

The Only Two Religions and Other Gospel Papers

By

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Preface

In this little volume the word *religion* is used in its popular, not its distinctively Biblical sense. In the Scriptures it is but seldom found, and where used it refers, undoubtedly, to outward observances. Paul “profited in the Jews’ religion.” He gave himself up to the carrying out of all its legal enactments. James contrasts with this the “pure religion and undefiled,” which is, not Christianity itself, but the outcome of it. Alas, how many stumble right here—designating a system of philanthropy and correct living as Christianity itself; mistaking the result for the cause from which it springs; denying the truth of God—unwittingly though it may be.

But, as generally used, the word *religion* covers both the faith and the practice of its devotees—according to Webster, “a system of faith and worship;” and it is in this sense it is used in the present collection of papers.

The first article is introductory to all the others; which throughout are designed to contrast God’s way of salvation with the numberless ways of man’s devising—the end of which will be death, moral and spiritual.

The fact that they were written as separate papers, and are now collected into a volume for the first time, will account for occasional repetitions of thought, and even statement.

If they lead any to value Christ more, and human religiousness less, they will have fulfilled the object for which they are sent forth.

H. A. I.

The Only Two Religions

“There are only *two* religions in the world:

The true and the false.

All phases of false religion are alike. They all say:

‘Something in my hand I bring,’

The only difference between them being as to *what* the ‘something’ is.

The true religion says: ‘*Nothing* in my hand I bring.’”

Lines well worth pondering are these, reader, and we beg you to consider them. You are, we will suppose, a religious person. Most people are. “Man,” said an ancient philosopher, “is a religious animal.”

You may have your particular ideas about religious questions, then; but are yours the true, or the false?

Recently, while presenting the gospel on the streets of a California city, we were often interrupted about as follows: “Look here, sir! There are hundreds of religions in this country, and the followers of each sect think theirs the only right one. How can poor, plain men like us, find out what really is the truth?”

We generally replied something like this: “Hundreds of religions, you say? That’s strange; I’ve heard of only two.”

“Oh, but you surely know there are more than that!”

“Not at all, sir. I find, I quite admit, many shades of difference in the opinions of those comprising the two great schools; but after all there are but the two. The one covers all who expect salvation by doing; the other, all who have been saved by something done. So you see the whole

question is very simple. Can you save yourself, or have you to be saved by Another? If you can be your own savior, you do not need my message. If you cannot, you may well listen to it.”

This we would press also upon you, reader, and for a few moments ask your attention to a picture drawn by Christ Himself of the only two religions. A word picture it is, and a graphic one. You will find it in **Luke 18:9-14**. It is the well-known parable of the Pharisee and the publican. The first is the doer, the man with “something” in his hand, which he offers God, hoping to buy a seat in heaven. Note his prayer: “God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.” He is, surely, a representative man in the great Church of the Doers. What a handful he brings!—his character, his fasts, and his tithes. A Pharisee he is called, but he will be found under a score of other names. We have beheld him in the garb of Papist and Jew, Churchman and Dissenter, Unitarian and Evangelical, Theosophist and Spiritist, Buddhist and Brahmin, Mormon and Mohammedan, Christian Scientist and Confucian, Jezreelite and—what not? His robes are various; his prayers—the pith of them—are ever the same. Sometimes he quotes Scripture. Sometimes he rejects it.

We heard him once in the village church, telling how, by living an exemplary life, attending to religious duties, and keeping the commandments, he expected to go to heaven after death. His manner was earnest, his words were fervent. He had been advertised as a wonderful evangelist and revivalist. He dwelt much on reformation, lauded creature-righteousness, and had apparently forgotten that Christ had ever died, though he quoted the verse that says, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,” omitting to

emphasize the fact that salvation must first be your own, and that this verse was written to those who are saints, or saved already.

Not long after, we listened to the Pharisee again, in the person of a Mormon elder, telling how his faith, his repentance, his baptism, the fact that hands had been laid on his head, and his good deeds, assured him, if he kept on to the end, of an exalted place after death; but not a word he uttered about the Lord Jesus—His cross, His death, His blood, His resurrection, or His Priesthood; and although he dwelt much on the doctrine of “justification by works,” he neglected to tell his hearers that such justification was before man—not before God! What need of Christ if he could do so much himself?

We met this Pharisee also one day as a Spiritist medium, and asked him his ground of hope. He told us of his benevolence and righteousness, and vaunted loudly his earnest desire to “help the world,” and “better his fellowman,” but not a syllable did he utter of Him whom God hath made “to be wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption” to poor sinners who receive Him.

A few months since, also, we questioned a Chinese merchant as to whether he had peace in view of death. He said, in fairly plain English, that he tried to be a good man: he neither smoked opium nor gambled in the lottery (the two great sins of the Americanized “celestial”); besides, he worked hard and attended to the precepts of Kung Fu Tze (Confucius); so he saw no reason to fear. A Pharisee, though he wore a queue!

Different men were all these, and widely differing many of their views; but on one point they all agreed: salvation could be won by effort—no need for the Christ of God!

The publican in our chapter—how different was his case! Righteousness he had none to plead. Character he is almost ashamed to mention. “Me, the sinner,” he cries, and beats upon his breast. Fasting and tithes he cannot tell of. Empty-handed he appears before God, his only hope that Divine love may find a way whereby Divine holiness may remain untarnished and Divine righteousness be fully vindicated, yet he, a guilty wretch, be saved instead of damned.

The latter he deserves. His true condition he does not try to hide. Has God, then, grace for such as he? and can He, without compromising the dignity of His throne, let the poor sinner go free—nay, more, justify him before that throne and bless him eternally?

He can. An apostle, once a Pharisee himself, but emptied at last of all his fancied goodness, tells us how, and in what name, it can be done. “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” (**Acts 13:38, 39**). Here, then, is that on which even the publican can rest. Here is the religion for the lost and helpless. Every phase of the false one says, “do;” but alas, he cannot do even what the law of Moses demands. He tries and struggles, but all in vain. To wash out the stain of one sin is, for him, impossible.

Blessed the message, then, that “true religion “ brings. It tells that “Christ, in death, has wrought salvation. God has raised Him from the tomb.”

Is this your ground of peace, dear reader; or do you belong to that great church started by Cain at the dawn of earth’s long day, who hoped by fruits plucked with toil from a cursed ground to satisfy the claims of a holy God against sin, instead of, like Abel, resting on the blood of the sacrifice?

Only the two religions, then—only two today. Which is yours? Do you trust in self, or Christ? There is no third party on whom to rest. “To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (**Rom. 4:5**).

A Hebrew’s Search for the Blood of Atonement

In the spring of 1898, I was holding some gospel meetings in San Francisco, and several times addressed the Jews attending a “Mission to Israel.” On one occasion, having concluded my discourse, the meeting was thrown open for discussion with any Hebrews who desired to ask questions or state difficulties, as also for any who had been brought to Christ to relate their conversions.

The experience of one old Jew interested me greatly, and, as nearly as I can, I give his remarks in his own words, though not attempting to preserve the inimitable Hebrew-English dialect.

He said: “This is Passover week among you, my Jewish brethren; and as I sat here, I was thinking how you will be observing it. You will have put away all leaven from your houses; you will eat the ‘motsah’ (unleavened wafers) and the roasted lamb. You will attend the synagogue services, and carry out the ritual and directions of the Talmud; but you forget, my brethren, that you have everything but that which Jehovah required first of all. He did not say, ‘When I see the leaven put away, or when I see you eat the motsah, or the lamb, or go to the synagogue;’ but His word was, ‘When I see the *blood* I will pass over you.’ Ah, my brethren, you can substitute nothing for this. You must have *blood*, blood, BLOOD!”

As he reiterated this word with ever-increasing emphasis, his black eyes flashed warningly, and his Jewish hearers quailed before him.

“Blood!” It is an awful word, that, for one who reveres the ancient oracle, and yet has no sacrifice. Turn where he will in the book, the blood meets him; but let him seek as he may, he cannot find it in the Judaism of the present.

After a moment’s pause, the patriarchal old man went on somewhat as follows: “I was born in Palestine, nearly seventy years ago. As a child I was taught to read the Law, the Psalms and the Prophets. I early attended the synagogue and learned Hebrew from the Rabbis. At first I believed what I was told, that ours was the true and only religion, but as I grew older and studied the Law more intently, I was struck by the place the blood had in all the ceremonies outlined there, and equally struck by its utter absence in the ritual to which I was brought up.

“Again and again I read **Exodus 12** and **Leviticus 16, 17**, and the latter chapters especially made me tremble, as I thought of the great Day of Atonement and the place the blood had there. Day and night one verse would ring in my ears. ‘It is the *blood* that maketh an atonement for the soul’ I knew I had broken the law. I *needed atonement*. Year after year, on that day, I beat my breast as I confessed my need of it; but it was to be made by blood, and there *was no blood!*

“In my distress, at last, I opened my heart to a learned and venerable rabbi. He told me that God was angry with His people. Jerusalem was in the hands of the Gentiles, the temple was destroyed, and a Mohammedan mosque was reared up in its place. The only spot on earth where we dare shed the blood of sacrifice, in accordance with **Deuteronomy 12** and **Leviticus 17**, was desecrated, and our nation scattered. That was *why* there was no blood. God had

Himself closed the way to carry out the solemn service of the great Day of Atonement. Now, we must turn to the Talmud, and rest on its instruction, and trust in the mercy of God and the merits of the fathers.

“I tried to be satisfied, but could not. Something seemed to say that the law was unaltered, even though our temple was destroyed. Nothing else but blood could atone for the soul. We dared not shed blood for atonement elsewhere than in the place the Lord had chosen. Then we were left without an atonement after all?

“This thought filled me with horror. In my distress I consulted many other rabbis. I had but one great question—*Where can I find the blood of atonement?*

“I was over thirty years of age when I left Palestine and came to Constantinople, with my still unanswered question ever before my mind, and my soul exceedingly troubled about my sins.

“One night I was walking down one of the narrow streets of that city, when I saw a sign telling of a meeting for Jews. Curiosity led me to open the door and go in. Just as I took a seat I heard a man say, ‘The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.’ It was my first introduction to Christianity, but I listened breathlessly as the speaker told how God had declared that ‘without shedding of blood is no remission;’ but that He had given His only begotten Son, the Lamb of God, to die, and all who trusted in His blood were forgiven all their iniquities. This was the Messiah of the fifty-third of Isaiah: this was the Sufferer of **Psalm 22**. Ah, my brethren, I had found the blood of atonement at last. I trusted it, and now I love to read the New Testament and see how all the shadows of the law are fulfilled in Jesus. His blood has been shed for sinners. It has satisfied God, and it is the only means of salvation for either Jew or Gentile.”

Reader, have you yet found the blood of atonement? “Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world” (**John 1:29**). Are you trusting in God’s smitten Lamb?—the sacrifice of God?

