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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

THE HOLY SPIRIT

26. The Spirit Drawing (Part 2)

The renewed heart is moved and melted when it contemplates the Holy Saviour having our iniquities imputed to Him and bearing “our sins in his own body on the tree” (1Pe 2:24). But how rarely is it considered, that it is little less wonderful for the *Holy Spirit* to exercise Himself with *our sins* and hold them up to the eyes of our understanding. Yet this is precisely what He does. He rakes in our foul hearts and makes us conscious of what a stench they are in the nostrils of an infinitely pure God. He brings to light and to sight the hidden and hideous things of darkness and convicts us of our vile and lost condition. He opens to our view the “horrible pit” in which by nature we lie, and makes us to realize that we are fit for nothing but the everlasting burnings. O how truly marvelous that the Third Person of the Godhead should condescend to stoop to *such* a work as that!

“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me *draw* him” (Joh 6:44). No sinner ever knocks (Mat 7:7) at His door for mercy, by earnest and importunate prayer, until Christ has first knocked (Rev 3:20) at his door by the operations of the Holy Spirit. As the Christian now loves God “because *he first* loved” him (1Jo 4:19), so he sought Christ, because Christ first sought him (Luk 19:10). Before Christ seeks us, we are well-content to lie fast asleep in the devil’s arms, and therefore does the Lord say, “I am found of them that *sought me not*” (Isa 65:1). When the Spirit first applies the word of conviction, He finds the souls of all men as the angel found the world in Zechariah 1:11, “All the earth sitteth still, and is at rest.” What a strange silence and midnight stillness there is among the unsaved! “There is *none* that seeketh after God” (Rom 3:11).

It is because of failure to perceive the dreadful condition in which the natural man lies that any difficulty is experienced in seeing the imperative need for the Spirit’s *drawing*

power if he is to be brought out of it. The natural man is so completely enslaved by sin and enchained by Satan that he is unable to take the first step toward Christ. He is so bent on having his own way and so averse to pleasing God, he is so in love with the things of this world and so out of love with holiness, that nothing short of Omnipotence can produce a radical *change of heart* in him so that he will come to hate the things he naturally loved, and love what he previously hated. The Spirit's "drawing" is the freeing of the mind, the affections, and the will, from the reigning power of depravity. It is His emancipating of the soul from the dominion of sin and Satan.

Prior to that deliverance, when the requirements of God are pressed upon the sinner, he, in every case, *rejects* them. It is not that he is averse from being saved from hell—for none *desire* to go there—but that he is unwilling to "*forsake*" (Pro 28:13; Isa 55:7) his idols—the things which hold the first place in his affections and interests. This is clearly brought out in our Lord's parable of "The Great Supper." When the call went forth, "Come for all things are now ready," we are told, "They *all* with one consent began to make excuse" (Luk 14:18). The meaning of that term "excuse" is explained in what immediately follows. They preferred other things. They were unwilling to *deny* themselves. They would not relinquish the competitive objects—the things of time and sense ("a piece of ground," "oxen," "a wife") were their all-absorbing concerns.

Had nothing more been done by "the servant"—in this parable, the Holy Spirit—all had *continued* to "make excuse" unto the end—that is, all had gone on cherishing their idols, and turning a deaf ear to the holy claims of God. But the Servant was commissioned to "bring in hither" (Luk 14:21), yea, to "*compel* them to come in" (Luk 14:23). It is a holy compulsion and not physical force which is there in view—the melting of the hard heart, the wooing and winning of the soul to Christ, the bestowing of faith, the imparting of a new nature, so that the hitherto despised One is now desired and sought after, "I *drew* them with cords of a man, [using means and motives suited to a rational nature] with *bands of love*" (Hos 11:4). And again, God says of His people, "with *lovingkindness have I drawn thee*" (Jer 31:3).

Even after the elect have been quickened by the Spirit, a further and distinct work of His is needed to *draw* their hearts to actually close with Christ. The work of *faith* is equally His operation, and therefore is it said, "We having [*received* not "*exercised!*"] the *same* Spirit of faith" (2Co 4:13), i.e., "the same" as Abraham, David, and the other Old Testament saints received, as the remainder of the verse indicates. Hence, observe the careful linking together in Acts 6:5, where of Stephen we read that, he was "a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost"—full of "faith," *because* filled with the Spirit. So of Barnabas we are told, "He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith" (Act 11:24). Seek to realize more definitely, Christian reader, that spiritual faith is the gift of the Spirit, and that *He* is to be thanked and praised for it. Equally true is it that we are now entirely dependent upon Him to call it into exercise and act.

The Divine Drawer is unto God's people "the spirit of grace and of supplications" (Zec 12:10)—of *grace*, in making to their smitten consciences and exercised hearts a wondrous discovery of the rich grace of God unto penitent rebels—of *supplications*, in moving them to act as a man fleeing for his life, to seek after divine mercy. Then it is He leads the

trembling soul to Calvary, “before whose eyes Jesus Christ” is now “evidently [plainly] set forth, crucified” (Gal 3:1), beholding the Saviour (by faith) bleeding for and making atonement for his sins—more vividly and heart-affectingly than all the angels in heaven could impart, and hence it follows in Zechariah 12:10, “They shall *look upon* me whom they have pierced.” Then it is that their eyes are opened to see that, hitherto, had been hidden from them, namely the “fountain opened...for sin and for uncleanness” (Zec 13:1), into which they are now moved to plunge for cleansing.

Yes, that precious “Fountain” has to be *opened to us*, or experimentally, we discern it not. Like poor Hagar, ready to perish from thirst, knowing not that relief was near to hand, we—convicted of our fearful sins, groaning under the anguish of our lost condition—were ready to despair. But as God opened Hagar’s eyes *to see* the “well,” or “fountain” (Gen 21:19), so the Spirit of God now opens the understanding of the awakened soul to see Christ, His precious blood, His all-sufficient righteousness. But more—when the soul is brought to see the Fountain or Well, he discovers it is “deep” and that he has “nothing to draw with” (Joh 4:11). And though he looks in it with a longing eye, he cannot reach unto it, so as to wash in it. He finds himself like the “impotent man” of John 5—desirous of “stepping in,” but utterly without strength to do so. Then it is that *the Holy Spirit* applies the atonement, “sprinkling the conscience,” effectually granting a realization of its *cleansing* efficacy. See Acts 15:8-9; 1 Corinthians 6:11—it is Christ’s blood, but the Spirit must apply it.

And when the awakened and convicted soul has been brought to Christ for cleansing and righteousness, *who is it* that brings him to the Father, to be justified by Him? Who is it that bestows freedom of access unto Him from whom the sinner had long been absent in the “far country”? Ephesians 2:18 tells us, “for through him [Christ, the Mediator] we both [regenerated Jews and Gentiles, Old and New Testament saints alike] have access *by one Spirit* unto the Father.” Ah, dear reader, it was naught but the secret and invincible operations of the blessed Spirit which caused you—a wandering prodigal—to seek out Him whom before you dreaded as a “consuming fire.” Yes, it was none other than the Third Person of the Holy Trinity who drew you with the bands of love, and taught you to call God “Father” (Rom 8:15)!

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

86. *Divine Chastisement (12:5)*

The grand truth of divine chastisement is inexpressibly blessed, and one which we can neglect only to our great loss. It is of deep importance, for when Scripturally apprehended it preserves from some serious errors by which Satan has succeeded (as “an angel of light”) in deceiving and destroying not a few. For example, it sounds the death-knell to that widespread delusion of “sinless perfectionism.” The passage which is to be before us unmistakably exposes the wild fanaticism of those who imagine that, as a result of some

“second work of grace,” the carnal nature has been eradicated from their beings, so that, while perhaps not so wise, they are as pure as the angels which never sinned, and lead lives which are blameless in the sight of the thrice holy God. Poor blinded souls—such have not even experienced a *first* “work of divine grace” in their souls, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1Jo 1:8).

“My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth” (Heb 12:5-6). How plain and emphatic is that! God *does* find something to “rebuke” in us, and uses the rod upon *every one* of His children. Chastisement for sin is a family mark, a sign of sonship, a proof of God’s love, a token of His Fatherly kindness and care. It is an inestimable mercy, a choice new-covenant blessing. Woe to the man whom God chastens not, whom He suffers to go recklessly on in the boastful and presumptuous security which so many now mistake for faith. There is a reckoning to come of which he little dreams. Were he a *son*, he would be chastened for his sin. He would be brought to repentance and godly sorrow, he would with grief of heart confess his backslidings, and then be blest with pardon and peace.

The truth of divine chastisement corrects another serious error which has become quite common in certain quarters, namely, that God views His people so completely in Christ that He sees no sin in them. It is true, blessedly true, that of His elect it is stated, “He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel” (Num 23:21), and that Christ declares of His spouse, “Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee” (Song 4:7). The testimony of Scripture is most express that in regard to the justification or acceptance of the *persons* of the elect, they are “complete in him”—Christ (Col 2:10), “accepted in the beloved” (Eph 1:6)—washed in Christ’s blood, clothed with His righteousness. In *that* sense, God sees no sin on them, none to punish. But we must not use that precious truth to set aside another, revealed with equal clearness, and thus fall into serious error.

God *does* see sin in His children and chastises them for it. Even though the non-imputation of sin to the believer (Rom 4:8) and the chastisement of sin in believers (1Co 11:30-32) were irreconcilable to human reason, we are bound to receive *both* on the authority of Holy Writ. Let us beware lest we fall under the solemn charge of Malachi 2:9, “Ye have not kept my ways, but have been *partial* in the law.” What could be plainer than this, “I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven. If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail” (Psa 89:27-33). Five things are clearly revealed there. Christ Himself is addressed under the name of “David.” Second, His children *break* God’s statutes. Third, in *them* there is “iniquity” and “transgression.” Fourth, God *will* “visit” their transgression “with the rod!” Fifth, yet will He not cast them off.

What could express more clearly the fact that God *does* see sin in believers, and that He *does* chastise them for it? For, be it noted, the whole of the above passage speaks of believers. It is the language, not of the law, but of the Gospel. Blessed promises are there made to believers in Christ—the unchanging lovingkindness of God, His covenant-faithfulness toward them, His spiritual blessing of them. But “stripes” and the “rod” are there promised too! Then let us not dare to separate what God has joined together. How do we know anything concerning the acceptance of the elect in Christ? The answer must be, Only on the testimony of Holy Writ. Very well, from *the same* unerring testimony we also know that God chastises His people for their sins. It is our imminent peril that we reject either of these complementary truths.

