, come they neither will, nor can” (Charles Spurgeon, 1834-1892).

The manifold wisdom of God is just as evident in the official task assigned the Holy Spirit as in the work that the Son was commissioned to perform. The miracles of regeneration and sanctification are as wonderful as the obedience and sufferings, the death and resurrection of Christ were. And the saint is as truly and as deeply indebted to the One as he is

to the Other. If it was an act of amazing condescension for God the Son to leave heaven's glory and assume unto Himself human nature, equally so was it for God the Spirit to descend to this earth and take up His abode in fallen men and women. And if God signaled the marvel and importance of the one by mighty wonders and signs, so did He in connection with the latter—the song of the angelic choir (Luk 2:13) having its counterpart in the “sound from heaven” (Act 2:2), the Shekinah “glory” (Luk 2:9) in the “tongues like as of fire.” If we admire the gracious and mighty works of Christ in cleansing the leper, strengthening the palsied, giving sight to the blind, and imparting life to the dead, no less is the Spirit to be adored for His supernatural operations in quickening lifeless souls, in illuminating their minds, delivering them from the dominion of sin, removing their enmity against God, uniting them to Christ, and creating in them a love of holiness.

From all that has been before us, it will be seen how complete and perfect is the remedy which the grace and wisdom of God have provided for His people. As they were federally in Adam, and, therefore, held responsible for what he did, so they are federally in Christ, and, therefore, enjoy all the benefits of His meritorious work. As they were ruined by the breaking of one covenant, so they are restored by the keeping of another. As they were rendered guilty by Adam's disobedience being charged to their account, so they are justified before the throne of God because the righteousness of their Surety is imputed to them. As they fell under the curse of the law, were alienated from God, and became children of wrath, through Christ's redemption, they are entitled to the reward of the law, reconciled to God, and restored to His favour. As they inherit a corrupt nature from their first head, so they receive a holy nature from their second Head. In every respect, the remedy answers to the malady.

THE APPLICATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

Part 3

Before turning to the positive side of our present subject, it was necessary for us to expose and denounce that teaching which insists that much in the Bible has no immediate application unto us today. Such teaching is a reckless and irreverent handling of the Word, which has produced the most evil consequences in the hearts and lives of many—not the least of which is the promotion of a pharisaical spirit of self-superiority. Consciously or unconsciously, dispensationalists are, in reality, repeating the sin of Jehoiakim, who mutilated God's Word with his penknife (Jer 36:23). Instead of “opening the Scriptures” (Luk 24:32), they are bent in closing the major part of them from God's people today. They are just as much engaged in doing the devil's work as are the Higher Critics, who, with their dissecting knives, are *wrongly* “dividing the word of truth” (2Ti 2:15). They are seeking to force a stone down the throats of those who are asking for bread. These are indeed severe and solemn indictments, but not more so than the case calls for. We are well aware that

they will be unacceptable unto some of our own readers; but medicine, though sometimes necessary, is rarely palatable.

Instead of being engaged in the unholy work of pitting one part of the Scriptures against another, these men would be far better employed in showing the perfect *unity* of the Bible, and the blessed harmony which there is between all of its teachings. But instead of demonstrating the concord of the two Testaments, they are more concerned in their efforts to show the discord which they say there is between that which pertained unto “the Dispensation of Law” and that which obtains under “the Dispensation of Grace,” and, in order to accomplish their evil design, all sound principles of exegesis are cast to the wind. As a sample of what we have reference to, they cite “Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot” (Exo 21:24) and then quote against it, “But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also” (Mat 5:39), and then it is exultantly asserted that those two passages can only be “reconciled” by allocating them to different peoples in different ages. And with such superficial handling of Holy Writ, thousands of gullible souls are deceived, and thousands more allow themselves to be bewildered.

If those who possess a “Scofield Bible” turn to Exodus 21:24, they will see that in the margin opposite to it, the editor refers his readers to Leviticus 24:20; Deuteronomy 19:21, and cf. Matthew 5:38-44; 1 Peter 2:19-21; upon which this brief comment is made: “The provision in Exodus is *law* and righteous: the New Testament passages, *grace* and merciful.” How far Mr. Scofield was consistent with himself may be seen by a reference to what he states on page 989, at the beginning of the New Testament under the Four Gospels, where he expressly affirms, “The sermon on the mount is law, *not grace*” [italics ours]. Verily, “The legs of the lame are not equal” (Pro 26:7). In his marginal note to Exodus 21:24, Mr. Scofield cites Matthew 5:38-44, as “grace,” whereas in his Introduction to the Four Gospels, he declares that Matthew 5-7 “is law, and not grace.” Which of those assertions did he wish his readers to believe?