God’s Remedy Versus That Of The Priest

Recently we listened to a Romish father of the Paulist order as, for some time, he depicted with fervor and eloquence—we might even say power—the exceeding heinousness of sin. A fell disease he showed it to be—a dreadful curse, a terrible affront to a holy God. He spared no words in declaring the undone condition of the sinner, his loss for time, his awful fate for eternity. Our own heart was moved by it. We doubt not many others were.

When, at last, he had well-nigh exhausted his magnificent vocabulary in picturing sin’s direful work of destruction, he paused a moment, then asked, dramatically, “Is there no remedy? Must the sinner be eternally lost? Or, is there a means of deliverance even for the one guilty of mortal sin?”

Anxiously we waited for his answer, feeling that perhaps the fate of many souls in the great cathedral trembled in the balance.

“Yes,” he said, “a remedy there is. God has provided it. All can avail themselves of it. Listen, O sinner, listen—you who sigh for deliverance! The remedy is—” Another pause, that all might catch the important word. What would it be? God’s remedy, we knew, was Christ—His finished work, His shed blood! Sad indeed was our heart as, in place of His blessed name, he pronounced the one word, “Penance!”

Poor, misled and misleading old man! Did he tell his vast congregation but a few moments before that they were all lost and ruined as sinners before God, only to mock them in

the next by pointing them to a remedy that could be of no avail? Alas, so it was! One verse of Holy Scripture pondered over would shatter the hopes of any who sought to obtain salvation by penance and prayers: “Without *shedding of blood* there is no remission” (**Heb. 9:22**). And yet, ere he closed, the same priest quoted the verse that tells whose blood it is—“The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from *all sin*” (**1 John 1:7**). If this be true, what place for penance? If *all sin* be cleansed by blood, for what sin will penance serve as a means to cleanse?

Doubtless many of his hearers had tried his remedy again and again. Penance after penance following each recurring confession had they fully attended to, yet were they just as burdened with their load of guilt at the end of it all as at the beginning, for—

“None but Jesus

Can do guilty sinners good.”

Of Him it is written, “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness; that He might *he* just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus” (**Rom. 3:25, 26**). And lest any should think it needful to add to this their own poor works—penance or aught else—we are told, “Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that *worketh not*, but *believeth* on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (**Rom. 4:4, 5**).

Turn, then, reader, if unsaved, from every other remedy, and “behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world” (**John 1:29**).

“Which Thief?”

“Oh, of course, I intend to be saved sometime; but there is no use being in a hurry about it. There is always a chance, even at the eleventh hour. Remember the dying thief!” carelessly said a young man at the close of a meeting, when spoken to about his soul.

“Which thief?” pointedly asked his questioner.

“Why, I had really forgotten there were two. I mean the saved one,” was the reply, as an anxious expression came over his face.

“Yes, one was saved, and is in heaven now. The other, who had an equal opportunity for salvation, is wailing in hell. What warrant have you that you will not spend eternity as he will, rather than as the other?”

It was a word fitly spoken, an arrow that pierced the joints of his harness; and the young man was led to see the folly of further procrastination, and that night was saved for eternity, through receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour.

Thousands, like him, forget there were “two thieves.” They remember the mercy of God that saved the one, while forgetting the judgment of God meted out to the other. Carelessly they wander on, hoping to be saved at last; but, alas, how many are cut off in sin and damned forever, to whom the gospel was often presented, but who, presuming on the patience of God, rejected it until “there was no remedy.”

Which thief, reader, we affectionately ask, would you be like? We recollect speaking once to a very refined and elegant lady on a steamer, who asked, indignantly, “You do not mean to say I have got to go to heaven like the dying thief, do you?”

“No, madam,” we replied, “you do not have to. If you reject Christ, you will have to go to hell with the other.”

And so we would remind the reader;

The saved thief believed on the Son of God, and is with Christ now.

The lost thief scorned a Saviour, and is in the depths of woe.

You *must* be with one or the other for eternity.

“Because there is wrath, beware lest He take thee away with His stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee.”

The Mormon’s Mistake Or What Is The Gospel?

Not long since, there came to my door a young man dressed in the conventional, pseudo-clerical style that readily proclaimed, to one at all acquainted with the so-called Latter-day Saints, that he was a Mormon “elder”—though “younger” might be a more correct term, (**1 Pet. 5:5**) as scriptural elders were invariably men of years and experience,¹ who could care for the flock of God (**1 Pet. 5:1-3**), but were not to lord it over the people of God as over possessions.

In the case mentioned, the Mormon introduced himself as a “minister of the gospel, doing missionary work among the mountain towns” of California, and stated that he would be pleased to put before me some of “the principles of the gospel.” Intimating that I myself was also seeking to give forth God’s good news to poor sinners (**1 Tim. 1:15**), he was told that if such was indeed his object, I would be glad to converse with him; so bade him be seated.

“And now, sir,” he was asked, “would you kindly favor us” (a number were present) “with a short statement of what the gospel really is?”

“Certainly,” he replied. “The gospel consists of four chief points. The first is repentance; the second, faith; the third, baptism for the remission of sins by one duly qualified; while the fourth is the laying on of the hands of a man called of God, for the reception of the Holy Ghost.”

“Well, and supposing one has gone through all this, is he then saved?”

“Oh, of course, no one can know that in this life. If one goes on to the end, he will be exalted in the kingdom.” Thereupon he proceeded to open a little Testament, with which, however, he was but slightly familiar, and pointed us to some proof texts showing conclusively that the Lord and the apostles preached repentance and faith, as also that Peter spoke of “baptism for the remission of sins” (**Acts 2:38**; let the reader carefully note the verse and its context), and that in at least two instances (**Acts 8:14-17**; 19:1-6) apostles laid their hands on people in order to their receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. An effort was also made to find a verse to prove that no one can know he is saved now; but in the face of **Eph. 2:4-8**; **1 Pet. 1:9**; 1 Cor. 1:8; **2 Cor. 2:15**; and **2 Tim. 1:9**, this was an utter absurdity, though he pointed to Matt, 24:13, “He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved,” in defense of his position.

As to this, one need only say that endurance certainly is a proof of reality. One who said he was saved, yet did not endure, would thereby prove the emptiness of his profession.²

“I quite agree with you,” I said, “as to the fact that Scripture speaks of the four points you mention; but, possibly, you did

not understand my query. I asked you for a statement of the gospel. If these so-called ‘four principles’ be indeed the gospel, then you have a gospel without Christ; in other words, a gospel with the gospel omitted. And if you are correct, then surely the apostle Paul, at least, labored under a most serious delusion, for he gives us a clear statement of his gospel, and actually says nothing of either one or other of the various points upon which you have dwelt. No doubt you will recollect the passage?”

He did not, however. He was not aware of any such direct statement on the subject. In fact, it was soon evident that, with the exception of a few verses on his favorite themes, his Bible was practically a sealed book. He turned, however, at my direction, to the fifteenth chapter of 1st Corinthians, to which, for a little, I would invite the reader’s careful attention.

Commencing at the first verse of this precious and wondrous portion of Scripture, we read: “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you *the gospel which I preached* unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also *ye are saved*, if ye *keep in memory what I preached* unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that *Christ died for our sins* according to the Scriptures” (see **Isa. 53:5, 6**); “and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures: and that He was seen of Cephas,” etc.

Here I stopped, as the rest of the passage is devoted to bringing forth the eye-witnesses of Christ in resurrection, and therefore could hardly be considered doctrinal; though the reader will derive much benefit by meditation on the entire portion at his leisure.

“Now,” I said, turning to the Mormon, “we have here a statement of the gospel—the gospel which Paul preached;

and it is dangerous to preach any other, as we find from **Gal. 1:8, 9** that the person who does so, though it be an angel from heaven, is under a curse, or devoted to judgment. I understand that you teach that your gospel was revealed to Joseph Smith by an angel. If true, that would prove nothing, if it be found, upon examination, to be other than that proclaimed by the apostle to the Gentiles. His gospel had been received by the Corinthians; in it they stood; by it they were *saved*, if *real believers*. It was not, you will notice, a careful obedience to certain ordinances or a walking according to certain rules, such as you mentioned a few minutes ago, that would insure their salvation, however blessed such might be, if properly understood; but it was keeping in memory this gospel.

“I notice, then, to begin with, that his gospel is *concerning a Person*, and quite a different person than yours brings before us. It is ‘concerning the Son of God,’ as **Rom. 1:3** tells us. Your gospel did not have a word about Him in all its four points. The subject of Paul’s gospel has not a word about any one or any thing save Him. Perhaps we might say it also could be divided into four heads, though more properly three; but even divided into four (to go as far with you as we can), what marked differences do we find! Your four heads are all concerning the poor sinner, and might be put this way:

1. The sinner repents;
2. The sinner has faith;
3. The sinner is baptized;
4. The sinner has hands laid on him.

Now, in contrast to this, see how the true gospel can be put:

1. Christ died;
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2. Christ was buried;
3. Christ has been raised again;
4. Christ is the object for the hearts of His own.

“Surely the two gospels have nothing in common. You teach, I believe, that Christ died for Adam’s transgression, not for ours; but maintain that while Adamic sin is met by the Cross, our sins as individuals must be washed away by baptism. Paul’s gospel tells us that He died for *our* sins; and if that be so, and ‘the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanseth us from *all* sin,’ where does baptism in your sense apply? If *all* my sins are met by His precious blood, if they were borne ‘in His own body on the tree’ (**1 Pet. 2:24**), how many are left to be cleansed by baptism?³ Assuredly none. But, alas, this is but one instance in which the false gospel of Mormonism is opposed to the precious gospel of the grace of God as revealed in the Bible.

“But I go on to the second point. Christ not only died, but ‘was buried;’ yet it was written of Him, “Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption” (**Acts 2:27; Psa. 16:10**). His burial declares the reality of His death, and surely speaks of His being forever through with the place He took on earth. It is the end of all the relationships in which He previously stood, and tells us He is dead to the law—having paid my penalty—and to sin—not His own, but mine—which He bore, and I am ‘buried with Him by baptism unto death;’ so that I am not left where Mormonism would leave me, as a poor, struggling soul on earth, striving to continue to the end in order to be saved, but I am accounted as one who, with Him, has been buried to it all: thus I am brought to the third point:

“Christ was raised from the dead, and I am raised with Him. His place is now mine as to acceptance with God. ‘He was

delivered for our offences and *raised again* for our justification;’ His resurrection being God’s open declaration that the believer is cleared from all charge of sin, since his Substitute is released from death.