The same fact is plainly presented again in Hebrews 12:7-10, “If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.” The apostle there draws an analogy from the natural relationship of father and child. Why do earthly parents chastise their children? Is it not for their *faults*? Can we justify a parent for chastening a child where there was no fault, nothing in him which called for the rod? In that case, it would be positive tyranny, actual cruelty. If the same be not true *spiritually*, then the comparison must fall to the ground. Hebrews 12 proves conclusively that, if God does not chastise me then I am an unbeliever, and I sign my own condemnation as a bastard.

Yet is very necessary for us to point out, at this stage, that *all* the sufferings of believers in this world are *not* divine rebukes for personal transgressions. Here too we need to be on our guard against lopsidedness. After we have apprehended the fact that God *does* take notice of the iniquities of His people and use the rod upon them, it is so easy to jump to the conclusion that when we see an afflicted Christian, God must be visiting His displeasure upon him. That is a sad and serious error. Some of the very choicest of God’s saints have been called on to endure the most painful and protracted sufferings. Some of the most faithful and eminent servants of Christ have encountered the most relentless and extreme persecution. Not only is this a fact of observation, but it is plainly revealed in Holy Writ.

As we turn to God’s Word for light on the subject of suffering among the saints, we find it affirmed, “Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all” (Psa 34:19). Those “afflictions” are sent by God upon different ones for various reasons. Sometimes for the *prevention* of sin. The experience of the beloved apostle was a case in point, “And *lest* I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, *lest* I should be exalted above measure” (2Co 12:7). Sometimes sore trials are sent for the testing and strengthening of our *graces*, “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience” (Jam 1:2-3). Sometimes God’s servants and people are called on to endure fierce persecution for a confirmatory testimony to the truth, “And they departed from the

presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name" (Act 5:41).

Yet here again we need to be much on our guard, for the flesh is ever ready to *pervert* even the holy things of God, and make an evil use of that which is good. When God is chastening a Christian for his sins, it is so easy for him to suppose such is *not* the case, and falsely comfort himself with the thought that God is only developing his graces, or permitting him to have closer fellowship with the sufferings of Christ. Where we are visited with afflictions *personally*, it is always the safest policy to assume that God has a controversy with us, humble ourselves beneath His mighty hand, and say with Job, "Show me *wherefore* thou contendest with me" (Job 10:2), and when He *has* convicted me of my fault, to penitently confess and forsake it. But where *others* are concerned, it is not for us to judge—though sometimes God reveals the cause to His *servants* (Amo 3:7).

In the passage which is to be before us, the apostle presents a third consideration why heed should be given unto the exhortation at the beginning of Hebrews 12, which calls to patient perseverance in the path of faith and obedience, notwithstanding all the obstacles, difficulties, and dangers which may be encountered therein. He now draws a motive from the nature of those sufferings considered in the light of *God's end in them*—all the trials and persecutions which He may call on His people to endure are *necessary*, not only as testimonies to the truth, to the reality of His grace in them, but also as chastisements which are required by us, wherein God has a blessed design toward us. This argument is enforced by several considerations to the end of verse 13. How we should admire and adore the consummate wisdom of God which has so marvelously ordered all, that the very things which manifest the *hatred* of men against us are evidences of *His love* toward us! How the realization of this should strengthen patience!

O how many of God's dear children have found, in every age, that the afflictions which have come upon them from a hostile world were soul-purging medicines from the Lord. By them they have been bestirred, revived, and mortified to things down here, and made partakers of God's holiness, to their own unspeakable advantage and comfort. Truly wondrous are the ways of our great God. Hereby doth He defeat the counsels and expectations of the wicked, having a design to accomplish by their agency something which they know not of. These very reproaches, imprisonments, stripes, with the loss of goods and danger of their lives, which the world opposed to their ruin, *God*, at the same time, makes use of their refining consolation and joy. Truly He makes "the wrath of man" to "praise thee" (Psa 76:10). O that our hearts and minds may be duly impressed with the wisdom, power, and grace of Him who bringeth a clean thing out of an unclean.

"In all these things is the wisdom and goodness of God, in contriving and effecting these things to the glory of His grace, and the salvation of His church, to be admired" (John Owen, 1616-1683). But herein we may see, once more, the imperative need for *faith*—a God-given, God-sustained, spiritual, supernatural FAITH. Carnal reason can see no more in our persecutions than the malice and rage of evil men. Our senses perceive nothing beyond material losses and painful physical discomforts, but faith discovers *the Father's* hand directing all things. Faith is assured that all proceeds from His boundless *love*. Faith realizes that He has in view *the good of our souls*. The more this is apprehended

by the exercise of faith, not only the better for our peace of mind, but the readier shall we be to diligently apply ourselves in seeking to learn God's lessons for us in every chastisement He lays upon us.

The opening "And" of Hebrews 12:5 shows the apostle is continuing to present motives to stir unto a perseverance in the faith, notwithstanding sufferings for the same. The first motive was taken from the example of the Old Testament worthies (v. 1). The second, from the illustrious pattern of Jesus (vv. 2-4). This is the third—the Author of these sufferings—our Father—and His loving design in them. There is also a more immediate connection with verse 4 pointed by the "And"—it presents a tacit rebuke for being ready to faint under the lesser trials, wherewith they were exercised. Here he gives a reason how and why it was they were thus making that reason the means of introducing a new argument. The reason why they were ready to faint was their inattention to the direction and encouragement which God had supplied for them—our failure to appropriate God's gracious provisions for us is the rise of all our spiritual miscarriages.

The Hebrew Christians to whom this epistle was first addressed were passing through a great fight of afflictions, and miserably were they acquitting themselves. They were the little remnant out of the Jewish nation who had believed on their Messiah during the days of His public ministry, plus those Jews who had been converted under the preaching of the apostles. It is highly probable that they had expected the Messianic kingdom would at once be set up on earth, and that they would be allotted the chief places of honour in it. But the millennium had not begun, and their own lot became increasingly bitter. They were not only hated by the Gentiles, but ostracised by their unbelieving brethren, and it became a hard matter to them to make even a bare living. Providence held a frowning face. Many who had made a profession of Christianity had gone back to Judaism and were prospering temporally. As the affliction of the believing Jews increased, they too were sorely tempted to turn their backs upon the new faith. Had they been wrong in embracing Christianity? Was high heaven displeased because they had identified themselves with Jesus of Nazareth? Did not their sufferings go to show that God no longer regarded them with favour?

Now it is most blessed and instructive to see how the apostle met the unbelieving reasoning of their hearts. He appealed to *their own Scriptures*, reminding them of an exhortation found in Proverbs 3:11-12, "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him" (Heb 12:5). As we pointed out so often in our exposition of the earlier chapters of this epistle, at every critical point in his argument the apostle's appeal was to the written Word of God—an example which is binding on every servant of Christ to follow. That Word is the final court of appeal for every controversial matter, and the more its authority is respected, the more is its Author honoured. Not only so, but the more God's children are brought to turn to it for instruction, the more will they be built up and established in the true faith. Moreover, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for *our* learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom 15:4). It is to them alone we must turn for solid comfort. Great will be our loss if we fail to do so.

“And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh *unto you*” (Heb 12:5). Note well the words we have placed in italics. The exhortation to which the apostle referred was uttered over a thousand years previously, under the Mosaic dispensation, nevertheless the apostle insists that it was addressed equally unto the *New Testament* saints! How this exposes the cardinal error of modern “dispensationalists,” who seek to rob Christians of the greater part of God’s precious Word. Under the pretense of “rightly dividing” the Word, they would filch from *them* all that God gave to His people prior to the beginning of the present era. Such a devilish device is to be steadfastly resisted by us. All that is found in the Book of Proverbs is as much God the Father’s instruction to *us* as are the contents of the Pauline epistles! Throughout that book God addresses us individually as “My son,” see 2:1, 3:1, 4:10, 5:1, etc. Surely that is quite sufficient for every spiritual mind—no laboured argument is needed.

The appositeness of Proverbs 3:11-12 to the case of the afflicted Hebrews gave great force to the apostle’s citing of it here. That passage would enable them to perceive that *their* case was by no means unprecedented or peculiar, that it was in fact no otherwise with them it had been with others of God’s children in former ages, and that long before the Lord had graciously laid in provision for their encouragement, “My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: for whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a Father the son in whom he delighteth” (Pro 3:11-12). It has ever been God’s way to correct those in whom He delights, to chastise His children, but so far from that salutary discipline causing us to faint, it should strengthen and comfort our hearts, being assured that such chastening proceeds from His *love*, and that the exhortation to perseverance in the path of duty is issued *by Him*. It is the height of pride and ingratitude not to comply with *His* tender entreaties.

But the apostle had to say to the suffering Hebrews, “Ye have *forgotten* the exhortation.” To forget God’s gracious instruction is at least an infirmity, and with it they are here taxed. To forget the encouragements which the Father has given us is a serious fault. It is expressly forbidden, “beware lest thou forget the LORD” (Deu 6:12). It was taxed upon the Jews of old, “They soon forgot his works...They forgot God their Saviour, which had done great things in Egypt” (Psa 106:13, 21). Forgetfulness is a part of that corruption which had seized man by his fall. All the faculties of his soul have been seriously injured—the memory, which was placed in man to be a treasury in which to lay up the directions and consolations of God’s Word, has not escaped the universal wreckage. But that by no means excuses us. It is a *fault* to be striven and prayed against. As ministers see the occasion, they are to stir up God’s people to use means for the strengthening of the memory—especially by the formation of the habit of holy *meditation* in divine things.

Thus it was with the Hebrews, in some measure at least—they had “forgotten” that which should have stood in good stead in the hour of their need. Under their trials and persecutions, they ought, in an especial manner, to have called to mind that divine exhortation of Proverbs 3:11-12 for their encouragement. Had they believingly appropriated it, they had been kept from fainting. Alas, how often we are like them! “The want of a diligent consideration of the provision that God hath made in the Scripture for our encouragement to duty and comfort under difficulties, is a sinful forgetfulness, and is of dangerous consequence of our souls” (John Owen).

“Which speaketh unto you as unto children” (Heb 12:5). It is very striking indeed to observe the tense of the verb here. The apostle was quoting a sentence of Scripture which had been written a thousand years previously, yet he does not say “which *hath* spoken,” but “which *speaketh* unto you”! The same may be seen again in that sevenfold exhortation of Revelation 2 and 3, “He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit *saith* (not “said”) unto the churches.” The Holy Scriptures are a living Word, in which God speaks to men in every generation. Holy Writ is not a dumb or dead letter. It has a voice in it, ever speaking of God Himself. “The Holy Spirit is always present in the Word, and speaks in it equally and alike to the church in all ages. He doth in it speak as immediately to us, as if we were the first and only persons to whom He spake. And this should teach us, with what *reverence* we ought to attend to the Scriptures, namely, as to the way and means whereby *God Himself* speaks directly to us” (John Owen).