Still the question may be asked, “How are *you* going to reconcile Exodus 21:24 with Matthew 5:38-44?” Our answer is, there is nothing between them to “reconcile,” for there is nothing in them which clashes. The former passage is one of the statutes appointed for *public magistrates* to enforce, whereas the latter one lays down rules for *private individuals* to live by! Why do not these self-styled “rightly dividers” properly allocate the Scriptures, distinguishing between the different classes to which they are addressed? That Exodus 21:24 *does* contain statutes for public magistrates to enforce is clearly established by comparing Scripture with Scripture. In Deuteronomy 19:21, the same injunction is again recorded, and if the reader turns back to verse 18, he will there read, “And the judges shall make diligent inquisition,” etc. It would be real mercy unto the community if our judges today would set aside their sickly sentimentality and deal with conscienceless and brutal criminals in a manner which befits their deeds of violence—instead of making a mockery of justice.

Ere leaving what has been before us in the last three paragraphs, let it be pointed out that when our blessed Lord added to Matthew 5:38, “But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you” (verse 44), He was not ad-

vancing a more benign precept than had ever been enunciated previously. No, the same gracious principle of conduct had been enforced in the Old Testament. In Exodus 23:4-5, JEHOVAH gave commandment through Moses, "If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him." Again in Proverbs 25:21, we read, "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink."

The same God who bids us, "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath" (Rom 12:17-19), also commanded His people in the *Old Testament*, "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD" (Lev 19:18). And therefore was David grateful to Abigail for dissuading him from taking vengeance on Nabal, "Blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand" (1Sa 25:33). So far was the Old Testament from allowing any spirit of bitterness, malice or revenge that it expressly declared, "Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee" (Pro 20:22). And again, "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth" (Pro 24:17). And again, "Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work" (Pro 24:29).

One more sample of the excuseless ignorance betrayed by these dispensationalists—we quote from E. W. Bullinger's *How to Enjoy the Bible*. On pages 108 and 110, he said under "Law and Grace," "For those who lived under the Law it could rightly and truly be said, 'It shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as He hath commanded us' (Deu 6:25). But to those who live in this present Dispensation of Grace it is as truly declared, 'By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight' (Rom 3:20). But this is the very opposite of Deuteronomy 6:25. What, then, are we to say, or to do? Which of these two statements is true and which is false? The answer is that neither is false. But both are true if we would rightly divide the Word of truth as to its dispensational truth and teaching...Two words distinguish the two dispensations: 'Do' distinguishes the former; 'Done' the latter. Then salvation depended upon what man was *to do*, now, it depends upon what Christ has done." It is by such statements as these that "unstable souls" are beguiled.

Is it not amazing that one so renowned for his erudition and knowledge of the Scriptures should make such manifestly absurd statements as the above? In pitting Deuteronomy 6:25 against Romans 3:20, he might as well have argued that fire is "the very opposite" of water. They are indeed contrary elements, yet each has its own use in its proper place—the one to cook by, the other for refreshment. Think of one who set up himself as a teacher of preachers affirming that under the Mosaic economy "salvation depended on what man was to do." Why, in that case, for fifteen hundred years not a single Israelite had been saved. Had salvation then been obtainable by human efforts, there had been no need for God to send His Son here! Salvation has never been procurable by human merits, on the ground of human performances. Abel obtained witness that he was righteous, because he offered to

God a slain lamb (Gen 4:4; Heb 11:4). Abraham was justified by faith, and not by works (Rom 4). Under the Mosaic economy, it was expressly announced that "It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Lev 17:11). David realized, "If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O LORD, who shall stand?" (Psa 130:3). And therefore did he confess, "I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only" (Psa 71:16).

By all means, let the Word of truth be "rightly divided." Not be parceling it off to different "dispensations," but by distinguishing between what is doctrinal and what is practical, between that which pertains to the unsaved and that which is predicated of the saved. Deuteronomy 6:25 is addressed not to alien sinners, but to those who are in covenant relationship with the Lord. Whereas Romans 3:20 is a statement which applies to every member of the human race. The one has to do with *practical* "righteousness" in the daily walk, which is acceptable to God. The other is a doctrinal declaration which asserts the impossibility of acceptance with God on the ground of creature doings. The former relates to our conduct in this life in connection with the divine government. The latter concerns our eternal standing before the divine throne. Both passages are equally applicable to Jews and Gentiles in all ages. "Our righteousness" in Deuteronomy 6:25 is a practical righteousness in the sight of God. It is the same aspect of righteousness as in "except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees" of Matthew 5:20, the "righteous man" of James 5:16, and the "doeth righteousness" of 1 John 2:29.