“And now the One who is alive forevermore (**Rev. 1:18**) is presented as an object for the hearts of His own. ‘He was seen;’ and the same apostle exclaims, in another place, ‘We see Jesus!’ (**Heb. 2:9**). Poor sinners are first led to see the utter impossibility of improving or rendering themselves more fit for God’s presence. The eye of faith is then directed to the One who died, in whom believing, they are ‘justified from all things’ (**Acts 13:38, 39**). Now they have also an object for the heart, even Christ in glory (**2 Cor. 3:18**). How different this to what you have presented! Here,

‘Tis Jesus first, ‘tis Jesus last,

‘Tis Jesus all the way,’

while you are cast entirely on yourself.

“But now, another question. You spoke of men with *authority* to baptize and lay on hands. Where do you get that in Scripture?”

For answer, he turned to **Heb. 5:4**, and read, “And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.”

“What ‘honor’ is here referred to?” I asked.

“The honor of the priesthood giving authority to baptize and confer the Holy Ghost.”

“No; the first verse contradicts this. It is not a question of the ‘priesthood’ at all. As *all* believers now are priests, there is no special priestly class in Christianity, as is clearly shown by referring to **Rev. 1:6**; and **1 Pet. 2:5, 9**. The subject in **Heb.**

5 is that of *High Priesthood*, and is referring to the Lord Jesus Christ, called of God, as noted in ver. 6. Nor is there a word about baptism or imposition of hands; but it is a question of ‘offering gifts and sacrifices for sins’ (ver. 1; also **Heb. 2:17**), and then of succoring His people in this world of trial. To apply such a scripture to human ministry is simply ‘handling the word of God deceitfully,’ and deserves the severest censure.”

Such was, in substance, what I sought to put before the misguided young man; but, alas, so deceitful is the human heart, that man would rather be occupied with *his* repentance, *his* faith, or *his anything*, than with God’s Christ; and I found this preacher of “a different gospel, which is not another” (**Gal. 1:6, 7**, margin), to be of the same class as thousands in professed Christendom. The scriptures brought before him had but little weight compared with “present-day revelation,” despite the word of Paul in **Col. 1:25** (for “fulfil,” read “complete,” the correct word); so he went on his way, trusting to his fleshly religion, and ignoring the “gospel of God.”

Ere dismissing the subject, I might remind the reader that neither faith nor repentance is ever presented in Scripture as the *ground* of salvation. The Cross alone is that. Brought to it by the Spirit of God, the sinner will indeed repent; trusting the work there accomplished, the soul is saved.

Nor are repentance and faith as set forth in the Scriptures to be confounded with the vagaries of Mormonism. In that wretched system repentance is confounded with penitence, and faith with credulity.

In its Biblical sense, repentance is self-judgment; the owning that one is lost and guilty, righteously deserving the wrath of a holy God. Faith is trusting in Christ, whose finished work puts away sins forever. It is not simply crediting the

statement that God exists, or that the historical Jesus was the Son of God. “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (**Rom. 10:9, 10**).

Of you, reader, we would affectionately ask, Are you making the same mistake as the “elder?” You might ridicule the poor, benighted Mormon, and be amazed at the semi-heathenism taught by his church, but do you, perhaps, trust in something just as hollow, when judged by the book of God?

Remember: penances; wrought-up repentance, consisting in peculiar frames, feelings, and renunciations; intellectual acquiescence to the truths of the Bible, miscalled faith; baptism, whether administered by Mormon elder or ordained clergyman; laying on of hands, or any other human rite or divinely prescribed ceremony, will avail nothing for you.

Christ, and Christ alone, is your only salvation. Discarding all else, fly, then, to Him. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (**Acts 16:31**).

Note On Mormon Doctrines

In the preceding paper it has been my aim not to follow all the devious errors of Mormonism, and seek to refute them, but rather to endeavor to show how opposed the system is to the *gospel* of the glory of the blessed God, which He has revealed in His Word.

It has been suggested, however, that a brief epitome of some of the more important doctrines of the sect, on other lines, might be helpful in serving as a warning to any who, allured by fair speeches and sophistical reasonings, are drifting towards its awful vortex.

The following statements can readily be proven to be part of the weird paganism of this dreadful quasi-religious cult, by examination of the more “advanced” of their publications, though some of them are often denied by the traveling “elders,” whose business it is, not to alarm by making public the “depths of Satan,” but to allure by presenting a creed as near like that of orthodox Christianity as possible. Nothing could be more misleading than the statement of the “doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” which is now being circulated by thousands all over the land. This was compiled by the assumed prophet Joseph Smith in the infancy of the movement, long before “present-day revelation” had introduced the many vagaries with which it abounds to-day.

The leading doctrines accepted among them to-day are, briefly, as follows:

They profess to believe in the Bible, but gain additional “light” from the “Book of Mormon,” a collection of rubbish which one but needs to scan to see its utter absurdity and incongruity with the word of God. “The Book of Doctrine and Covenants,” purporting to be a series of revelations, chiefly to Joseph Smith, is also considered inspired, as is “The Pearl of Great Price,” which includes “The Book of Abraham,” and other apocryphal works; while prophets and apostles abound who may at any time give forth further communications, all of equal authority with these.

They are really polytheist, and believe that there are many gods, but that all (save possibly the first—as to this their statements are conflicting) were at one time men, but gained their exaltation to divinity by their faithfulness in this state. It is the hope of each man to become a god eventually. Their gods are supposed to retain their human forms and functions.

It is in connection with this that polygamy comes in. This relationship is carried on eternally. The progeny of the gods and their numerous wives will constitute their “kingdom” in the ages to come. Woman’s welfare depends on her being united to one of the faithful.

As to *this* world (to them there are many), they teach a Trinity, who administer its affairs. God and Christ are both said to have human bodies, parts, and passions; but the Holy Spirit is omnipresent, though of a material substance.

The preceding paper has outlined their teaching as to the salvation of the living. They also publicly pro- claim salvation for the dead, to whom the gospel is being preached, and who can be saved if their friends on earth will be baptized for them.

As to eschatology, they have a system of prophetic teaching embodying an exceedingly carnal view of the Millennium, ushered in by the return of Christ to regather Israel, including the ten tribes, to a Zion in America (!), and to destroy all the enemies of “the saints.” The dead will be raised, and will appear on the earth. Referring to this time, Parley Pratt says, in his “Voice of Warning,” “Our father Adam will sit enthroned as the Ancient of Days,” etc., ascribing the words of **Dan. 7:9, 10** to refer to him!

A final judgment will conclude all things; but no one will be eternally lost. There are three spheres, terrestrial, celestial, and *telestial*. In one of these all will eventually be found.

Such a system needs no attempt at refutation. It refutes itself. No child of God, who has at all apprehended the Cross, could be ensnared by it; but it is because many unwary and simple ones, anxious to be saved, but ignorant of God’s way, are daily being entrapped by it, that this paper has been penned.

The Lord use it to deliver many from such “abominable idolatries” (**1 Pet. 4:5**).

The Tramp Who Became A Deacon And How He Found Peace With God

A ragged, travel-stained and hungry-looking tramp was idly shambling along one of the principal streets of the thriving city of Louisville, Kentucky, some few years ago, furtively eyeing the passers-by, as though wondering who would be most likely to respond to a touching plea of ill-luck and various hardships, when suddenly a police officer touched him on the shoulder.

“Look here,” he said, “you’re not fit to be seen on the streets of this place. I’ll give you just forty minutes to get out of town; and if you’re found in the city limits after that time, I’ll run you in for sixty days.”

The tramp hastily beat a retreat, and started for the railroad. He would not have minded thirty days in jail. In fact, it would have really been in the nature of an accommodation, and would have rather pleased him; for, when let out again the present cold weather would probably have passed away, and he would have food and rest, at least, in the interim. He had plenty of the latter as it was, but the former had been exceedingly difficult to obtain of late; for beyond occasional scraps of bread dropped by the train hands along the track, and dried corn found in the fields, he had tasted nothing for several days.

A month in jail would certainly be preferable to spending the same length of time in his present half-starved condition. In fact, he finally concluded that even two months, long as it seemed, would be better than to go as hungry as he had recently. So, suddenly deciding to accept the hospitality of the city, he turned right about and began retracing his steps,

looking for the officer who had threatened his arrest. He got back to the corner from whence he had been ordered away, but no policeman was in sight. He roamed where he would, according to his own will, and still no officer appeared.

He began to despair of any present relief. No one would part with their means to assist him, and he could not even run across a policeman who would arrest him. He was turning disconsolately away and heading for the railroad again, when a kindly-visaged individual, evidently noting his forlorn appearance, stopped as he passed him, and dropped a five-cent piece into his hand. The surprised and gratified vagrant mumbled some unheard words of thankfulness as the gentleman passed on, and then hastened off to a nearby store, where he invested in some crackers, thinking he would get of these the largest amount. Ordinarily the drinking saloon would have claimed him, but on this occasion he decided that hunger should have the first place; thirst would be attended to next time. Eagerly grasping his purchase, he hastened off to an out-of-the way place to satisfy the cravings of his appetite.

Ensconced on a pile of railway ties, he was munching his dry meal, when the door of a cottage across the street opened, and a little girl, a bright-faced, cheery child of perhaps eight summers, stepped out and came straight over to where he sat; bearing in her dainty hands a cup of steaming hot coffee.

“Here, poor man,” she said, my mama sent this to you, because it’s so cold, and she saw you eating your supper without anything warm to drink. She didn’t put any cream in it, for she thought perhaps you might not like it; but if you do, I’ll run and get you some.”

With that, the little miss handed the refreshing cup to the wretched young man on the ties, who, long unused to such kindness, was too astonished, for the moment, to utter even

a word of thanks, but took it from her hands in silence. When he returned the cup to the house, and did essay to speak, his feelings quite overcame him; and bursting into tears, he thanked the mother for her kindness to one so worthless.

As the tears rolled down his rough cheeks, she faltered some words of comfort, but he turned hastily from the door, and started down the road, anxious to be alone with his own thoughts.

And *think*, he did. That little act of thoughtful kindness, those sympathetic words, had touched a hidden spring in the heart of the wanderer that seemed to set all the wheels of memory, long clogged, in motion. It is true he was only a tramp, and, as such, considered to be feelingless, and possibly soulless, by the most of the people whom he encountered. But he was a man for all that, and for his soul, as for all others, Christ had died. Dirty and dissolute as he was, the God of all grace, who declares that “there is no difference,” in that all alike have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, was looking upon him in compassion and love, and had followed him through all his tangled pathway.

He had not always been in the plight we have seen him in. Born on a little farm in the state of Pennsylvania; the child of honest, hardworking parents, it had doubtless never entered his mother’s mind, as night after night she tucked her baby boy away in his bed, that some day her darling would be a homeless wanderer, a slave to drink and kindred vices, spurned by the self-righteous, hunted by the officers of the law, and a stranger generally to affection, comfort, and purity. Yet so it was. As he left childhood behind, he grew up without God; and when, at an early age, he had to go out to work, he soon fell in with evil companions, who introduced him to “the pleasures of sin,” in forms he had known nothing of in the quiet home of his earliest days; so that he became

quite accustomed to the taste of tobacco and strong drink while yet in his teens, and was often drunk before he was twenty.