“Which speaketh unto you as unto *children*” (Heb 12:5). The apostle emphasizes the fact that God addresses an exhortation in Proverbs 3:11, to “My son,” which shows plainly that His relation to the *Old Testament* saints was that of a Father to His children. This at once refutes a glaring error made by some who pose as being ultra-orthodox, more deeply taught in the Word than others. They have insisted that the Fatherhood of God was never revealed until the Son became incarnate, but every verse in the Proverbs where God says, “My son,” reveals their mistake. That the Old Testament saints were instructed in this blessed relationship is clear from other passages, “Like as a father pitieth his children, so *the LORD* pitieth them that fear him” (Psa 103:13). This relation unto God is by virtue of their (and our) union with Christ—*He* is “the Son,” and being one with Him, members of His body, they were “sons” too.

This precious relationship is the ground of the soul’s confidence in God. “If God speaks to them as to *children*, they have good ground to fly to God as to a Father, and in all time of need to ask and seek of Him all needful blessings (Mat 7:11), yea, and in faith to depend on Him for the same (Mat 6:31-32). What useful things shall they want? What hurtful thing need such to fear? If God deal with us as with *children*, He *will* provide for them every good thing, He will protect them from every hurtful thing, He will hear their prayers, He will accept their services, He will bear with their infirmities, He will support them under all their burdens, and assist them against all their assaults. Though through their own weakness, or the violence of some temptation, they should be drawn from Him, yet will He be ready to meet them in the mid-way, turning to Him—instance the mind of the Father of the prodigal towards him” (William Gouge, 1575-1653).

We have already covered so much space in introducing the general subject of divine chastisement, and in examining the first half of Hebrews 12:5, that we must defer our comments upon the remaining portion of that verse (D.V.) till our next article, for it is much too important to condense into a couple of paragraphs.

THE LIFE OF DAVID

38. His Bringing Up the Ark

Our principal design in this David-series of articles is to emphasize the fact that the Old Testament is far, far more than an historical record of events which happened thousands of years ago, and to make it manifest that every part of God's Word is full of important truth which is urgently needed by us today. The business of a Bible teacher is twofold—to give an accurate *interpretation* of the meaning of Holy Writ, and to make *application* of its contents to the hearts and lives of his hearers or readers. By “making application,” we mean, the pointing out and the pressing upon ourselves of the practical lessons which each passage contains, seeking to heed its warnings, appropriate its encouragements, obey its precepts, and put in a claim to its promises. Only thus does it become a living and profitable Word *to us*.

The first verses of 2 Samuel 6 record an incident which needs to be prayerfully laid to heart by everyone whom God has separated unto His service. It chronicles a most blessed action on the part of David, who had in view naught but the honour and glory of the Lord. But alas, that action was sadly marred by permitting the fervency of his zeal to ignore the precepts of God. He was anxious that the long-neglected and dishonoured ark should be suitably housed in Zion. His desire was good and his motive was pure, but his execution of the same met with the open displeasure of the Lord. It is not sufficient to have a worthy purpose and a proper spirit. God's work must be performed *in the right way*, that is, according to the rules of His prescribing, anything other than that is but a species of self-will.

There seems to be a great many in Christendom today who are desirous of doing good, but they are exceedingly lax and careless in the mode and manner their desires are carried out. They act as though the means used and the methods employed mattered little or nothing, so long as their aim and end is right. They are creatures of impulse, following the dictates of mere whim and sentiment, or imitating the example of others. They seem to have no concern for *God's standard*, study not His Word diligently to discover what laws and rules the Lord has given for the regulation of our conduct in His “service.” Consequently, they are governed by the flesh, rather than the Spirit, so that it frequently happens that they do good things *in a wrong way*, yea, in a manner directly opposed to *God's way* as revealed in His Word.

There are many “church officers” who are anxious to see the pews occupied and their treasury well-filled, and so, “socials,” “ice-cream suppers,” and other worldly attractions are employed to draw the crowd. There are many preachers who are anxious to hold the young people, and so “athletic clubs,” “social entertainments,” are introduced to secure that end. There are many evangelists who are anxious to “make a good show,” secure “results,” and be able to herald so many hundreds of “converts” at the close of their “campaigns,” and so fleshly means are used, high pressure methods are employed to bring this about—“decision cards,” the “sawdust trail,” the “penitent form” are called in to their

aid. There are many Sunday School teachers who are anxious to hold the interest of their class, and so “prizes” are given, “picnics” are arranged, and other devices are resorted to.

Apparently it does not occur to these “leaders” to *challenge* their own actions, to weigh them in “the balances of the sanctuary,” to inquire how near or how far they measure up to the divine standard. So long as such means and methods seem right *to them*, or are in general vogue in other “churches,” and so long as they appear to “succeed,” nothing else matters. But in a coming day, GOD is going to ask of them, “Who hath required *this* at your hands?” (Isa 1:12)! None of the devices mentioned by us above have one particle of Scriptural authority to warrant their use, and it is *by the Scriptures* that each of us will yet be *judged*! All things must be done “according to the pattern” (Heb 8:5; Exo. 25:40) with which God has furnished us, and woe will it yet be unto us if we have disregarded *His* “pattern” and substituted another of our own.

The terrible confusion which now prevails so extensively in Christendom is no excuse whatever for us falling into line with it, “*Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil*” (Exo 23:2). No matter how “peculiar” he may be thought, no matter how “unpopular” he may be because of it, *faithfulness* is what God requires from each of His servants, 1 Corinthians 4:2. And “faithfulness” means doing the work which God has appointed *in the way which He has prescribed*. Expediency may have grasped the helm, compromise may be the order of the day, principles may be valued because of their “practicability” rather than because of their *Scripturalness*, but that alters not one whit the strict discharge of the duty which the Lord requires from each of His servants. Unless that fact be clearly realized, we read in vain the solemn incident recorded in 2 Samuel 6.

The laxity which now obtains in so many professedly “Christian” circles is indeed appalling. Unconverted men are allowed to occupy positions which none but Christ’s true servants have any title to stand in. Women are allowed to speak in public before a mixed audience, in open violation of 1 Corinthians 14:34.

The “sprinkling” of a few drops of water on an infant’s head is substituted for the Scriptural immersion of believers only. Human convenience is consulted when the Lord’s death is to be remembered, and His “supper” is changed into the *morning* “breaking of bread.” Leavened bread, rather than “*this bread*” (1Co 11:27), is used to set forth the immaculate Person of the Redeemer. And if one dares to raise a voice in protest against these innovations—no matter how gently and lovingly—he is called “legalistic” and a “troubler in Israel.” But even that must not move the one who covets his *Master’s* “Well done.”

“And they set the ark of God upon a new cart” (2Sa 6:3). In so doing, David and his counselors (1Ch 13:1) committed a serious fault. They ignored the divinely appointed order and substituted their own arrangements. The Lord had given express commands in Numbers 4:5-6, 15; 7:9 as to *how* the sacred ark was to be carried when it should be moved from one place to another, and He requires unquestioning obedience to all His regulations. It is true that David was moved on this occasion with a deep concern for JEHOVAH’s honour and glory. It is true that it was the urgings of *love for Him* which prompted his noble action, but He has said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (Joh 14:15)—love

must flow in the *appointed* channels. It must be *directed by* the divine precepts if it is to please its object.

“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (Joh 4:24). Among other things that means, God must be worshipped according to *the pattern* He has given us in His Word. There are many Protestants who can see clearly the human inventions, superstitious innovations, and unscriptural practices of the Romanists, in their “elevation of the mass,” the vestments of their “priests,” the burning of incense, the worship of images, and the adoration of the mother of our Saviour. The unwarrantable introduction of such devices are patent to multitudes of Protestants, yet they are blind *to their own* unscriptural and antiscritptural ways! Listen, my reader, anything we introduce into “the service of the sanctuary,” into the worship of God, for which we have no “thus saith the Lord,” is nothing but a species of “*will* worship” (Col 2:23), and must be abandoned by us.

As we pointed out in our last article, the counsel given to David by the “leaders” in Israel, was patterned after the invention of the heathen. The “priests” of the Philistines had sent back the ark on “a new cart” driven by oxen (1Sa 6). And history had repeated itself. If many of the means and methods which are now used in much so-called “divine worship” and “Christian work” were challenged, if a *reason* were demanded for their employment, the best that could be given would be, *others* are using them. But no Scriptural authority could be cited. The “leaders” in Israel might have argued that the device used by the Philistines “succeeded” and that God “blessed” their arrangements. Ah, but the Philistines had not God’s Word in their hands, but Israel had! In like manner, many now argue “God blesses” these women preachers and many other things for which we have no “thus saith the Lord.” But, as we shall see, God *cursed* Israel’s flagrant violation of His commands!

The outstanding fact which concerns us as we seek to ponder and *profit from* this solemn incident in David’s life is that *he acted without divine orders*. He introduced something into the divine worship for which he had *no* “thus saith the Lord.” And the lesson to be learned therefrom is to rigidly scrutinize our own actions—the things we do, *the way in which* we do them, the means we employ—and ask—Are these *appointed by God*? There is much *apparent* reverence and devotion among the Papists, but is it acceptable to the Lord? Ah, my readers, if very much of the “Christian service” of earnest, zealous, enthusiastic Protestants were weighed in the balance of Holy Writ, it would be “found wanting”—nor am I guiltless if found in association and fellowship with the same—no, no matter how much I protest against it all. Individual loyalty to Christ, personal obedience to His commands, is what is demanded of each one of us!

It may be thought that David was ignorant of what was recorded in Numbers 4 and 7, and so was not so seriously to blame, but the validity of such a conclusion is more than doubtful as we shall show (D.V.) in the next article. Again, it may be supposed that David considered the regulations given in the days of Moses pertained only to Israel while they were on the march in the wilderness and did not apply to his own case, but this defence of David also breaks down before a passage we hope to consider in our next. Even were the case as just supposed, his bounden duty would have been to first “ask counsel of the

LORD,” and inquire, “*Whereon* shall the ark be placed?” Instead he conferred with flesh and blood (1Ch 13:1) and followed their advice.

David’s efforts proved a failure. And sooner or later all effort on the part of the “church,” or of the individual Christian, which is not strictly according to the Word of the Lord will prove a failure. It will be but “wood, hay, stubble” (1Co 3:12) in the day of divine testing and reward. God has magnified His Word above all His name (Psa 138:2), and He demands that His servants shall do all things according to the plan and manner which He has prescribed. When He commanded Moses to build the tabernacle, He bade him do so according to the “pattern” which He showed him in the mount (Exo 25:40). There was no room for human opinion or preference. And if we would serve Him *acceptably*, then we must go according to *His* way, and not ours. The right attitude for us was expressed by Peter when he said, “Nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net” (Luk 5:5). He acted according to Christ’s instruction and was blest!