The Old Testament saints were the subjects of the same everlasting covenant, had the same blessed Gospel, were begotten unto the same celestial heritage as the New Testament saints. From Abel onwards, God has dealt with sinners in sovereign grace, and according to the merits of Christ's redemptive work—which was retroactive in its value and efficacy (Rom 3:25; 1Pe 1:19-20). "Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD" (Gen 6:8). That they were partakers of the same covenant blessings as we are is clear from a comparison of 11 Samuel 23:5 and Hebrews 13:20. The same Gospel was preached unto Abraham (Gal 3:8), yea, unto the nation of Israel after they had received the Law (Heb 4:2), and, therefore, Abraham rejoiced to see Christ's day and was glad (Joh 8:56). Dying Jacob declared, "I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD" (Gen 49:18). As Hebrews 11:16 states, the patriarchs desired "a better country [than the land of Canaan, in which they dwelt], that is, an heavenly." Moses "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter...esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt" (Heb 11:24-26). Job exclaimed, "I know that my redeemer liveth...in my flesh shall I see God" (Job 19:25-26)

When JEHOVAH proclaimed His name unto Moses, He revealed Himself as "the LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious" (Exo 34:5-7). When Aaron pronounced the benediction on the congregation, he was bidden to say, "The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: the LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the LORD lift up the light of his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace" (Num 6:24-26). No greater and grander blessings can be invoked today. Such a passage as that cannot possibly be harmonized with the constricted concept which is entertained and is being propagated by the dispensationalists of the Mosaic economy. God dealt *in grace* with Israel all through their long and chequered history. Read through the book of Judges and observe how often He raised up deliverers for them. Pass on to Kings and Chronicles and note His longsuffering benignity in sending them prophet after prophet. Where in the New Testament is there

a word which, for pure grace, exceeds “though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow” (Isa 1:18)? In the days of Hezekiah, “the LORD was gracious unto them” (2Ki 13:23). They were invited to say unto the Lord, “Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously” (Hos 14:2). Malachi bade Israel “beseech God that he will be gracious unto us” (Mal 1:9).

The conception which the pious remnant of Israel had of the divine character during the Mosaic economy was radically different from the stern and forbidding presentation made thereof by dispensationalists. Hear the Psalmist as he declared, “Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful” (Psa 116:5). Hear him again, as he bursts forth into adoring praise, “Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases...He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities” (Psa 103:2-3, 10). Can Christians say more than that? No wonder David exclaimed, “Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever” (Psa 73:25-26). If the question be asked, “What, then, is *the great distinction* between the Mosaic and Christian eras?” The answer is, God’s grace was then confined to *one* nation, but now it flows out to *all* nations.

What is true in the general holds good in the particular. Not only were God’s dealings with His people during Old Testament times substantially the same as those with His people now, but *in detail*, too. There is no discord, but perfect accord and concord between them. Note carefully the following parallelisms. “His inheritance in the saints” (Eph 1:18)—“The LORD’s portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance” (Deu 32:9). “Beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation” (2Th 2:13)—“I have loved thee with an everlasting love” (Jer 31:3). “In whom we have redemption” (Eph 1:7)—“With him is plenteous redemption” (Psa 130:7). “That we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2Co 5:21)—“In the LORD have I righteousness and strength” (Isa 45:24). “Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings...in Christ” (Eph 1:3)—“Men shall be blessed in him” (Psa 72:17). “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1Jo 1:7)—“Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee” (Song 4:7).

“Strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man” (Eph 3:16)—“In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul” (Psa 138:3). “The Spirit of truth...will guide you into all truth” (Joh 16:13)—“Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to instruct them” (Neh 9:20). “I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing” (Rom 7:18)—“All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” (Isa 64:6). “I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims” (1Pe 2:11)—“Ye are strangers and sojourners” (Lev 25:23). “We walk by faith” (2Co 5:7)—“The just shall live by his faith” (Hab 2:4). “Strong in the Lord” (Eph 6:10)—“I will strengthen them in the LORD” (Zec 10:12). “Neither shall any pluck them out of my hand” (Joh 10:28)—“All his saints are in thy hand” (Deu 33:3). “He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit” (Joh 15:5)—“From me is thy fruit found” (Hos 14:8). “He which hath begun a good work in you will finish it” (Phi 1:6, margin)—“The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me” (Psa 138:8). Innumerable other such harmonies might be added.