He was not yet at that age, when he left the more prosaic East for the wilder West; though at that time getting no farther than the state of Illinois, where he worked for a short period; then, after a brief visit home, he turned his steps towards Ohio. For a few months he worked on a new railroad; but this put him in company with men of the hardest character, who readily helped to mold him in the same way. He was an apt pupil, and had not quite attained to his majority, when he gave up his job, and, deciding that begging was more congenial than working, set out to see the world, at the expense of any who would be prevailed upon to help him.

The particular part of the world to which he turned was that portion known to Americans as "The South." The chains of an almost uncontrollable appetite now held him tightly. Liquor he would and must have. Food was rather an after consideration. For some years he roamed through the country, tramping and "beating his way" through seven states. Seldom did thoughts of eternity press on his spirit. Never, perhaps, did he calmly weigh his condition as a poor sinner hastening on to meet a holy God. These things had occupied him to no great extent when at home. They were even less to him now. Yet that forgotten One, so grievously sinned against, was very gracious to him, again and again saving him from death and—what must have followed—an eternal hell, when circumstances seemed to have combined to destroy him. On one occasion he and a companion had stolen a ride on the "Panhandle Road," going from Pittsburg to Columbus. They were riding on the bumpers between two cars. Rain began to fall, accompanied by heavy crashes of thunder and lurid lightning. He proposed to his partner to

seek shelter in the cattle car behind them. Crawling around on the edge of it, they crept through an open side door. The next instant there was a tremendous crash. A rear-end collision had taken place in the darkness. Terrified, the tramps jumped from their hiding-place. They found that the end of the box car in front had been thrown out against the car into which they had crept. Had they not changed just when they did, certain death must have been their portion. The train men were cursing and swearing. He of whom I write turned away, shocked at profanity at such a time. He felt instinctively that he owed his life to the God who was being blasphemed, and for a time his conscience was somewhat aroused; but, the danger over, its voice was unheeded. On other occasions, not necessary to mention here, he experienced the preserving grace of God who, in this sense, is “the saviour of all men, specially of those that believe” (**1 Tim. 4:10**).

Once, in those years of dissipation and godless-ness, he wrote home to let his parents, who had mourned him as dead, know of his whereabouts. And dead he *was*—not actually, as men speak, but morally so—“dead in trespasses and sins;” for he was “without hope and without God in the world.” See **Eph. 2**.

But the God who had given His Son to die for such as he, had set His heart upon him, and the day was approaching when his very condition was to be the means of his awakening. For some little time previous to the incident first mentioned, he had been proving, in a manner more bitter than ordinarily, that “the way of the transgressor is hard.” A few months prior to that, he had turned from his aimless life, for several weeks, and gone to work; but toil he had become unaccustomed to; and giving it up, he took his wages and went up the Mississippi river, from Bolivar to Memphis. On the third and last night of the trip, while sleeping on deck

beneath the boilers, he was chloroformed and robbed by the colored roustabouts. Upon regaining consciousness, he found his pockets cut open and all his earnings gone, save a few odd cents which the thieves had overlooked.

From this time on he experienced hardship after hardship. It was God's way of bringing him to himself. In no other way, perhaps, could he be broken down. At times he would think of turning over a new leaf, and giving up his bad habits; but with no thought of what was due to God—simply for his own betterment.

On the night referred to above, however, when the genial kindness of the mother and the little girl was shown him, a new thought came to his mind. These people had been good to him when he deserved nothing. Who made them so? Could it be God? It surely must have been, else why would they have cared about him? And how had he treated this “most blasphemed and yet indulgent God”? Alas, the past years of neglect, of transgression, of forgetfulness, what a tale did they tell of mercy slighted and of grace despised!

It was not yet the gospel—God giving His Son to die for lost, guilty sinners—that had spoken to him. Long, weary months, even years, were to go by ere his soul rested on this. But the ordinary mercies, the dispensations of Providence, the everyday evidences of divine care—these were the things that were used to convict this wretched drinking tramp of his terrible wickedness in spurning a God who could be so gracious to those so undeserving, and who makes His sun to shine and His rain to fall on just and unjust alike. The more he reflected on this, the more he felt a sense of sin crushing him. He loathed himself as he thought of his wretchedness and degradation. He alone was to blame, for it might have been so different. Like an earlier prodigal, he said, “How many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!” Temporally and spiritually he had

not gained, but lost, by his wayward career; and if in *time* he had found life so hard, what of eternity? He had “run with the footmen,” and they had wearied him: “contend with horses,” he could not. In the land of peace—this world, in which he hoped to find his fill of pleasure and folly—he had become wearied and sick of all that Satan had used to allure him on. How would he do “in the *swellings of Jordan*”? Ah, there was something terrible in the thought of some day having to leave the shores of Time behind him, to buffet with and be buffeted by the icy billows of death, sweeping him on to eternity! God *must* be faced. His own evil record must be met; and, without a Bible to tell him so, he knew that an *eternal hell* awaited such as he.

He went on from Louisville to a town in Ohio. Here he grew so miserable that he made up his mind that something must be done. He was going on to judgment. He must call a halt, and seek to put matters right with the God he had sinned against so long. He gave up his vaga-bondish life, and went to work. His craving for liquor he sought to conquer. He fought hard to be free, and in some measure succeeded. He tried to do right to atone for the past, and hoped God would be merciful; but he was in agony of mind still. At last he decided to see a minister, in order to learn how he might put away his sins. He sought out a clergyman. A very good and sincere person he was, no doubt, but evidently blind to the need of a soul and ignorant of the gospel of God. Ushered into his presence, the erstwhile tramp broke out with—“I’m lost, and I want to be saved. For a year I’ve been in anguish. I cannot sleep. If I die as I am, I’ll have an awful eternity. Can you tell me what I must do?”

The minister was interested, and really anxious to help. As a first step, he advised him to join a class in the Sunday-school and learn the Scriptures. He did as he was told. He became a regular attendant, and for a time conscience was

lulled to rest; but true peace with God he knew not. When the minister thought he was ready for it, he was told to learn the catechism, and thus be prepared to join the church. He had a bad memory, but he pored over his task. For six months he went to the lectures on it. He managed to memorize most of the ten commandments at last; the minister telling him God would be satisfied if he learned as much of it as he could. But this gave him no peace; for what comfort could the law, which is the “min- istry of condemnation” (**2 Cor. 3:9**), and “the strength of sin” (**1 Cor. 15:56**), minister to a man already groaning beneath the weight of the very sin that the commandment only made “exceeding sinful” (**Rom. 7:13**)? Willing to do all he was told, he was baptized and joined the church, and then took the sacrament as a further means of grace; but still he was without peace. He joined the “Christian Endeavor Society” also, and sought to be faithful in the discharge of all his religious duties. For over a year this was kept up. On one occasion he traveled forty miles to be present on sacramental Sunday to partake of the bread and wine, that told of a crucified Christ, as yet unrevealed to his soul.

I do not mean to say that there had been no change in his outward life. There had been a most marked one. He gave his employers faithful service; mastered, bit by bit, the appetite that had well-nigh ruined him body and soul; kept company only with people of high moral character, in place of the dissolute companions of former days; and was outwardly a very different man to what he had been. Alas I it was yet *outside* work with him. Inwardly he was still ignorant of the grace of God, even as when ordered off the streets of Louisville as disgraceful to himself and dangerous to the public peace. He had yet to learn that “Except a man be *born* again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” The difference between his past and the then present was this: Before, he had been an immoral sinner; now, he was a moral sinner: he

had been a cursing, blaspheming sinner; now, he was a prayer-saying and hymn-singing sinner. He was once an idle, vicious sinner; now, he was a hard-working, religious sinner. He had been a sinner in his own proper place—outside the circle of those who were, in name at least, Christians; now, he was a baptized, church-going, sacrament-taking sinner, but still a Christ-ignoring sinner; or, if Christ had any place at all in his thoughts, it was, at best, that of a crutch to a lame man—a mere helper to better himself.

As he had no peace, spite of all his earnestness and punctilious attendance upon the various means of grace he knew of, he again repaired to his minister. It was suggested that possibly he was not devoted enough. Let him give freely of his money to the support of the church, for “the Lord loveth a cheerful giver,” and doubtless blessing would follow. As an added incentive, he was made a deacon; and it thus devolved on him to assist in collecting the pastor’s salary. He was now actively employed in church work, which he took up faithfully; but to peace with God he was still a stranger.

This went on for about a couple of years, when he made a visit to his old home in Pennsylvania. He was walking one evening down the streets of Reading, when he was attracted to a crowd of people gathered about a street preacher. There was a ring of confidence and assurance about this man’s address that our friend the deacon (for we can call him the tramp no longer) had not been used to. His theme was God’s love to poor sinners. He dwelt at some length on the grand evidence of it in the giving of His Son to die, “that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” The unhappy deacon listened attentively as God’s way of salvation through simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ was clearly set forth. “Not of works, lest any man should boast:” “For by grace ye are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (**Eph. 2:8**), were the words

which rang from the preacher's lips. This was the first gleam of the true light that had so far shone into his darkened soul. He began to realize that not all his earnestness and religiousness, his liberality and his reformation, nor yet anything that he could add to them, had brought, or could bring, him one step nearer salvation. He had not advanced by all his efforts a hair's-breadth in all those two weary years. The deacon had been as ignorant of God's salvation even as the tramp. But he was learning that lesson; and it is a great one. They were, perhaps, far from agreeable truths; but truths they were nevertheless, as the questioning reader can see by referring to the third chapter of the epistle to the Romans.

But if the deacon found out that he could do nothing to save himself, he also found out that

"All the doing has been done,

As God has clearly shown,

When, by the offering of His Son,

His purpose He made known."

The result of the preaching, which was listened to for several evenings, was that he *trusted in Christ*, and ceased from his own works. Thus the deacon had become a *Christian*. He was still weak; there was much that he did not understand; but one thing he was clear about, viz., that God had loved him enough to give His Son to die for him. Surely, then, he could trust Him for the rest. With this thought filling his mind, he returned to Ohio. He did not yet know the full meaning of "peace with God," but his soul rested on His love as shown in Christ; and more was to follow.