“And when they came to Nachon’s threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it” (2 Sa 6:6). Yes, as the marginal rendering tells us, “the oxen *stumbled*.” And do you suppose that was an accident? No, indeed, there are *no* “accidents” in a world which is presided over by the living God. Not even a hair can fall from our head till the moment He *decreed* for it to happen. But not only is everything directed by God, but there is also a significance, a meaning, a message, in the smallest occurrences, had we but eyes to see and hearts to understand. “The oxen stumbled.” Of course they did, what else could be expected! There can be naught but “confusion” when the divine order is departed from. In the stumbling of those oxen the Lord was *making manifest* David’s disorder.

“Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it” (2 Sa 6:6). He feared it would be overthrown, and so he wished to avert such a disaster. Like David’s design in seeking an honourable habitation for the ark, Uzzah’s purpose was good, and his motive pure, but like David, he also *disregarded God’s written law*. See here one sin leading to another! See how David’s conferring with flesh and blood, following the counsel of the “leaders,” and emulating the way of the heathen, was now succeeded by the priest’s son committing an act of sacrilege. Alas, alas, how much will the present-day “leaders” in Christendom yet have to answer for, because of their setting such an evil example before others, and thus encouraging the “young people” to lightly esteem the holy and authoritative precepts of God.

“And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God” (2Sa 6:7). The Lord God will not be mocked. Plainly had He declared that, even the Kohathites, who were appointed to carry the ark by staves on their shoulders, “shall *not touch* any holy thing, *lest they die*” (Num 4:15). God not only keeps His promises, but He also *fulfills His threats*! So Uzzah found, and so will every other disregarder of His commandments yet discover.

“He, whose name is *Jealous*, was greatly offended. The sincere, the well-meaning man, having no command, nor any example for what he did, fell under JEHOVAH’s anger, and lost his life, as the reward of his officiousness. And as the Holy Spirit has recorded the fact so circumstantially, we have reason to consider it *as a warning to all*, of the danger there is

in tampering with positive ordinances, and as a standing evidence that God will have His cause supported, and His appointments administered, *in His own way*. The case of Saul, and the language of Samuel, to that disobedient monarch, inculcate the same thing, 'The people,' said Saul to the venerable prophet, 'took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal. And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as *in obeying the voice* of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams,' 1 Samuel 15:21-22" (Abraham Booth, 1813).

It is solemn to recall that no divine judgment fell upon the Philistines when *they* placed the holy ark upon a cart and sent it back to Israel, but "the anger of the LORD *was* kindled against Uzzah"! How plainly this shows us that God will suffer from the world what *He will not tolerate* in His professing people who bear His holy name. That is why it will be "more tolerable" for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than it will be for divinely-enlightened, highly favoured, and loud-boasting Capernaum. The same principle will obtain when Christendom comes to be judged. Better to have lived and died in the ignorance of darkest Africa, than to have had God's Word in our hands and set at naught its laws!

GOD'S ESTIMATE OF OBEDIENCE

"Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1Sa 15:22). Two things are here placed in apposition—worshipping God and obeying God. Which of the two does *He* esteem more highly, with *which* is He most pleased? A divine answer has been given to this question—God values obedience more than anything else we can proffer Him. Do we really believe this? Do we *act* as though we did! Ah, my reader, it is not a reverent mien, a devout posture, beautiful words, liberal contributions, which the Lord requires first from us. All of these things are worthless in His sight, yea, unacceptable to Him, unless they be preceded by a definite determination and a sincere and prayerful effort to walk in obedience to His commands. We are but mocking God to come before Him as devout worshipers on the Sabbath day, if the remainder of the week we disregard His statutes and precepts. Observe carefully that the Lord gave His law to Israel (Exo 20) *before* He gave them instructions to build the tabernacle (Exo 25-31). Lawless worshipers are an offence to Him. The will must be brought into subjection unto God before the heart can worship Him acceptably. Beg Him to work in you the spirit of *obedience*.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

“I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all” (Ecc 9:11). How true is this in things that are natural! How frequently does it occur among those who seem possessed of every natural ability for certain objects, and who are placed in favourable circumstances for carrying out their projects. Yet they make no progress, for some unforeseen event transpires which destroys their hope and expectations, and lays their all in ruins. Nor can such be charged with any want of prudence, care, diligence, or any of those qualifications that are needful to their attaining a certain object. Then it may be asked, Why do not they succeed? The reply is—The Sovereignty of God interferes, baffles, defeats, and prevents their projects taking place in the way they had laid down. Man, in general, is taught that there is nothing certain, nothing real, and that he must reap the reward of his hands in labour, toil, vexation, and disappointment. And many, under these trials of the flesh, seeing all things against them, and that nothing succeeds which they take in hand, plunge themselves into suicide, and terminate their existence of disappointment in some awful manner, by (as they suppose) putting an end to the sorrows and miseries.

On the other hand, some, without any remarkable gifts, and persons of very worthless character, often succeed temporally in all that they do, “flourish like a green bay tree” (Psa 37:35). This thing Solomon saw naturally occurring among the children of men, or “under the sun.” He saw the natural prowess of strength fail in time of need. He saw the racer faint before he reached the goal. He saw that bread is not always to be obtained by the most prudent, that riches flew away, and could not be kept, and that those honours which worldly men pursue, vanish into nothing. And therefore, speaking in a natural way, to be understood by natural men who mind earthly things, he saw that “Time and chance happeneth to them all,” or something like what men mean when they say, “If they have the good luck,” or “If they happen to be fortunate.” The words are to be understood in the sense which natural men speak, for a spiritual man knows nothing of “chance,” all that shall transpire being *ordained*, fixed, and decreed, and each individual filling up that spot, or maintaining just that position, which *predestination* has given him. The spiritual man, therefore, acknowledges a Sovereign Ruler, though too often we speak half in the language of Ashdod, instead of acknowledging a great Supreme Ordainer, for what is “providence” but *God reigning*?

But there is another sense to be taken of this remarkable passage which first arrested me at the throne of grace, as intended by the Spirit of God to describe a certain *path of experience*. If I am a real believer in the Son of God, there is no death awaiting me. What remains and is before me is open day, a scene of glory, an endless eternity of light, through the death of Christ. I say again, if I am a *real* believer in Him, for the prophet asks, “Who hath believed our report?” (Isaiah 53:1). There is a different belief required in Christ from what most will admit of. I must view my own death to sin in His death. I must see the justice of God exacting from me, in the death of Christ, the penalty due to me. And if once, in the light of the Spirit, I am favoured to behold and enjoy this, there is no more death or

curse awaiting me. How blessedly is this described by John in the last two chapters of the Revelation! When faith is really exercised on Christ, it brings into the soul all those glories which are so beautifully, gloriously, and figuratively described there.

And what is said of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem? It is said that there shall be no more death, no more curse, "There shall be no night there...for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev 22:5). Now if I am living in Christ, these solemn realities are at times enjoyed in my soul, for there is no more death, because He hath poured out His soul unto death. "He died unto sin once" (Rom 6:10). And hath abolished it, destroyed it, yea, swallowed it up. No more curse for me, because He was made a curse while hanging on the tree. There is no more the midnight of nature—light everlasting has broken in, and the reigning God causes me to reign over these forever and ever—over death, as abolished, over the curse, as being removed, and enables me to follow Him who said, "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (Joh 8:12). These *shall*s are precious realities enjoyed by the light of faith.

Now, then, how comes it to pass, since God has said there shall be no more death, curse, or night, that there is such a dread and fear of these, and so many are brought into bondage by them? How often are the Lord's redeemed family brought into this state of slavery and dread! But let the Sun of righteousness arise and shine into the soul, and all is swallowed up in a moment. And thus many thousands of Israel who have feared death, shall, in their departing moments, be like their glorious Head, who, when He was pouring out His soul unto death, "cried with a loud voice" (Mat 27:46). So, when the frail voice of nature is sinking, a loud voice of celestial triumph bursts from the soul. But if they are suffered to go on in darkness to this point, we must leave it to the sovereign Ruler of all things, who giveth no account of any of His ways, and who has said that, "The race is *not* to the swift, *nor* the battle to the strong" (Ecc 9:11). In other words, if the Lord the Holy Comforter does not shine in with *His* light, there is no conquest, nor any prize gained.

The battle over our fears "is not to the strong," and the ultimate victory shall not be given to any because they have been strong in the faith, but shall be given *to whom the Lord* shall in His sovereignty *see fit to give it*. Nor, on the other hand, shall it be given to those who harp so much on the string of fears and doubts, sins and unbelief, and who think that for treading *this* gloomy path *they* shall obtain the prize. No, but the victory shall be given to that soul *whom the Lord* delights to honour by giving it. Thus, strong faith, and little faith, and scarcely any faith at all, shall "arise and shine" *when the Lord biddeth*, and HE gives the crown, the battle, the honour, the bread of life, the everlasting riches, to whosoever *He will*. Nor shall any say that *they* can claim them, have them, or enjoy them, *independent of Him*. Nor shall these blessings be given for any running, fighting, wisdom, skill, or zeal of *theirs*, for God is Sovereign in all His ways, and none shall say unto Him, "What doest thou?" But all must submit themselves to Him who does all things well, in giving the race to the lame, the victory to the weak, the bread to the hungry, the riches to the poor, the favour to the outcasts.—H.W., 1841.

THE DIVINE COVENANTS

3d. The Adamic (Continued)

In the previous papers upon the Covenant of Works we have seen that, at the beginning, man was made “upright” (Ecc 7:29), which language necessarily implies a law to which he was conformed in his creation. When anything is made regular or according to rule, the rule itself is obviously presupposed. The law of Adam’s being was none other than the eternal and indispensable law of righteousness, the same which was afterwards summed up in the Ten Commandments. Man’s “uprightness” consisted in the universal rectitude of his character, his entire conformity to the nature of his Maker. The very nature of man was then fully able to respond to the requirements of God’s revealed will, and his response thereto was the righteousness in which he stood.

It was also shown that man was, in Eden, placed on probation—that as a moral being, his responsibility was tried out. In other words, he was placed under the moral government of God, and being endowed with a free will, he was capable both of obedience or disobedience—his own free choice being the determining factor. As a creature, he was subject to his Creator, as one who was indebted to God for all he was and had. He was under the deepest obligation to love Him with all his heart, and serve Him with all his might, and perfectly was he fitted so to do. Thus created, and thus qualified, it pleased the Lord God to constitute Adam the federal head and legal representative of his race. And as occupying that character and office, God entered into a solemn covenant or agreement with him, promising a reward upon the fulfillment of certain conditions.