WELCOME TIDINGS

Since there be so much without to distress and so much within to depress them, we deem it a duty as well as a privilege to share with Christian friends some of the encouraging words we so often receive from our readers. That our gracious Master is pleased to bless this little messenger to one and another of His children "scattered abroad" (Joh 11:52) will be evident from the unsolicited testimonies that follow. Abundant cause has the editor to say, "O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together" (Psa 34:3). As Matthew Henry well remarked, "We should be as desirous of the assistance of our friends in returning thanks for mercies, as in praying for them."

"The Lord has greatly blessed me as I have studied the various articles" (Northern Rhodesia). "The Studies provide rich pastures for the believer, and help greatly to hold fast in these momentous days" (Australia). "I am enjoying the articles on 1 John especially, and getting much help and blessing" (New Zealand preacher). "There is no doubt readers of the Studies are very thankful to God for giving you both enabling grace and strength to continue with them" (Australia). "I am most grateful to you for the Studies, which I enjoy more than I did at home" (India). "My husband spends a lot of time reading the Studies, and has derived much benefit from them" (Canada). "Your ministry is more deeply appreciated as time goes on. Some of my greatest times of inspiration and refreshment are associated with your written ministry" (One in the Forces).

"I have been refreshed and guided by them many a time throughout the past year" (Local). "We always appreciate them for their freshness and their closeness to God's revealed will" (Stirling). "I would thankfully testify to the help received again and again in turning over pages of past volumes. I feel that our heavenly Father has provided us with rich food through the Studies" (Nurse). "I have enjoyed reading and proved them to be of much spiritual value" (Local). "I would find it hard to say which of your articles is the most helpful. I have enjoyed every paragraph on every page. Each article is so informative, so practical, so searching; each one so exalts the Most High, and abases self, that I am put in my proper place" (Annan). "I receive profit from your articles on 'The Interpretation of the Scriptures': they have given me more confidence in telling them out" (Scottish preacher).

"What appeals to me in the Studies is their perpetual freshness. Incidentally, I know of one or two places where they are read when no minister is present" (Manchester). "I realize that they involve you in unceasing labour—labour, of course, that is a delight. I have found that as I have kept the issues since 1935, I now have a valuable source of help and instruction on many passages. I turn back to them again and again with profit. May our Lord continue to enable you both for His glory" (English preacher). "I am always delighted when the new Studies arrive, for I know that a feast of fat things, full of marrow, awaits me" (Shrewsbury). "Just to say 'Thank you' to you and Mrs. Pink cannot really convey what I feel. They are a great source of help, inspiration, encouragement and deep enjoyment. I read them again and again" (Medical practitioner). "There is much material which I have found helpful in the Studies" (Ministerial student). "Your Studies are so spiritually instruc-

tive and helpful. I know the hours of search and study they must take to produce them” (London).

“The articles upon human depravity are sad reading, and sometimes fill me with despondency and gloom; but I am sure we need to be reminded of our innate wickedness. Thank you very much” (Bournemouth). “I always look forward to getting the Studies, as all the pieces are most helpful” (Belfast). “I appreciate your magazine very much. It is a real blessing to me. We sometimes sing ‘Make me a channel of blessing,’ and He has made *you* such to your readers” (Lurgan). “Thank you heartily for the Studies, with their heart-searching, soul-edifying and God-exalting messages. The Lord is worthy of our thanksgiving for His care and protection over yourself and Mrs. Pink in your labour of love. May He keep and guide you to His glory” (Wales). “For another year I have feasted on the good things in the Studies, and do thank the Lord for them” (S. Dakota). “Your writings are opening the blind eyes all over this country, and causing a great stir among the church people” (Kentucky). “God bless you for the immeasurable good your books have brought to our despairing souls” (Arkansas). “Your Studies have been my meat and drink. Your articles never grow old” (Georgia). “I read three other periodicals, but yours is the only one that draws me down to my knees in thankfulness that He is God, and in supplications to Him to cover my nakedness” (Texas). “Praise to the glory of God for the blessings He has brought to me, using you as the human agent in your writings” (Alabama). “The great aid you are rendering those of us who would know more concerning the revealed will of God, you will never realize this side of eternity” (Florida). “I wish to tender my heartfelt thanks. I am quickened and inspired; you have the power from God to let the Word speak” (Germany).

Praise ye the Lord! Yours in the honour and joy of ministering to some of “His own.”
A. W. and V. E. Pink.