Shortly after his return, an evangelist came to his town to hold "Union meetings." He was cordially received by the

various churches, and the services opened with a great deal of enthusiasm, and numbers professed to find blessing. It was not long, however, until a strong undercurrent of dissatisfaction set in. Ministers and church-members began to become angry and alarmed, and finally he was turned out of the pulpits, and the "Union meetings" were at an end. The reason is simply given. He preached that all are on one plane *before God*. Men might make distinctions; *He* made none. All are lost and guilty, and so wretched is their plight that they can do nothing to save themselves; that God knew that; in love He had sent Christ; Christ had done it all; now, therefore, all who believe in Christ are justified from all things, and can *know* it here and now, on the authority of the word of God. This, the same doctrine as the street preacher's, was unpalatable teaching for that highly respectable community, and they would have no more of it.

A number of weary *workers* for salvation, however, had obeyed the gospel and accepted the invitation to

"Cast your deadly doing down,

Down at Jesus' feet;

Stand in Him, in Him alone,

Gloriously complete."

These were not disposed to acquiesce in the summary dismissal of the strange preacher with the unpopular message; so, meetings of a more private nature were held in various homes.

The deacon attended these regularly, and, having rested in the cross for pardon before, he now saw that he was not only forgiven, but *fully justified*; the judgment he deserved had been fully borne, and ended in the judgment of Christ on the cross; he was now, therefore, free —cleared of all. Thus he

had assurance from the only authority in the case—God’s own word.

About this time a little paper postmarked “Boston,” but without the name or address of the sender upon it, came to him through the mail. It was a copy of *The Messenger of Peace*, containing an article entitled “Safety, Certainty, and Enjoyment.”⁴ From this precious tract, he saw that he was not only justified for the present, but eternally saved, for he had eternal life. “I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand” (**John 10:28**). Now his cup of joy was full. Cloudless peace with God was his: he could say:

“That which can shake the Cross

Can shake the peace it gave,

Which tells me Christ has never died,

Nor ever left the grave.”

He gave up his diaconate shortly after, realizing that what he now possessed was not in sympathy with his surroundings. He subsequently returned to Reading, intending to go on to New York, with the purpose of uniting with a society there of which he had heard. It was represented as being both pentecostal and apostolic: its leaders were said to be men of marvelous faith and personal holiness, who could heal the sick and perform various other wonders.

But God had something better than this for him; for in Reading he once more found upon the streets the man who had before told him of God’s love and grace. He gladly heard him again, attending indoor and outdoor meetings for some weeks. In this time he made a further wonderful discovery: he found he was not only a justified man, the possessor of eternal life, but he was, from the moment he believed the

gospel, *a member of the only church he could find anything about in Scripture*, called “the Church, which is His body,” of which the Lord Jesus is the one Head. He learned that upon believing the gospel he had received the Holy Spirit, and had thereby been made a member of this Church, “for by one Spirit *are ye all baptized into one body.*” (See **1 Cor. 12**) He at once saw the incongruity of joining anything, inasmuch as he was already a member of the Church of God. He therefore relinquished the idea of going to New York.

From this time on, the word of God became his daily companion and his almost constant study. He saw from it the divine principle of gathering to the precious name of the Lord Jesus Christ alone, in the confession of his membership in the body of Christ, in common with all true Christians; “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:20).

For a number of years now he has enjoyed meeting in godly simplicity, and yet also godly order, with others similarly gathered—assembling on the first day of the week; not now to take the sacrament as a means of grace, but to partake of the Lord’s Supper in remembrance of Him to whom he owes everything for time and eternity.

He was persuaded to let this account of his godless life, his efforts for salvation, and the way he found peace with God, be sent forth, in the hope that some other weary prodigal or self-righteous soul might be led to trust in Christ Jesus, “who, of God, is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.”

If the Lord so use it, it will have fulfilled its one end and object.

“Religion Runs In Our Family, Sir!”

We were speeding across the plateaus of Colorado. . My little son had taken a package of gospel papers and gone through the sleeping-car, distributing them to the jaded passengers. On my way to the platform shortly afterwards, a lady accosted me with the words, "I beg your pardon, sir, but I think it was your child who gave me this tract; was it not?" Replying in the affirmative, she looked up brightly and said, "You can't imagine how pleased I was to know there are other religious people on board besides myself. It is always a pleasure to meet those who are engaged in doing good."

She invited me to sit down in her section to chat together upon matters religious and philanthropic. After running on for some little time, telling of her church connection and the various good works in which she was engaged, she said, with great satisfaction, "It is so nice to feel you are of some use in the world, and that you love the Church and the Sabbath. So many people seem to have neither time nor taste for these things."

"Your last remark," I now put in, "is very true indeed. May I ask if you have been converted yourself?"

Her face expressed the surprise she felt at such a question, put so abruptly. She looked slightly hurt, as well as embarrassed, as she replied: "Why, I've always been interested in these things. My father was a class-leader, and I have an uncle and two brothers who are all clergymen."

"Indeed!" I answered. "And have you been converted yourself?"

"You do not seem to understand," was the grieved reply, "these things have always interested me. My father was a class-leader for many years, and my uncle and two brothers are earnest clergymen."

“Yes, madam, I understood all that; but I mean, have *you* been truly converted to God yourself?”

Looking at me in a bewildered manner, she said, “I guess it is I who do not understand you. I thought, when I told you of my father, and my relatives who are clergymen, you would see that *religion runs in our family, sir!*”

It was said with such evident sincerity that for a moment or two I was at a loss for a word, and could scarcely forbear smiling. Her simple, earnest manner appealed to me; and yet it was clear to me that she was building on a foundation of sinking sand.

“But have you not read,” I asked, at last, “the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, “Except ye repent and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven?”

“Yes, sir, I remember the words,” she answered, in a dazed kind of a way; “but in a religious family like ours—do you think they have the same application as to others?”

Faithfully as I knew how, I sought to show her that religion was not Christ. A moral and religious training, especially if the Bible be the text-book of instruction, is of inestimable value in the bringing up of a child; but morality and religion do not save sinners for eternity. Were it so, what place would there be for the cross of Christ? What would be the value of the blood of Jesus?

Religion may be handed down from parent to child. To use the lady’s words, it may run in the family. But new birth is a very different, thing. Grace is not inherited. To every soul of man the words are addressed, “Ye *must* be born again.”

In **John 1:12, 13** we read of three ways by which people *cannot* become children of God. It says, “As many as received Him” (that is, Jesus), “to them gave He power to become the

sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

To this I drew the attention of the lady in whose family religion ran.

First, salvation, or new birth, is “not of blood.” The child of godly parents is not “born regenerated,” as I once heard a clergyman contend. Like all other sons of Adam, he is born in sin, and needs to be born anew.

Second, it is not “of the will of the flesh.” Human resolutions, vows, determinations, turning over new leaves, and such like, “will never effect new birth. The flesh can rise no higher than itself. As “that which is born of the flesh is flesh,” so all that springs from it, whether it be religion or aught else, is but fleshly too.

Third, it is not “of the will of man.” Neither church, priest, nor clergyman, with all the ordinances combined, can make one a child of God. It is beyond the power of the holiest man on earth to re-create one soul.

How, then, can it be brought about? The last phrase gives the answer. It is “of God.” He works through His Word. Believing that Word, trusting what He has said, the man is regenerated.

To the lady on the train all this seemed new and strange; and as I left her, she remarked, “Well, I have never heard it put this way before. I must think it over.” What the result was, the coming day will reveal.

Undoubtedly she was but one of a large class who have never learned to distinguish between religion and Christ as a ground of hope. All who rest on religion, however earnest and orthodox, will find, in the day of the coming storm, that

they have been building a house on shifting sands. When the rains descend and the floods come, the fall must be great; and it will be too late to choose a more secure foundation.

Those who rest on Christ, and stay their souls upon His words, “the word of the truth of the gospel,” are building upon the Rock that never can be shaken. Creeds of men will change and fall; human systems will pass away; but Christ abides eternally—the resting-place of all who trust His love and grace.

Even though religion may run in the reader’s family, do not, I beseech you, trust to the piety of godly ancestors or the devotion of loved relatives. Make sure you trust in Christ for yourself. He gave Himself for our sins, and through Him “all that believe are justified from all things.”

Rest not till you can sing with assurance founded on the testimony of the word of God,

“On Christ the solid Rock I stand:

All other ground is sinking sand.”

The Dying Gambler

“He died for sinners, and that’s me exactly.”

“While holding gospel meetings in the town of Albuquerque, N. M., we were told one morning of a man who was reported to us as being under deep conviction of sin, the Lord having awakened him through the preaching on the street. Our informant told us that he was one who never went to a church or mission hall, as he would not have anything to do with religion or its advocates. But, happening to be out upon the streets in the evenings, he had twice listened to the Word as there proclaimed, and was now in deep distress about his soul. No

more cheering intelligence can be conveyed, to one whose heart is in the work of evangelization, than that God has been using the message to the awakening or the conversion of sinners; so, giving thanks for what we had heard, Mr. M—— and I went over to the house in which the convicted man was living.

We found him in deep distress. He was a consumptive who had come to Albuquerque from the Indian Territory in search of a climate where his disease would be more readily checked. But it was easy to see that his days on earth were fast drawing to a close. In broken accents he told us his story. He had been a most ungodly person. Gambling was his occupation, and all its attendant evils had held him in their snare. His had been “the pace that kills,” and now he was reaping the bitter fruits in his own body of a life spent in reckless dissipation in the service of the devil. The reason why he had, although awake to his wretched physical condition, avoided all Christians who might have been able to help him, now came out. He realized that he was dying. He was in dread of death with the awful judgment which he knew must follow. But he had long since concluded that there was no hope for him. He was too far gone for the mercy of God to be extended to him. His sins were crying for vengeance. There was no solace to be expected in religious meetings, so he had kept away, as it only aggravated his mind to see others happy in the knowledge of the forgiveness of their sins while for him there was nought but the “blackness of darkness” forever.

Through the goodness of God he had been led to listen to the preaching on the corner; and for the first time he began to realize that there might be mercy even for him. But accompanying this faint hope had come a deeper sense of his own iniquity, so that he was tossed about between hope and despair. We read the word of God and conversed with him,

but he was quite gloomy, though he said, "I'm praying; and I've made up my mind that if I have to go to hell, I'll go praying." Earnestly we sought to impress upon his mind that salvation was God's free gift, offered "without money and without price" to all who confessed their sins, and who, as guilty, lost men and women, were ready to receive it for nothing. He did not seem to grasp it, but frequently remarked, "I won't give up praying."

It is hard for man to realize the perfect freedom of the offer made by the God of all grace to needy sinners. It is neither by prayer nor by works of human righteousness that salvation is obtained. The believing sinner, saved by grace divine, gladly owns:

"Could my zeal no languor know,

Could my tears forever flow,

These for sin could not atone;

Thou must save, and *Thou* alone."

Jesus it was who did all the *doing*; there remains nothing for the repentant sinner but the *taking*.

But the very freedom of it all seemed to stumble the poor dying gambler. He promised to be out to the meeting however; and so, after praying that he might be led to see the perfection of the finished work of Christ, we left him.