It is true that the actual “covenant” does not occur in the Genesis record, in connection with the primordial transaction between God and man, but the facts of the case present all the constituent elements of a covenant. Brief as is the statement furnished in Genesis 2:17, we may clearly discern concentrated in it those eternal principles of truth, righteousness, and justice, which are the glory of God’s character, and which necessarily regulate His government in all spheres and in all ages. There is an avowal of His authority to govern the creature of His hands, a revelation of His will as to what He requires from the creature, a solemn threat of what would surely follow upon his disobedience, with a clearly implied promise of reward for obedience. One test only was stipulated, by which obedience was to be formally expressed—abstinence from the fruit of the one forbidden tree.

“The covenant of works was in its nature fitted, and designed to give, and did give uninterrupted happiness, as long as its requisitions were observed. This is true throughout the whole moral universe of God, for man is not the only being under its government. It is the law of angels themselves. To their nature, no less than to man’s while in a state of holiness, it is perfectly adapted. Those of them who ‘have kept their first estate,’ (see Jude 1:6) are conformed perfectly to all its demands. They meet and satisfy them fully by love—fervent love to God, and to all their celestial associates. Heaven is pervaded consequently with the unbroken harmonies of love. And how unspeakably happy! ‘The man’ said Paul, ‘which doeth those things shall *live* by them’ (Rom 10:5). His bliss is unfading” (R. B. Howell, 1855).

God, then, entered into a covenant with Adam, and all his posterity in him, to the effect that if he obeyed the one command not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, he should receive as his reward an indefectibility of holiness and righteousness. Nor was that transaction exceptional in the divine dealings with our race, for God has made covenants with other men which have vitally effected their posterity—if we are spared, this will appear when we take up His covenant with Noah and Abraham. The compact which the Lord God entered into with Adam is appropriately termed “The Covenant of Works,” not only to distinguish it from the Covenant of Grace, but also because under it life was promised *on condition of* perfect obedience, which obedience was to be performed by man *in his own creature strength*.

We come now to consider *the penal sanction* of the covenant. This is contained in the words, “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen 2:17). Here was made known the terrible penalty which would most certainly follow upon Adam’s disobedience, his violation of the covenant. All the blessings of the covenant would instantly cease. Transgression of God’s righteous law would not only forfeit all blessings, but would convert them into so many fountains of wretchedness and woe. The covenant of works provided no Mediator, nor any other method of restoration to the purity and bliss which was lost. There was no place given for repentance. All was irrevocably lost. Between the blessing of obedience and the curse of disobedience there was no middle ground. So far as the terms of the covenant of works was concerned, its inexorable sentence was, “the soul that sinneth, it shall die.”

“But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen 2:17). It is to be duly noted what God here threatened was the direct consequence and immediate punishment of *sin*, to be inflicted only upon the rebellious and disobedient. That death which now seizes fallen man, is no mere natural calamity, but a penal infliction. It is not a “debt” which he owes to “nature,” but a judicial sentence which is passed upon him by the Divine Judge. Death has come in because our first parent, our federal head and representative, took of the forbidden fruit, and for no other reason. It was altogether meet to God’s authority and holy will that there should be an unmistakable connection between sin and its punishment, so that it is impossible for any sinner to escape the wages of sin, unless Another should be paid them in his stead—of which the covenant of works contained no hint.

“But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen 2:17), or as the margin renders it, “dying thou shalt die” That dread threat was couched in general terms. It *was not* said, “thou shalt die physically,” nor “thou shalt die spiritually,” but simply “thou shalt surely die.” The absence of any modifying adverb shows that the term “death” is here taken in its widest scope, and is to be defined according to whatever the Scriptures elsewhere signify by that term. It is the very height of presumption for us to limit *what God has not limited*. Far be it from us to blunt the sharp point of the divine threat. The “dying thou shalt die”—which expresses more accurately and forcibly the original Hebrew—shows the words are to be taken in their full emphasis.

First, *corporeal* death, the germs of which are in our bodies from the beginning of our existence, so that from the moment we draw our first breath, we begin to die. And how can it be otherwise, seeing that we are “shapen in iniquity” and conceived in sin (Psa 51:5)! From birth our physical body is indisposed, and entirely unfitted for the soul to reside in eternally, so that there must yet be a separation from it. By that separation the good things of the body, the “pleasures of sin,” on which the soul so much dotes, are at once snatched away, so that it becomes equally true of each one, “Naked came I out of my mother’s womb [the earth], and naked shall I *return thither*” (Job 1:21). God intimated this to Adam when He said, “Till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou *return*” (Gen 3:19)!

Second, “by death is here understood all that lasting and hard labour, that great sorrow, all the tedious miseries of this life, by which life ceases to be *life*, and which are the sad harbingers of certain death. To these things man is condemned, see Genesis 3:16-19—the whole of that sentence is founded on the antecedent threat of Genesis 2:17. Such miseries Pharaoh called by the name ‘death’ (Exo 10:17). David called his pain and anguish ‘the sorrows of death’ (Psa 116:3). By those ‘sorrows’ death binds and fastens man that he may thrust them into and confine them in his dungeon. As ‘life’ is not barely to live, but to be happy, so ‘death’ is not to depart this life in a moment, but rather to languish in a long expectation, dread and foresight, of certain death, without knowing the time which God has foreordained” (Hermann Witsius, 1636-1708).

Third, “death” in Scripture also signifies spiritual death, or the separation of the soul from God. This is what the apostle called “being alienated from the life of God” (Eph 4:18), which “life of God” illuminates, sanctifies, and exhilarates the souls of the regenerate. The true life of the soul consists of wisdom, pure love, and the rejoicing of a good conscience. The spiritual death of the soul consists in folly, evil lustings, and the rackings of an evil conscience. Therefore when speaking of those who were “alienated from the life of God,” the apostle at once added, “through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness.” Thus, the unregenerate are totally incapacitated for communion with the holy and living God.

“But I would more fully explain the nature of this (spiritual) death. Both living and dead bodies have motion. But a living body moves by *vegetation*, while it is nourished, has the use of its senses, is delighted, and acts with pleasure. Whereas, the dead body moves by *putrefaction* to a state of dissolution, and to the production of loathsome animals. And so in the soul, spiritually alive, there is motion, while it is fed, repasted, and fattened with divine delights, while it takes pleasure in God and true wisdom, while, by the strength of its love, it is carried to and fixed on that which can sustain the soul and give it a sweet repose. But a dead soul has no feeling—that is, it neither understands truth, nor loves righteousness, but wallows and is spent in the sink of concupiscence, and brings forth the worms of impure thoughts, reasonings and affections” (Hermann Witsius).

Fourth, *eternal* death is also included in Genesis 2:17. The preludes of this are the terrors of an evil conscience, the soul deprived of all divine consolation, and often an anguished sense of God’s wrath, under which it is miserably pressed down. At physical

dissolution, the soul of the sinner is sent into a place of torments (Luk 16:23-25). At the end of the world, the bodies of the wicked are raised and their souls are united thereto, and after appearing before the great white throne they will be cast into the lake of fire, there to suffer for ever and ever the “due reward of their iniquities.” The wages of sin is *death*, and that “death” there involves and includes *eternal* death is unmistakably plain from the fact that it is placed in direct antithesis with “eternal life,” Romans 6:23. The same appears again in Romans 5:21 which verse is the summing up of verses 12-20.

Let us now pause for a moment and review the ground already covered. First, we have seen the favourable and happy state in which Adam was originally created. Second, we have contemplated the threefold law under which he was placed. Third, we have observed that he stood in Eden as the federal head and legal representative of all his posterity. Fourth, we have pointed out that all the constituent elements of a formal covenant are clearly observable in the Genesis record—there was the contracting parties—the Lord God and Adam; there was the stipulation enjoined—obedience; there was the penalty attached—death upon disobedience; there was the necessary implied promise of reward—an immutable establishment in holiness and an inalienable title to the earthly paradise.

In order to follow out the logical sequence, we should, properly, examine next, the “*seal*” of the covenant, that is, the formal symbol and stamp of its ratification, but as that would call for more space than is here available, we must postpone our consideration of that until our next article (D.V.), which will conclude what we have to say upon the Adamic covenant. Instead, we will pass on to *Adam’s consent* unto the compact which the Lord God set before him. This may be inferred, first of all, from the very law of his nature—having been made in the image and likeness of God, there was nothing in him contrary to His holy will, nothing to oppose His righteous requirements, so that he *must* have readily attended.

“Adam, being holy, would not refuse to enter into a righteous engagement with his Maker, and being intelligent would not decline an improvement in his condition” (William Shedd, 1820-1894)—an “improvement” which, upon his fulfillment of the terms of the covenant, would have issued in being made *immutably* holy and happy, so that he would then have had spiritual life as *indefectible*, passing beyond all point of apostasy and misery. The only other possible alternative to Adam’s freely consenting to be a party to the covenant, would be his *refusal*, which is unthinkable in a pure and sinless being. Eve’s words to the serpent in Genesis 3:2-3 make it plain that Adam had given his word not to disobey his Maker. We quote from another who has ably handled this point:

“The *voluntary assent* of the parties, which is in every covenant. One party must make the proposition—God proposed the terms as an expression of His will, which is an assent or agreement. God’s commanding man not to eat, is His consent. As to man, it has been already observed, he could not without unreasonable opposition to his Creator’s will, refuse any terms which the wisdom and benevolence of God would allow Him to proffer. Hence we should conclude, Adam must most cheerfully accede to the terms. But this the more readily, when their nature is inspected—when he should see in them everything adapted for his advantage, and nothing to his disadvantage.

“The same conclusion we deduce from an inspection of the Scripture history. For, 1. there is not a hint at anything like a refusal on the part of Adam, before the act of violation. The whole history is perfectly consistent with the supposition that he did cheerfully agree. 2. It is evident that Eve thought the command most reasonable and proper. She so expressed herself to the serpent, giving God’s command as a reason for her abstinence. This information she must have derived from her husband, for she was not created at the time the covenant was given to Adam. We hence infer Adam’s *consent*. 3. Adam was, after his sin, abundantly disposed to excuse himself. He cast the blame upon the woman, and indirectly upon God, for giving her to him. Now most assuredly, if Adam could in truth have said, I never *consented* to abstain—I never agreed to the *terms* proposed—I have broken no pledge—he would have presented this apology for justification. But he was dumb, he offered no such apology. Can any reasonable man want further evidence of his consent? Even this may be had, if he will. 4. Look at the consequences. The penal evils *did* result, sorrow and death *did* ensue, and hence, because God is righteous, we infer the legal relations. The Judge of all the earth would not punish where there is no crime” (George Junkin, 1839).

THE DOCTRINE OF SANCTIFICATION

2. *Its Meaning*

Having dwelt at some length (in last year’s articles) upon the relative or legal change which takes place in the *status* of God’s people at justification, it is fitting that we should now proceed to consider the real and experimental change that takes place in their *state*, which change is begun at their sanctification and made perfect in glory. Though the justification and the sanctification of the believing sinner may be, and should be contemplated singly and distinctively, yet they are inseparably connected, God never bestowing the one without the other, in fact we have no way or means whatsoever of knowing the former apart from the latter. In seeking to arrive at the meaning of the second, it will therefore be of help to examine its relation to the first. “These individual companions, sanctification and justification, must not be disjoined—under the law the ablutions and oblations went together, the washings and the sacrifices” (Thomas Manton, 1620-1677).

There are two principal effects that sin produces, which cannot be separated—the filthy defilement it causes, the awful guilt it entails. Thus, salvation from sin necessarily requires both a cleansing and a clearing of the one who is to be saved. Again, there are two things absolutely indispensable in order for any creature to dwell with God in heaven—a valid title to that inheritance, a personal fitness to enjoy such blessedness—the one is given in justification, the other is commenced in sanctification. The inseparability of the two things are brought out in, “In the LORD have I righteousness and strength” (Isa 45:24), “but of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and

sanctification, and redemption" (1Co 1:30), "but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified" (1Co 6:11), "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, *and to cleanse us* from all unrighteousness (1Jo 1:9).

"These blessings walk hand in hand, and never were, never will be, never can be parted. No more than the delicious scent can be separated from the beautiful bloom of the rose or carnation. Let the flower be expanded, and the fragrance transpires. Try if you can separate gravity from the stone or heat from the fire. If these bodies and their essential properties, if these causes and their necessary effects, are indissolubly connected, so are our justification and our sanctification" (James Hervey, 1770).

"Like as Adam alone did personally break the first covenant by the all-ruining offence, yet they to whom his guilt is imputed, do thereupon become inherently sinful, through the corruption of nature conveyed to them from him. So Christ alone did perform the condition of the second covenant, and those to whom His righteousness is imputed, do thereupon become inherently righteous, through inherent grace communicated to them from Him by the Spirit. 'For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ' (Rom 5:17). How did death reign by Adam's offence? Not only in point of guilt, whereby his posterity were bound over to destruction, but also in point of their being dead to all good, dead in trespasses and sins. Therefore, the receivers of the gift of righteousness must thereby be brought to reign in life, not only legally in justification, but also morally in sanctification" (Thomas Boston, 1690).

Though absolutely inseparable, yet these two great blessings of divine grace are quite distinct. In sanctification something is actually *imparted* to us, in justification it is only *imputed*. Justification is based entirely upon the work Christ wrought *for* us, sanctification is principally a work wrought *in* us. Justification respects its object in a legal sense and terminates in a relative change—a deliverance from punishment, a right to the reward. Sanctification regards its object in a moral sense, and terminates in an experimental change both in character and conduct—imparting a love for God, a capacity to worship Him acceptably, and a meetness for heaven. Justification is by a righteousness without us, sanctification is by a holiness wrought in us. Justification is by Christ as Priest, and has regard to the penalty of sin. Sanctification is by Christ as King, and has regard to the dominion of sin—the former cancels its damning power, the latter delivers from its reigning power.

They differ, then, in their *order* (not of time, but in their nature), justification preceding, sanctification following. The sinner is pardoned and restored to God's favour before the Spirit is given to renew him after His image. They differ in their *design*—justification removes the obligation unto punishment, sanctification cleanses from pollution. They differ in their *form*—justification is a judicial act, by which the sinner is pronounced righteous. Sanctification is a moral work, by which the sinner is made holy—the one has to do solely with our standing before God, the other chiefly concerns our state. They differ in their *cause*—the one issuing from the merits of Christ's satisfaction, the other proceeding from the efficacy of the same. They differ in their *end*—the one

bestowing a title to everlasting glory, the other being the highway which conducts us thither.

The word “holiness” and “sanctification” are used in our English Bible to represent one and the same word in the Hebrew and Greek originals, but they are by no means used with a uniform signification, being employed with quite a varied latitude and scope. Hence it is hardly to be wondered at that theologians have framed so many different definitions of its meaning. Among them we may cite the following, each of which, save the last, having an element of truth in them. “Sanctification is Godlikeness, or being renewed after His image.” “Holiness is conformity to the law of God, in heart and life.” “Sanctification is a freedom from the tyranny of sin, into the liberty of righteousness.” “Sanctification is that work of the Spirit whereby we are fitted to be worshipers of God.” “Holiness is a process of cleansing from the pollution of sin.” “It is a moral renovation of our natures whereby they are made more and more like Christ.” “Sanctification is the total eradication of the carnal nature, so that sinless perfection is attained in this life.”

Another class of writers, held in high repute in certain circles, and whose works now have a wide circulation, have formed a faulty, or at least very inadequate definition of the word “sanctify,” through limiting themselves to a certain class of passages where the term occurs and making deductions from only one set of facts. For example—not a few have cited verse after verse in the Old Testament where the word “holy” is applied to inanimate objects, like the vessels of the tabernacle, and then have argued that the term itself *cannot* possess a *moral* value. But that is false reasoning. It would be like saying that because we read of the “everlasting hills” (Gen 49:26) and the “everlasting mountains” (Hab 3:6) that therefore *God* cannot be “everlasting”—which is the line of logic (?) employed by many of the Universalists so as to set aside the truth of the everlasting punishment of the wicked.

Words *must* first be used of *material* objects before we are ready to employ them in a higher and abstract sense. All our ideas are admitted through the medium of physical senses, and consequently refer in the first place to external objects. But as the intellect develops, we apply those names, given to material things, unto those which are immaterial. In the earliest stages of human history, God dealt with His people according to this principle. It is true that God’s sanctifying of the Sabbath day teaches us that the first meaning of the word is “to set apart,” but to argue from this that the term *never* has a moral force when it is applied to moral agents is not worthy of being called “reasoning”—it is a mere begging of the question—as well argue that since in a majority of passages “baptism” has reference to the immersion of a person in water, it can never have a mystical or spiritual force and value—which is contradicted by Luke 12:50 and 1 Corinthians 12:13.

The outward ceremonies prescribed by God to the Hebrews with regard to their external form of religious service were all designed to teach corresponding inward duties, and to show the obligation unto moral virtues. But so determined are many of our moderns to empty the word “sanctify” of all moral value, they quote such verses as “for their sakes I sanctify myself” (Joh 17:19), and inasmuch as there was no sin in the Lord Jesus from which He needed cleansing, have triumphantly concluded that the thought of moral purification *cannot* enter into the meaning of the word when it is applied to His people. This also is a serious error—what the lawyers would call “special pleading.” With just as

much reason might we insist the word "tempt" can never signify to solicit and incline to evil, because it cannot mean *that* when used of Christ in Matthew 4:1 and Hebrews 4:15!

The only satisfactory way of ascertaining the meaning or meanings of the word "sanctify" is to carefully examine *every* passage in which it is found in Holy Writ, studying its setting, weighing any term with which it is contrasted, observing the objects or persons to which it is applied. This calls for much patience and care, yet only thus do we obey that exhortation "prove all things" (1Th 5:21). That this term denotes more than simply "to separate" or "set apart," is clear from Numbers 6:8 where it is said of the Nazarite, "All the days of his separation he is holy unto the LORD," for according to some that would merely signify, "all the days of his separation he is *separated* unto the LORD," which would be meaningless tautology. So again, of the Lord Jesus we are told, that He was "*holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners*" (Heb 7:26), which shows that "holy" means something more than "separation."

That the word "sanctify" (or "holy"—the *same* Hebrew or Greek term) is far from being used in a uniform sense is clear from the following passages. In Isaiah 66:17, it is said of certain wicked men, "They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh." In Isaiah 13:3, God said of the Medes, whom He had appointed to overthrow the Babylonian empire, "I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger." When applied to God Himself, the term denotes His ineffable majesty, "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy" (Isa 57:15 and cf. Ps 99:3, Hab 3:3). It also includes the thought of adorning and equipping, "thou shalt anoint it, to sanctify it" (Exo 29:36 and cf. 40:11), "anointed him, to sanctify him" (Lev 8:12 and cf. v. 30), "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, *and meet for the master's use*" (2Ti 2:21).

That the word "holy" or "sanctify" has in many passages a reference to a *moral quality* is clear from such verses as the following, "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Rom 7:12)—each of these predicates are moral qualities. Among the identifying marks of a Scriptural bishop, are, that he must be "a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate" (Ti 1:8)—each of those are moral qualities, and the very connection in which the term "holy" is there found proves conclusively it means much more than an external setting apart. "As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness" (Rom 6:19). Here the word "holiness" is used antithetically to "uncleanness." So again in 1 Corinthians 7:14, "else were your children *unclean*; but now are they *holy*," i.e., maritally pure.

That sanctification includes *cleansing* is clear from many considerations. It may be seen in the types, "Go unto the people, and *sanctify* them today and tomorrow, and let them *wash* their clothes" (Exo 19:10)—the latter being an emblem of the former. As we have seen in Romans 6:19 and 1 Corinthians 7:14, it is *the opposite of* "uncleanness." So also in 2 Timothy 2:20-21, the servant of God is to *purge* himself from "the vessels to dishonour" (worldly, fleshly, and apostate preachers and churches) if he is to be "sanctified" and meet for the Master's use." In Ephesians 5:26, we are told that Christ gave Himself for the

church, “that he might *sanctify and cleanse it*,” and that, in order that He “might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but [in contrast from such blemishes] that it should be *holy*” (v. 27). “If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh” (Heb 9:13)—what could be plainer!—ceremonial sanctification under the law was secured by a process of *purification or cleansing*.

“Purification is the first proper notion of internal real sanctification. To be unclean absolutely, and to be holy, are universally opposed. Not to be purged from sin is an expression of an unholy person, as to be cleansed is of him that is holy. This purification is ascribed unto all the causes and means of sanctification. Not that sanctification consists wholly herein, but firstly and necessarily it is required thereunto, ‘Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you’ (Eze 36:25). That this sprinkling of clean water upon us is the communication of the Spirit unto us for the end designed, I have been evinced. It hath also been declared wherefore He is called ‘water’ or compared thereunto, Verse 27 shows expressly that it is the Spirit of God which is intended: ‘I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes.’ And that which He is thus in the first place promised for, is the cleansing of us from the pollution of sin, which, in order of nature, is proposed unto His enabling us to walk in God’s statutes” (John Owen, 1616-1683).