In accordance with his promise he was present at night. He seemed to listen eagerly, but with a look of bewilderment that implied inward anxiety and confusion of mind. Upon the conclusion of the meeting we handed him several gospel booklets, which he promised to read.

The following evening he came to the hall, and it was easy to see that some great change had taken place. After the

preaching he spoke to Mr. M—— and brokenly told what had that day transpired. His voice was so weakened by the inroads of disease that he could only speak in short whispers. He said, “This afternoon—I lay on the bed—I took the tracts and tried to read.—My aunt came in—I asked her to read them to me.—Every time she came to a verse from the Bible—I said, ‘Look it up.’—She said, ‘Tain’t necessary.’—I said ‘It is.—I can’t afford to make any mistake—I must be sure.’ She got a Bible and looked them up—They were all just the same.—At last I saw it—I said, ‘That’s it—Christ died for sinners—that’s me exactly.—He shed His blood for sinners—He saves all who trust Him—I can trust Him now—He died for sinners—That’s me,’—I felt happy then—I knew it was all right—I know He won’t cast me out.”

Together we rejoiced that thus he had been led to rest upon Him whose blood cleanses from all sin.

And now a remarkable change took place. When we went to see him the next day, we found that physically he had failed to an amazing degree. He could no longer go about. It seemed that strength had been given him to get out where he might hear the gospel, and then he was bereft of it all. Mr. S, a fellow-laborer, had been to see him in the morning and had apprised me of the change; but, although expecting to see a great difference, I was not prepared for what I found when together we called on him in the afternoon. He was so weak that he could barely make himself understood. Satan had been troubling him with doubts. We gave him God’s own words, and the doubts were dissipated. He seemed to receive as a child every statement from the Scriptures as indeed the word of Him who cannot lie.

Three days later he passed away. Just before the end came he looked up and asked, “Do you hear it? I hear them singing. Jesus died for sinners. He died for me.” And so the

redeemed gambler had gone into the presence of Him who delights to show mercy to the vilest.

To the unsaved reader we would address a word in closing this brief account. Whether a sinner of the deepest dye, crushed beneath the weight of the iniquities of a life-time spent in high-handed rebellion against the God who created you, and who, though you have neither known nor acknowledged Him, has yet been your preserver through all your devious paths; or whether you may be generally accounted moral and religious, but are still guilty of that greatest of all sins—the rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ—“unto you is the word of this salvation sent.” For you God’s blessed Son died upon the cross, having borne the judgment due to sin; and now, through the work He there accomplished, you, like the poor gambler, may be “justified from all things” and prepared to enjoy an eternity of bliss in His own presence.

Christ received, means *eternal joy*; Christ rejected, means *eternal misery*.

Micah’s Religion Or Reformation Is Not Salvation

The Scriptures contain, not only many beautiful stories and incidents which illustrate, as no human record could, the salvation that is in Christ, but they likewise set forth in the same way false religion, with its hopelessness in the end. Such a record is found in **Judges 17** and 18. It is the story of Micah of mount Ephraim.

He had at one time been far from an exemplary character. Details as to his past life before his reformation are lacking; but he tells us himself one great fact. He had been a thief. Nor was he a mere robber of the kind abounding in an unsettled country like Palestine in the days of the judges; but he had robbed his own mother. She had hidden away

eleven hundred shekels of silver —a most respectable sum in those times. This money Micah stole from her and put away to use for himself.

Upon discovering the theft, the old woman told him of it, probably little dreaming that he had been the guilty one. Filled with indignation, she called on God to curse the thief who had been so base as to steal her hoard: and then, evidently considering that the money was gone forever, she “wholly dedicated it unto the Lord” if it should ever be found and returned to her.

Micah’s fears were apparently aroused by his mother’s curses. In an ignorant and superstitious age, he dreaded being thus made an object of Divine vengeance. There is no hint that he repented towards God of his sin. There is no record of his bringing Him into account at all. But in verse 2 we learn that, tormented by the fear of condign judgment, he went to his mother and returned the money, making a clean breast of his sin to her. “He said unto his mother, The eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from thee, *about which thou cursedst*, and spakest of also in mine ears, behold, the silver is with me; / took it. And his mother said, Blessed be thou of the Lord, my son.”

Now all this might, to a superficial reader, appear very right and proper. Micah had sinned against his mother. To his mother he confessed his sin. He had robbed her. He restored what he had robbed. More than that, his future life shows that he was a truly reformed man. He had turned over a new leaf, as people say. What more could be asked?

Ah, a great deal more was required to put Micah right with God, as well as with his mother. Sin, is not merely against our fellow-creatures: it is primarily against our Creator Himself; and this is what so intensifies its seriousness. In David’s case, dreadful as his crime had been against Uriah

and Bathsheba, he confesses, when awakened as to the evil he had done, “Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight!” (**Psa. 51:4.**) He owns the sin against God above all else. He is a truly repentant man; and so he justifies God and condemns himself, as the psalm makes evident throughout. There is nothing of this in Micah’s case. His fears are stirred. He returns the money. He confesses to his mother. He reforms his life. That is all. There is not one real move toward God.

In **Lev. 6:1-7** we have, in the instructions as to the trespass offering, just what was required in a case like that of Micah. “If a soul sin ... in a thing taken away by violence, or hath deceived his neighbor; . . . because he hath sinned, and is guilty, he shall restore that which he took violently away; ... he shall even restore it in the principal, and shall add the fifth part more thereto, and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the day of his being found guilty” (margin) “And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the Lord, a ram without blemish out of the flock: . . and the priest shall make an atonement for him before the Lord: and it shall be forgiven him for anything of all that he hath done in trespassing therein.” Here we have not merely the wrong righted that was done to one’s neighbor, but, what was of infinitely more importance, the trespass was put right before God on the ground of the offering and the shedding of blood. An atonement was required. By blood alone could it be made. Micah ignored the blood, and neglected the offering. His highest thought was putting matters straight with his mother. God is not brought into his affairs at all.

This is the root evil of a great mass of religious profession at the present day. The blood of atonement is ignored, or despised. But God has said, “When I see the *blood*, I will pass over you.” Nothing less than this will satisfy Him. Where, then, is that blood to be found? The guilty sinner is

not called upon now to procure an offering, and to bring it to a human priest. God has Himself provided the Victim, in the person of His own spotless, unblemished Son. He is the true Trespass Offering. In the sixty-ninth psalm we see Him taking that place, and hear His cry in verse 4, while suffering the awful ignominy of the cross: "I restored that which I took not away." God's holy judgment fell upon Him when He gave Himself for our sins. Oh, how guilty, then, is the man who, despising this one offering, setting at naught all His suffering and anguish for sin, essays to reach God in any other way than by the cross of Christ!

To pay one's debts; to forsake evil ways; to turn from wicked companionships; to become religious—not any of these things, nor all of them combined, can ever put away sin. It is the blood of Jesus, and the blood alone, "in all its solitary dignity," that can do that.

How plainly, then, do we see in Micah a merely reformed man? Not a converted man; not a repentant sinner; but a man who gives up his iniquitous ways only to fall into worse ones—becoming an idolater, as we shall see further on.

His poor mother was as easily satisfied with his sham conversion as are many good people nowadays. Delighted, she cries, "Blessed be thou of the Lord, my son!" She is as ready now to bless as she was to curse before. But, remembering her vow, she adds, "I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the Lord from my hand for my son, to make a graven image and a molten image: now therefore will I restore it unto thee" (ver. 3).

Her measure is easily taken. She is a sample of multitudes of pious-speaking people who have no sense of what really suits God, but who fancy He is" altogether such an one as thyself." This class are ever ready to make pledges and promises, hoping thereby to propitiate His favor. In times of

distress they call upon Him. When all goes well, He is comparatively forgotten. Nor is there any intelligence as to His mind, for His Word is refused and their own vain thoughts substituted. How common the expression among this class, “I think,” or, “I do not think”! It is the human mind working in the holy things of God. Of what *He* has said, they never inquire; but deify their own poor brains and follow the dictates of their own fleshly minds.

How manifestly is this the case here! Had Micah’s mother been reading her Bible, she would have found it recorded, “*Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments*” (Exod. 20:4-6). But without stopping to inquire, “What has God said in His Word?” the poor, deluded woman dedicated the silver to the Lord to make a graven and a molten image.

Micah refused to handle the money again; so she “took two hundred shekels of silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image and a molten image: and they were in the house of Micah” (ver. 4). So much for vows made in distress, when the trouble is over! She had dedicated the missing silver *wholly* to the Lord. Having recovered it, she kept nine parts of it, and used two parts in accordance with her pledge. Who can measure the deceitfulness of the heart away from God!

But, turning from this self-deceived old woman, we go on to view her son in a new role—as the religious man of his tribe, albeit an idolater! What a difference between Micah the thief

and Micah the reformed, devoted man of verse 5! "The man Micah had a house of gods, and made an ephod, and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest." The change is very marked. The man's whole life is altered: but the sin-question remains unsettled still! Neither his "chapel," nor his images, nor his giving his son up to religious service, can settle that. It is the blood of atonement he needs, and that blood he ignores, and goes proudly on doing "that which was right in his own eyes" (ver. 6).

However, he seems to have felt that there was one flaw in the system he had built up. In the secret of his own heart he is not quite sure that his priest has the authority needed to ensure his soul's salvation and blessing. If man refuse the simple plan of God's appointment, he at least wants something venerable and authoritative upon which to lean. How many a soul has been troubled for years as to whether he was in "the true church," or enjoying the ministry of a properly ordained clergy; and then, when once assured in his own mind that all was well on these lines, has settled down into a false peace and a carnal security that, perhaps, was never disturbed till he awoke in hell!

Micah is uneasy. His soul is not at rest. The ministrations of his son may not be valid, as he is not in the direct priestly succession. Very well; then the devil will give him a man to suit!

"There was a young man out of Bethlehem-judah of the tribe of Judah, who was a Levite, and he sojourned there. And the man departed out of the city from Bethlehem-judah to sojourn where he could find a place: and he came to mount Ephraim to the house of Micah, as he journeyed" (vers. 7, 8). The name of this active young Levite is given in the next chapter, as also his pedigree: "Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of" (not, as in the A. V., Manasseh, but, according to the R. V.,) "Moses"! (ver. 30). Here surely was one holding

orders that were unimpeachable. Did not Moses talk with God face to face? Who so fitted to attend to Micah's spiritual interests as his grandson? But, alas, grace is not inherited, nor yet gift to minister in the holy things of God!