To sanctify, then, means in the great majority of instances, to appoint, dedicate or set apart unto God, for a holy and special use. Yet that act of separation is not a bare change of situation, so to speak, but is preceded or accompanied by a work which (ceremonially or experimentally) *fits* the person for God. Thus the priests in their sanctification (Lev 8) were sanctified by washing in water (type of regeneration, Titus 3:5), having the blood applied to their persons (type of justification, Rom 5:9), and being anointed with oil (type of receiving the Holy Spirit, 1 John 2:20, 27). As the term is applied to Christians it is used to designate three things, or three parts of one whole. First, the *process* of setting them apart unto God or constituting them holy, Hebrews 13:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:3. Second, the *state* or condition of holy separation into which they are brought, 1 Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 4:24. Third, the personal sanctity or *holy living* which proceeds from the state, Luke 1:75; 1 Peter 1:15.

To revert again to the Old Testament types—which are generally the best interpreters of the doctrinal statements of the New Testament, providing we carefully bear in mind that the antitype is always of a higher order and superior nature to what prefigured it, as the substance must excel the shadow, the inward and spiritual surpassing the merely outward and ceremonial—“Sanctify unto me all the firstborn...*it is mine*” (Exo 13:2). This comes immediately after the deliverance of the firstborn by the blood of the paschal lamb in the preceding chapter—first justification, and then sanctification as the complementary parts of one whole. “Ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean, and between unclean fowls and clean: and ye shall not make your souls abominable by beast, or by fowl, or by any manner of living thing that creepeth on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean. And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should *be mine*” (Lev 20:25-26). Here we

see there was a separation *from* all that is unclean, with an unreserved and exclusive devotement *to* the Lord.

FOLLOWING THE CLOUD

“Ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price” (1Co 6:19-20). This is true of every Christian. He is no longer at his own dispose, but entirely subject to the will of his Redeemer. Doubly does this principle apply to His public servants. They are not free to lean unto their own understandings, follow their own preferences, please their relatives or fellow-Christians. Instead, they must take orders only from their Master. Even though comfortably and congenially settled, even though the blessing of the Lord be resting upon their present labours, when the Cloud of Providence moves, they are required to pull up the stakes of their tents, and follow it unhesitatingly and uncomplainingly. It is not for us to reason why—it is for us to promptly comply.

“And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: but if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up” (Exo 40:36-37). The sacred cloud which supplied special and supernatural guidance to the children of Israel in their wilderness wanderings, while possessing a deeper typical significance than we can here enter upon, was also a blessed figure of the providential and gracious direction which God affords His people now. Though not so evident and palpable as the cloud, yet unto those whose eyes are humbly and trustfully turned unto Himself, the Lord gives today just as real and definite a guidance under all their varied and perplexing circumstances.

Those who are acquainted with the details of Israel’s wilderness journeyings have seen that God called upon them to be *frequently on the move*—prefiguring the fact that in this world His saints have “no *continuing city*” (Heb 13:14). Not for long were they suffered to remain in any one place. No sooner were they comfortably placed than the Lord stirred up their nest. True, God does not treat with all of His people in the same way, yet throughout the centuries many of them have been forcibly struck with the close analogy between their own experiences and those of Israel in the wilderness of old. Particularly has this been the case with God’s official servants. The more we study the lives of the prophets, the Saviour, and the apostles, the more shall we find that they were constantly on the move.

Thus it has been with the writer and his wife during the past twenty years. Many times has the Lord required us to leave one happy camping-ground for another. Just when we thought we were permanently located, the clear call has come for us to journey to other parts. Verily God’s thoughts and ways are often the very opposite of ours. The flesh desires a smooth and straight path, with lengthy periods of relaxation, but again and again the word is given “Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest” (Mic 2:10). The disposing of furniture, the packing of our large library, the moving from one country to another, is a considerable undertaking, and to continue issuing the magazine without any break under

such conditions is a task for which only divine wisdom and strength is sufficient. But God has never failed us, and we have abundant cause to praise Him for all the way in which He has led us.

The Lord made it very plain that the work for which He took us to the U.S.A. was completed, and that He would have the editor return to the land of his birth. From the human side of things, it seemed a foolish move to make, for nearly all our Christian friends are in America, whereas in England we are now almost unknown. Nor was there any natural inducement, for during our absence from Great Britain our beloved parents have been called home, and we have no relatives at all who know Christ. Moreover, religious conditions in England today are very far from being promising. In fact, true spirituality is probably at a lower ebb now than for over a century past. Yet these very circumstances have only provided a background for *faith*, because of them we are, by grace, the more cast back upon our never-failing God. O that we may now be enabled to trust in Him with all our hearts.

We have much cause for thanksgiving. Full journeying mercies were granted—a smooth voyage across the ocean, and all our baggage intact on reaching our destination. Cordial welcome was given us by our kind and loyal friends, the Winstones. For the present we are located in Cheltenham, how long the Lord will keep us here, we know not. Our daily prayer is that the Lord of the harvest will graciously open doors where we may minister His Word orally. There are few places where we would feel free to enter, for we dare not, even by our presence, sanction much which is now going on under the cloak of Christ's holy name. Yet it seems almost impossible to get a hearing on the outside. We have hired a room where we teach each Wednesday evening, but only a handful have assembled thus far.

The prayers of God's children are earnestly solicited. Our main work, by God's enabling, will still be the continued publication of this little monthly messenger, which reaches many of the scattered children of God who we never expect to meet down here. Nevertheless, it is our fervent longing that we may have opportunity to preach and teach by lip as well as by pen. We are neither discouraged nor cast down, far from it. Rather are we increasingly hopeful that a real and widespread revival is not far distant. O that it may please the God of all grace to grant us some part in the same. His ear is still open unto the cries of the righteous. And humble, and earnest, importunate supplication and intercession will again open the windows of heaven, as it so often has in the past.

Surely there are still left somewhere in these British Isles congregations or groups which would welcome an oral ministry along the lines of our articles, places where "*all* the counsel of God" would be welcomed. Pray that the Lord will bring us into touch with such, give us favour in their eyes, and use us to bring them into a closer walking with Himself and into the fullness of His rich blessing. As of old, it is largely true today that God's people "are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hos 4:6)—lack of faithful Gospel preaching, lack of sound doctrinal instruction, lack of practical teaching as to how they may enter into God's best for them in this life. The need is indeed great, the situation is urgent—a challenge to faith, to prayer, to believing effort.

Through thirteen years the Lord has graciously sustained us in the publication of this little magazine. Though no subscription charge is made for it, and though no one has been asked for a penny, yet during the worldwide financial depression, God has moved His stewards to send in gifts to defray its expenses, so that we have been enabled to pay every bill promptly and to obey that command, "Owe no man any thing" (Rom 13:8). We are greatly encouraged by the constant receipt of letters telling of how God has been pleased to bless different articles to the hearts and lives of one and another of His dear people. We greatly long for our coast to be enlarged, that we may have the holy privilege of feeding many more of Christ's hungry sheep. Our circulation increased substantially last year, and we are praying for a still larger addition this year. The Lord bless us, and make us a blessing.

Will new readers kindly bear with the familiar references to the editor and his wife in the above paragraphs. Many of our older readers are close personal friends which the Lord gave us in the various places at which we stopped in our journeyings. They desire to be kept informed of our movements and of God's providential dealings with us, and though we have an instinctive dislike of saying anything about ourselves, yet from time to time we yield to the loving desires of our well-wishers. Having no "office help" and composing so many articles each month, it is impracticable to write a lengthy private letter to each one of those with whom we have been closely associated in the past, so occasionally we employ these columns to supply a few news items about ourselves. One day the full record will be read out of that "Book of Remembrance" which is being kept on High. Then we shall be gathered together around the Lamb, never more to leave His presence or be separated from each other. In the meantime, let us seek to bear each other up in the arms of faith before the throne of grace. We are thankful to say that all is well with us.—A. W. and V. E. Pink.

UNION AND COMMUNION

1b. Introduction (Completed)

Union and communion with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, by the Holy Spirit who dwells personally in the saints, is a most glorious and transcendent wonder of divine grace. Nature cannot comprehend it—carnal reason cannot grasp it—none can have the least real perception of its nature, importance, or excellency, but such as are born from above—nor can the regenerate either, except as they are divinely enlightened and supernaturally lifted up into the true knowledge and enjoyment of the same. Spiritual life, and all its activities, is beyond the ken of mere intellect, consisting as it does in communion with God Himself. The oneness of the church with Christ is a blessed reality, which none but the Spirit of God can open to the renewed mind and give right views of it. It is His royal prerogative so to do. It is part of His official work according to the eternal settlements of grace. His work is to glorify Christ, to enthrone Him in the hearts of His blood-bought people.

Were it not that the Holy Spirit “searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (1Co 2:10), and that we had the unfailing promise of Christ (which needs to be laid hold of by faith and pleaded before God) that this infallible Teacher “will guide you into all truth” (Joh 16:13), it would be the very height of presumption for us to attempt to write upon such a subject. The very profundity of our present theme has been clearly intimated by God’s designating it a “mystery.” It is remarkable that twice only in the sacred Scriptures do we read of a “*great* mystery.” Once when the reference is to that ineffable union of the human nature with the Godhead in the Person of Immanuel—“great is the mystery of godliness” (1Ti 3:16), and once when mention is made of the mystical union subsisting between Christ and His church—“This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church” (Eph 5:32).

To aid our finite understandings, a variety of figures and natural analogies are used to express the oneness of Christ and His people. The marriage of Adam and Eve in their unfallen state, by which they became “one flesh” (Eph 5:31) is a striking resemblance of the union between Christ and His church, for He is the Husband (Isa 54:5), she is the Spouse (Song 2:1). As Adam said of Eve, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh” (Gen 2:23), so the saints are assured, “We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones” (Eph 5:30). Another resemblance or type is that of the head and members of our physical organism. In the human body, there is such an intimate relation and vital connection between the head and its members that if severed, the one could have no living existence apart from the other. Thus it is in the Body mystical—Christ is the Head, believers are the members, see 1 Corinthians 12:12, 27; Ephesians 4:15-16.

A third resemblance is that of the root and the branches. There is a union between them, otherwise how should the one convey juice and nourishment to the others. So it is with Christ and believers, “I am the vine, ye are the branches” (Joh 15:5). The same figure is found again in a number of passages in the epistles. There we read of being “*grafted in* among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree” (Rom 11:17), of being “*rooted and built up in him*” (Col 2:7). This is a blessed analogy between Christ and believers and the root and the branches, in point of union and in point of influence. The root conveys life and nourishment to the branches, so does Christ to those who are one with Him. With this resemblance we may link the simile used by our Lord, the “corn of wheat” (Joh 12:24) falling into the ground, with its embryo increase of “much fruit” wrapped up within itself.

Still another resemblance is the foundation and the building, which is found again and again in Scripture. Here too there is a *union*, for in a building all the stones and timbers being joined and fastened together upon the foundation, make but one entire structure. So it is here. The saints are “God’s building” (1Co 3:9), Christ Himself being the “foundation” of that building (v. 11). And again, we are said to be “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone” (Eph 2:20). The building itself is the complement of the foundation, but remove it, and the whole superstructure topples to the ground. How blessed to be assured by God, “Behold, I lay in Zion...a *sure* foundation” (Isa 28:16). Finally, Christians are referred to as “lively [living] stones, are built up a spiritual house” (1Pe 2:5), which tells us that our union with Christ is both a mystical and a vital one.