Jonathan the Levite was out looking for a call. It must have seemed to be nothing less than Divine Providence that led him to visit the house of Micah. The one wanted a priest, the other wanted a living: what could be more marked? In answer to Micah's query, "Whence comest thou?" the young man is not slow to reply. "I am a Levite of Bethlehem-judah," he says, "and I go to sojourn where I may find a place" (ver. 9). This suits Micah exactly, and he makes a salary proposition, which is eagerly acquiesced in by the young ecclesiastic. "And Micah said unto him, Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest, and I will give thee ten shekels of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel, and thy victuals. So the Levite went in" (ver. 10). A bargain is struck immediately; and now Micah feels satisfied that all is well at last.

Though but a mere boy in comparison with his patron, the Levite-priest is, like many another pretentious youth since, designated "*father*;" and Micah says, with assured conviction (founded on profound ignorance of the word of God), "Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest!" (ver. 13). It is the merest presumption; for nowhere had God made salvation and blessing to depend upon a human minister; but we venture to say vast multitudes could be found to-day who rest on the same false ground.

How is it with the reader? Micah's mistake was in putting reformation, religiousness, and a "clergyman," in the place of the Trespass Offering and the blood of atonement. Are you, dear friend, making the same fatal mistake? Perhaps you rest upon your church-membership, your baptism, your

confirmation, your sacrament-taking, or your benevolence or philanthropy. Oh, I beseech you, remember that it is the blood, and the blood alone, that maketh an atonement for the soul. No church, however ancient; no clergyman, however talented; no priest, however holy, can avail to put away your sins. Jesus is the only Saviour. His blood, nothing more and nothing less, cleanseth from all sin.

Mark, that mere assurance that all is right does not make it so. Micah *believed* all was well because he had a Levite for his priest; but his belief was grounded upon his own thoughts, not upon what God had said. This is the difference between faith and presumption. The latter relies upon some word or thought of man; the former rests upon the word of God, and knows all must be well.

Micah's false confidence was doomed to be terribly shaken. The next chapter relates the coming of some men to his house, who were on their way to spy out a new country for some of the children of Dan. They knew "Father" Jonathan of old. Upon their second journey, with a company of emigrants, they decided it would be well to start their new settlement in a religious way. Accordingly, "the five men that went to spy out the land went up, and came in thither" (to Micah's chapel), "and took the graven image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image: and the priest stood in the entering of the gate. . . . Then the priest said unto them, What do ye? And they said unto him, Hold thy peace, lay thy hand upon thy mouth, and go with us, and be to *us* a father and a priest: is it better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel? And the priest's heart was glad; and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went in the midst of the people" (vers. 17-20). What a picture have we here! "The hireling fleeth because he is a hireling." The man who could so readily accept the care of Micah's soul for

a monetary consideration is just as ready to forsake him when the opportunity presents itself to better his own condition. He sees in the rude action and the surly offer of the children of Dan a call to a larger sphere of usefulness—to use a popular expression; and, without a word of farewell to his patron, he goes off with a delighted heart to his new fields, where he establishes a hierarchy that lasted till the captivity of the ten tribes (ver. 30). How hollow is the whole priestly system, after all!

But what of Micah in regard to all this? He has been away from home, apparently; but upon his return, learns of the spoliation of his chapel and the carrying off of his priest. Gathering some of his neighbors together, he sets out to pursue the children of Dan, and soon overtakes them. “And they cried unto the children of Dan. And they turned their faces, and said unto Micah, What aileth thee, that thou comest with such a company?” (ver. 23). It was adding insult to injury. The priest discreetly holds his peace. Micah despairingly replies, “Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and ye are gone away: and *what have I more?* and what is this that ye say unto me, What aileth thee?” (ver. 24). Note the pathos in the question, “What have I more?” What a confession as to the true state of affairs! All his religion had consisted in outward observances. Now his gods and his priest are gone, and he is bereft of all. What *had* he more? Nothing!

He had never been in the presence of God about his sins; he had never consulted the sure word of the Lord given through Moses; he had rested only upon what his own deceived and deceitful heart persuaded him would suit Jehovah’s holy eye; and now all was gone! He had lost his religion, and he knew not God’s way of salvation. His confidence had proven to be but vain confidence after all. His “Now I *know*” of the

previous chapter was changed to this solemn “What have I more?”

It was a rude awakening from his dream of security; but we read of no repentance even now. The chapter closes leaving him mourning his losses, and his gods set up among the children of Dan. His fancied light had proven but an untrustworthy will-o'-the-wisp.

Before dismissing the subject, we would seek once more to press the question home upon the reader's conscience. Are you *certain* you have any surer hope for eternity than that which deluded Micah? If suddenly bereft of all the outward forms and ceremonies of religion, would you have to cry, with him, “What have I more?” Or, could you, on the other hand, take up the cry of a poor woman once found dying on the floor of a garret, bereft of everything to comfort or cheer, who, when questioned as to what she desired, exclaimed in triumph, “I have Christ: what want I more!”

Oh, be persuaded, dear unsaved one, this is very different to merely doing your best, striving to live a religious life, trying to keep the law, or depending upon church, sacrament, or priest! Many of these things may be in themselves very good, but they cannot save poor sinners. “It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should put away sin.” And it is equally impossible to put it away by human effort, however earnest and well-meaning. Were it possible so to fit yourself for the presence of God, be assured He would never have given His Only-begotten Son up to the death of the cross, there to bear His awful judgment against sin. It was because there was no other way that God “made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (**2 Cor. 5:21**). Either He must endure the wrath of God against iniquity, or the sinner must sink beneath it forever. In infinite love and grace He took our place, bore our judgment, and now God offers a full, free

pardon to all who come to Him in the name of Jesus, confessing their sins. His Word declares that “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (**1 John 1:9**). Discarding every other hope as unreliable and vain, turn to Him now, ere His patience be exhausted and the door of grace be closed forevermore.

“Because there is wrath, beware; lest He take thee away with His stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee” (**Job 36:18**). The “great ransom” is Christ Himself. He died, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. All who come to God through Him are saved eternally. All who pass from this life neglecting or rejecting Him are lost forever. “Now is the accepted time;” while God, in grace, is still beseeching men to be reconciled to Himself. Accept, and live! Refuse, and die! “He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (1 Jno. 5:12).

Concurrent Blessings

When a poor, weary sinner comes in his guilt and misery to the Lord Jesus Christ, his utmost expectation, as a rule, is to obtain forgiveness for the sins committed up to the time of his awakening and conversion. Even this he realizes to be wonderful grace, and imagines that to ask or expect more would be the greatest presumption. Like the prodigal, if pardoned for the past, he will sue for a hired servant’s place for the future (**Luke 15:12-24**).

Blessed it is, however, that God deals with souls in accordance with His own thoughts. He has no hired servants. His word is, “Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet.” So arrayed, the saved one is given a place at his Father’s table, where both together feast on Christ.

In this paper I wish to consider a few of the blessings bestowed, through grace, upon the one who trusts in the Lord Jesus as his Saviour.

The word of God declares that “He hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (**Eph. 1:3**). Among Christians there is no special aristocratic class. All alike have been “made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (**Col. 1:12**), and all alike are dear to the Father’s heart as Christ Himself (**John 17:23**).

There are seven things which may be predicated of every one who has trusted Him whose precious blood puts all sin away; and it is these blessed truths I desire to bring before the converted reader.

1. New Birth.

All Christians have been born anew. “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God” (**1 John 5:1**). The word of God received in faith results in new birth. “Of His own will begat He us by the word of truth.” “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.” “And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you” (Jas. 1:18; **1 Pet. 1:23, 25**).

By new birth the Christian receives a nature the bent of which is absolutely righteous; just as, by the natural birth, he inherited a nature whose tendency is ever evil. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (**John 3:6**). These two natures exist side by side in the believer. “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye might not do the things that ye would” (**Gal. 5:17**, N.Tr.). But as he walks in the Spirit, he does not fulfil the desires of the flesh. “We know that

whosoever is born of God sinneth not.” “He cannot sin” (literally, be sinning), “because he is born of God” (**1 John 5:18; 1 John 3:9**). He is no longer to be controlled by the old nature. Denying that, acting as born again, he does not sin. It is a question of practice. The Christian, whatever his failures, is characterized by righteousness.

“As many as received Him, to them gave He title to become the sons of God, even to them that *believe on His name*: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (**John 1:12, 13**).

2. Eternal Life.

In unmistakable terms, the Scriptures affirm over and over again that every believer has eternal, or everlasting, life. Some have tried to make a distinction between the two words; but they are simply different renderings into English of the one Greek word. “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.” “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation “ (judgment, R.V.), “but is passed from death unto life “ (Jno. 3:14, 15; 5:24).

This life is communicated in new birth, as natural life was communicated at the birth according to nature. It is not immortality. All will live forever, in conscious bliss or woe (Matt, 25:46); but only those who trust in Christ have eternal life. “This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent” (**John 17:3**). It is not to be defined, but enjoyed. Christ is the believer’s life as to source, and is likewise the sustainer of it when communicated. Heaven is its proper sphere. There we shall enter into life eternal. That is, we shall be in the scene

that is suited to its full display. This is why, in some passages of the Pauline epistles, and the synoptic Gospels, it is presented as the goal. But throughout the Gospel and the first epistle of John it is viewed as the present possession of all believers. “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that *ye may know that ye have eternal life*” (**1 John 5:13**).

To deny that all Christians have it is to make God a liar!

3. Justification.

“By Him all that believe are justified from all things” (**Acts 13:39**). This is far more than being merely pardoned—unmerited grace as that might be. To be justified is to be entirely vindicated from every charge that might be brought against me. It is “the sentence of the judge in favor of the prisoner.”

The ground of this is the finished work of Christ, He bore the judgment due to all my sins. Therefore God can be “just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (**Rom. 3:26**).

Justification is not a state of soul. It is the standing of the once guilty sinner, before God, in absolute righteousness. “Who shall lay any to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth” (**Rom. 8:33**). This settles every question as to guilt. If God has justified, none can condemn.

As no work of man could avail to procure justification, so no act of man can cause it to be forfeited. Christ having been made sin for sinners, they who believe are made the righteousness of God in Him. The new life which they receive is one to which sin can never attach. They stand before Him in “justification of life” (**Rom. 5:18**); and this on the ground of one accomplished act of righteousness, which has settled the sin-question forever, in a manner fully satisfactory to God. All the believer’s sins were laid on Jesus. All were

atoned for. All were put away for eternity. None can ever be mentioned to him again. His justification is perfect, complete, and therefore once for all.

4. Sanctification.

Not only is every believer justified, he is also sanctified, *i.e.*, set apart. Christ is his sanctification. In God's eye he is not only cleared (justified), but he is likewise cleansed from the pollution of sin as well as from its dreadful guilt. He is "sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." "By one offering He hath *perfected forever* them that are sanctified" (**Heb. 10:10, 14**).

Paul could address all saints as "sanctified in Christ Jesus" (**1 Cor. 1:2**), though many of them were far from being *practically* so. This latter must never be ignored. It is of tremendous importance. It is by the word of truth and the Spirit of God (**John 17:17; Eph. 5:26; 2 Thess. 2:13**). Positional, or absolute, sanctification is by the blood of Christ.