In addition to the various figures and resemblances which God has graciously designed to employ so as to aid our feeble minds in grasping something of the mysterious and glorious union which exists between His Son and His people, there are also types in the Old Testament which throw light thereon. A notable one is found in Exodus 28, "And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty...And thou shalt take two onyx stones, and grave on them the names of the children of Israel...And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod for stones of memorial unto the children of Israel: and *Aaron* shall bear *their* names before the LORD upon his two shoulders for a memorial...And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre; upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be. And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon *his* forehead, that *they* may be accepted before the LORD" (Exo 28:2, 9, 12, 36-38). Thus was the whole Israel of God represented before JEHOVAH *in* the person of Aaron—blessed adumbration of the identification with our great High Priest. "It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments" (Psa 133:2)—figure of the Holy Spirit communicated to Christ *and* His people.

Communion with Christ is our participation with Him in the *benefits* flowing from His several offices. As in marriage, there must be a union before there can be any communion (sharing together) of estates and conditions, so before we can obtain anything *from* Christ we must first be one *with* Him, all is *in* Christ for us. "He that hath the Son hath life" (1Jo 5:12), and the term "life" sums up all spiritual blessings, just as physical "death" cuts off from all temporal mercies. We "have" the Son by God's eternal gift to us, as He possesses us by the Father's eternal gift of us to Him. Therefore it is written, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is *given*" (Isa 9:6)—as in marriage. God made a grant of His Son to us, and *that* included all, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him *also* freely give us all things?" (Rom 8:32).

"For we are made *partakers* of Christ" (Heb. 3:14). He and we are made one, "*joint* heirs" (Rom 8:17). "Being united *to* Christ, we are possessed of all *in* Christ, so far as is consistent with our capacities of receiving and God's ordination and appointment in giving. Union gives us interest in the personal merits and righteousness of Christ and the benefits of His mediatory actions. They are ours to all effects and purposes, as if we ourselves had satisfied and obeyed the law. Why? because it is not in a person sundered from us. It is in our Head, in One to whom we are united by a strait bond of union (better "by a legal and vital bond of union"), therefore are they reputed as one." (Thomas Manton, 1670).

"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1Co 1:30). To be "in Christ" is to be *united* to Him—first electively (Eph 1:4), when God chose us in Him before the foundation of the world. Second, representatively (1Co 15:22), as we were in Adam. Third, vitally (2Co 5:17), as a branch in the vine. Fourth, voluntarily (Rom 8:1), by faith cleaving unto Him. Of this compound union we are taught two things here in 1 Corinthians 1:30—its

origin and its effects. As to its origin, it is “of God,” He alone being the efficient cause. As to its effects, because the saints are one with Christ, they *participate* in His benefits, and so He is “made unto us wisdom” etc.

Because of our union with Christ we are “accepted in the beloved” (Eph 1:6). We have the same title to enter God’s presence that Christ has, “*by his own blood* he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Heb 9:12), “having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest *by the blood of Jesus*” (Heb 10:19)! Because of our union with Christ we have not only a valid title or right to draw nigh unto God, but a personal *fitness*, “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath *made us meet* to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Col 1:12). Our very life is “hid *with Christ* in God” (Col 3:3), so that before we can perish, He must perish. What is yet more blessed, the Father loves us as He loves Christ, “That the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me” (Joh 17:23).

“Christ is His Father’s Son, and believers are Christ’s sons, (Isa 8:18). He is the Father’s delight (Isa 42:1), they are Christ’s (Psa 16:3). He is the Father’s glory (Heb 1:3), and they are Christ’s (2Co 8:23). God is Christ’s Head (1Co 11:3), Christ is their Head (1Co 11:3). God always hears Christ (Joh 11:42), and Christ them (Joh 15:15). All power is given to Christ (Mat 28:18), and by Christ to them (Phi 4:13). God has committed all judgment to Christ (Joh 5:22), Christ makes them His assessors (1Co 6:2-3)” (David Clarkson, 1685).

The oneness of Christ and His people is manifested in intimate and precious fellowship together. The whole of Solomon’s “Song” sets forth this union and communion in a most wonderful and blessed way. Observe by what endearing terms the Saviour calls His church, “Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse” (Song 4:9)—she is His “sister” as well as His “spouse,” for by taking her into union with Himself, this brings the church into *every* relation—the saints are His “sons” (Heb 2:10), His “brethren” (Heb 2:12), and compare Matthew 12:48. The divine Bridegroom says to His wife, “*Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved*” (Song 5:1), and she says, “Let my beloved come into his garden, and *eat* his pleasant fruits” (Song 4:16). There is sweet entertainment on both sides. They are mutually charmed with each other’s beauty. He says, “Behold, THOU art fair, my love” (Song 4:1), she exclaims, “My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand” (Song 5:10).

The precious intimacy of that union which exists between Christ and His people is manifested in many Scriptures. “If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, *and he with me*” (Rev 3:20). There is *mutual* communion, reciprocal affections. Christ and His saints are fond of hearing each other’s voices, “Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely” (Song 2:14). That is Christ speaking to His spouse. Her response is, “the companions hearken to thy voice: cause me to hear it” (Song 8:13). There are also mutual complaints between them, “I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love” (Rev 2:4); “LORD, why castest thou off my soul? why hidest thou thy face from me?” (Psa 88:14). O that both writer and reader may be favoured with more intimate and

constant communion with the eternal Lover of our souls, "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (1Pe 5:7).

Let us now seek to define and describe a little more closely the *nature* of that union which exists between Christ and His church.

1. It is *supernatural*, being altogether beyond the powers of the creature to effectuate. It is wholly of the wisdom, grace, and power of God. All the unions we have in the natural world come infinitely short of this. The union of the body and soul in man puzzles and baffles the greatest philosophers, but the union of Christ and His church is a far greater mystery—that persons so distant, so divided, should be made one, is a profundity which no finite intelligence can fully comprehend. We had known nothing whatever about it if God had not revealed it to us in His Word, and even now we discern it "through a glass darkly."

2. It is a *real* union, not a mere theoretical or fantastic thing, a creature of the imagination. Though it cannot be perceived by our senses, nor visualized by the mind, it is not a mere theological fiction. It is plainly and expressly affirmed in many Scriptures, under a great variety of expressions, all of which are too clear to be misunderstood. As actually as the limbs of the body are united to their head, the wife to the husband, the branches to the root, so truly are the saints united to Christ and Christ to them. Take this away and the whole of Christianity collapses. Is not the union between God the Father and God the Son a *real* one? then so is this, John 17:22—the one is as much a verity as the other.

3. It is *spiritual*. The great design and the grand aim of God in His purpose and dealings with the elect is the communication to them of the benefits of Christ—but all communication of benefits implies communion, and all communion necessarily presupposes *union* with His Person. Not that there is any confusion or transfusing of the Christian's person with Christ's Person, but a real and personal conjunction between them. That conjunction is not a gross, fleshly, corporeal union, but a mystical, spiritual, and inward one. The nature of this union is seen in the *bond* of it. It is entirely spiritual—the Spirit in Christ, faith in us. The husband and the wife are "one flesh" (Eph 5:31), but "he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit" (1Co 6:17).

4. It is *intimate*, far closer than that existing between the branches and root of a tree, or that between husband and wife. The union between Christ and His people is so near that we know not how to conceive it, still less express it. We may borrow some light here and there from the different unions in nature, but they all, in point of nearness, fall far short of it. Believers are so united to the Lord as to be "one spirit"—what an expression is that! what could be spoken higher! so intimate is this oneness that in a coming day Christ will say, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto *me*" (Mat 25:40). So near are the saints to Christ, they are a part of Him, so that He would be *incomplete* without them—they are His "fullness" (Eph 1:23).

5. It is *indissoluble*. The oneness between Christ and His church is such that it cannot be broken. All the powers of Satan cannot destroy that union. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (Rom 8:35). "Ye *shall* abide in him" (1Jo 2:27). It is an inseparable, insuperable union. Death itself, though it break all other unions, does not and cannot put an end to or reach this. "Blessed are the dead which die *in* the Lord" (Rev 14:13), "absent

from the body, and to be present *with* the Lord” (2Co 5:8)! And this union pertains to *all* the redeemed, the least as well as the greatest Christian, the humblest as well as the highest, is *equally* united to Christ and participates in what belongs to Him.

Union with Christ *in glory* is the goal toward which we are now moving, but at present we enjoy *experimental* union with Him in grace. But experimental union with Christ is only possible as there is a *practical* union with Him, *for* “can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (Amo 3:3). Practical union with Christ presupposes a *saving* one, whereby the heart is wedded to Christ in faith and love. That, in turn, necessitates a *vital* union, for only as quickened by the Spirit and made one with Christ can any sinner savingly believe unto Him. And that again denotes a *mystical* and eternal union, for the Spirit quickens none save those who had a covenant-oneness with Christ before the foundation of the world. Nor could there ever have been *any* union between the Creator and the creature but for the *mediatorial* union, whereby the Son united our nature to His own ineffable Person. And the foundation of *that* was the *divine* union, the three Persons in one God. The Lord willing, by His enabling, we shall seek to contemplate separately each of these unions in the articles which follow, taking them up in their inverse order.

ANXIETY

“In nothing be anxious” (Phi 4:6. R.V.) Worrying is as definitely forbidden as theft. This needs to be carefully pondered and definitely realized by us, so that we do not excuse it as an innocent “infirmity.” The more we are convicted of the sinfulness of anxiety, the sooner are we likely to perceive that it is most dishonouring to God, and strive against (Heb 12:4) it. But *how* are we to “strive against” it? First, by begging the Holy Spirit to grant us a deeper conviction of its enormity. Second, by making it a subject of special earnest prayer, that we may be delivered from this evil. Third, by watching its beginnings, and as soon as we are conscious of harassment of mind, as soon as we detect the unbelieving thought, lift up our heart to God and ask Him for deliverance from it.

The best antidote for anxiety is frequent meditation upon God’s goodness, power, and sufficiency. When the saint can confidently realize, “The Lord is my shepherd,” he must draw the conclusion, “I shall not want!” (Psa 23:1). Immediately following our exhortation is, “but in *every thing* by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (Phi 4:6). Nothing is too big and nothing is too little to spread before and cast upon the Lord. The “with thanksgiving” is most important, yet it is the point at which we most fail. It means that *before* we receive God’s answer, we thank Him for the same. It is the confidence of the child expecting his Father to be gracious.