Saved through His death, He is made unto me sanctification (**1 Cor. 1:30**), for I am in Him; but I am to make this practical by daily walking in subjection to the word of God, in the power of an ungrieved Spirit.

Sanctification, in Scripture, never means the eradication of the sinful nature, which, as we have seen, remains in every believer until the Lord shall fashion anew these bodies of our humiliation, and make them like unto His glorious body (Phil. 3:21). The Lord Jesus, in His great intercessory prayer, said, "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth" (**John 17:19**). He was ever holy. This negatives all thought of sanctification referring to inward cleansing from pollution. He set Himself apart as an object for His people's hearts, that they might be practically

separated from all evil by the truth, even as they are already viewed by God as set apart in Him.

The old nature is too bad to be sanctified. The carnal mind “is not subject to the law of God, *neither indeed can be*” (**Rom. 8:7**).

The new nature is absolutely holy, and does not require to be sanctified. It is the man himself (who through the work of Christ has lost his place in the old creation, which is under judgment) who is separated from the filthiness of his sins, and is now in the One who died and rose again.

5. The Holy Spirit.

In addition to having a new nature, all who trust in Christ are indwelt by the Holy Ghost. “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.”⁵ Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His “ (**Rom. 8:9**; see, also, verse 11).

This is true of the youngest babe in Christ, as **1 John 2:20, 27** will make clear. It is not the “fathers,” or the “young men,” who are there addressed, but the babes, the “little children.” To such John says, “Ye have an unction from the Holy One,” and “The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you.”

Likewise, in addressing the Galatians, Paul asks, “Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” (**Gal. 3:2**). This is not a “second blessing,” but the beginning of the Christian course.

The “certain disciples” often referred to in **Acts 19:1-6** were not on Christian ground at all, but, as the passage itself makes plain, were Jewish believers, disciples of John the Baptist.

All Christians have the Holy Spirit from the moment of their believing the testimony of the gospel.

He is the earnest of what is to come when the child of God is taken home. He is also the seal that he is the Lord's down here. "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory."

This sealing is not for a brief period, but Eph. 4:30 says, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

Believers are quickened by the Spirit, sanctified by the Spirit, baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ, anointed by the Spirit, and, as they walk with God in obedience to His Word, filled with the Spirit.

6. In Christ.

Again, every Christian is in Christ; in contrast to his previous condition, in Adam. (See **Rom. 5:12-21** and **1 Cor. 15:45-49**.) If the reader is unsaved, he is in Adam, and therefore under condemnation. If he is saved, he is in Christ, in a "new creation," (**2 Cor. 5:17**), and "there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" (**Rom. 8:1**).

He is linked up forever with the glorified Head of the new creation. All in Adam die; all in Christ shall be made alive.

It is of the utmost importance to see this. If in Christ, I am loved by the Father as He is; as secure from judgment as He is; as certain of being forever in glory as He is. My destiny is linked up with His. I died with Him. I have been raised with

Him. I am accepted in Him. I am seated in heavenly places in Him. “As He is, so are we *in this world*” (**1 John 4:17**). “He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit” (**1 Cor. 6:17**).

All who are now “in Christ” are certain to be in the glory “with Christ.”

7. The Church.

Lastly, every Christian is a Church member. He does not need to *join* a church. He is joined to the Church. In **Acts 2:47** we read, “The Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved.” This Church is the Body of Christ. He is its only Head (**Eph. 5:22-32**; **Col. 1:18**). The way believers are brought into the Body is given us in **1 Cor. 12:13**: “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body.”

As of old, so now, the Spirit’s baptism brings each saved one into the Church, or Assembly, which consists of all in every place who have trusted in Christ.

The responsibilities flowing from this are clearly set before us in the Corinthian epistles, and the letters to Timothy and Titus, as also in other portions of the New Testament, notably the last half of Ephesians and **Rom. 12**.

May grace be given to reader and writer to enter more fully into the wondrous privileges of the Christian place, and wisdom be given to walk in subjection to the practical truths flowing therefrom!

“Who Hath Bewitched You? Or, The Believer’s Relation To The Law

The great question of the soul’s salvation settled, another very soon arises to perplex and trouble many a new-born babe in Christ. What is the Christian’s relation to the law? Granted that human enactments and man-made ordinances

have no place in Christianity, can the same be said of that “fiery law” which the New Testament declares is “holy, just, and good?” The more sincere and earnest a soul is, the more will this question trouble and perplex.

For answer, let us turn to the third and fourth chapters of the epistle to the Galatians.

These assemblies of Galatia consisted, in large measure, of honest souls from among the heathen, who had been but recently converted to the Lord. Paul had been to them the messenger with feet beautiful upon the mountains, who had brought them the glad tidings of peace with God through the blood of His Son. They had received him as an angel of God, and would have plucked out their own eyes and given them to him, had such a thing been possible. Loving the Saviour, they loved the one who had been the bearer of His gospel.

Having fulfilled his ministry among them for the time, he had gone to labor elsewhere. There the news of a strange reaction reached him. His beloved Galatian converts had been thrown into confusion and trouble of soul. His own apostleship even was called in question, for it was bruited that his was but a partial gospel, which stopped short of the full truth of Christianity. (See first two chapters.)

Disaffected men from Judea had gone up to Galatia, and were busy spreading among these Galatian converts the pernicious doctrine that, while faith in Christ was all very well as a means of *obtaining* salvation, obedience to the law of Moses was the divinely appointed method of *retaining* it! How like much that one hears in Christendom to-day!

Stirred to the soul by the havoc being wrought among these simple saints, the apostle sits down and with his own hand pens a letter, as many suppose, in large, awkward

characters⁶ designed to deliver them from the snare into which they were falling.

After declaring the reality of his apostleship, he exclaims, in chapter 3, “O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?” Their vaunted clearer light and new teaching was but the work of the enemy of souls, blinding their eyes to the true meaning of the cross of Christ, and shutting them up to the darkness and bondage of Judaism.

Now this first question, rightly understood, settles the whole matter. Jesus Christ has been crucified! This simple yet solemn fact bears a tremendous relation to the entire subject of the Christian’s place in regard, not only to the law, but to sin, the world, and all fleshly religion.

Why was Jesus Christ crucified?—All had sinned. From the mass of mankind God selected one nation. To them He gave a holy law. That law decreed judgment upon the breaker of it. “As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them” (ver. 10). None ever “continued.” Therefore all were under the sentence of doom. Into such a scene Christ came to take that curse upon Himself, and to bear the sinner’s judgment. He was crucified. Upon the tree, God dealt with Him as though He were the guilty one. He fully met all the claims of that broken law. “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (ver. 13). He, then, has delivered from the law every believing Jew; and no Gentile was ever under it in the full sense. Has His work, then, no bearing upon *their* state? It has. He bore the wrath, and was made a curse, not alone to redeem the Jew, but “that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles

through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (ver. 14).

Long before the giving of the law, it had been declared to Abraham, “In thee shall all nations be blessed.” “So, then, they which be of faith are blessed with believing Abraham” (vers. 8, 9). And so “the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe” (ver. 22).

These Galatians had believed (at least, so the apostle hoped, though their readiness to turn from Christ to law made him fear for their reality, chap. 4:11): by thus trusting in Christ, they became “sons of God” (chap. 3:26). As such, they never had been, nor were they now, under the law.

Before faith came, the Jews were “kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed” (ver. 23). That faith, the precious truth of the gospel, had now come; therefore they who believed among the Jewish nation were taken out of the place of childhood and tutelage, which they had occupied so long, and given the full place of sons. “When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we” (i.e., converted Israelites) “might receive the adoption of sons” (chap. 4:1-5).

What, then, of the Gentiles who believed? Taken out of heathenism, they had been at one time subject to the judgment of God against their manifold iniquities; but they had never been under the law of Moses at all! Saved through grace, they found themselves at once in the same position as the redeemed Jew. “Because *ye* (i.e., the Gentiles who were converted) are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (ver. 6).

Why, then, go back to the place from which God had delivered believing Jews? Such a step was to give up Christianity, to “fall from grace” (chap. v. 4). It would be setting at naught grace, and going back to the yoke of bondage. Against this he warns them with all the fervor of his soul.

And yet this is exactly what the mass in Christendom have done! Owning with more or less clearness that justification somehow depends upon the blood of Christ, the one who has trusted in that precious blood is put back under the law as a rule of life. This has well been called “the Galatian heresy.” He who bewitched these saints of apostolic days, has succeeded in entangling untold thousands in the same yoke of bondage. And this in the face of the clear teaching of this trenchant letter to the Galatians, and the equally clear instruction of the second great section of the epistle to the Romans! (See chap. 5:12 to the end of chap, 8.)

The uniform teaching of the inspired apostle to the nations is, that “I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God” (**Gal. 2:19**) That law which slew our Substitute, has no longer any claim upon us who have died to the law.

But, at once, the question arises, What, then, is to be the Christian’s rule of life? Is he to be lawless because not under law? Assuredly not! He has a far higher rule than the Mosaic tables, even *Christ in glory*. “For *in Christ Jesus* neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature” (or, literally, a new creation). “And as many as walk according to *this rule*, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God” (chap. 6:15, 16).

Here is all the rule that is needed. The believer is now in the new creation. The law was the standard of righteousness for man in the flesh, in the old creation. The Head of the new creation is Christ Himself, risen and glorified, at God’s right

hand. This is the rule of life for the child of God. And this is something infinitely higher than the ten words given on Sinai, which, after all, are never said to be the strength of holiness, but distinctly declared to be “the strength of sin” (**1 Cor. 15:56**).

Occupation with Christ in the glory of God is the strength of holiness. Turn your eye, dear fellow-believer, not back to Sinai, with its cloud-capped top and its fire and smoke, but up to heaven, where the Lord Jesus has gone. Let the heart be fixed upon Him, and the walk will be right. He has become the Mediator of the New Testament. Search, then, His Word, and seek grace to order your ways in accordance with it, which will be joyful service indeed, when the heart beats true to Him.

The Scriptural Place Of Good Works

It is a great mistake to suppose that because salvation cannot be merited by good works, the instructed Christian does not believe in them. The same apostle who wrote “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief” (**1 Tim. 1:15**), also penned another “faithful saying” in **Titus 3:8**: “This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.” No one insists more earnestly than he on the absolute worthlessness of good works as a procuring-cause of justification. On the other hand, he is behind none in pressing the necessity of good works upon those already saved. The Christian, he declares, is “created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (**Eph. 2:10**). Notice the preposition—“created . . . unto” (not by means of) “good works.” Right living springs from new birth. When

born of God, a life is communicated that is divine and eternal. This life is manifested in obedience.

“I would not work my soul to save;

For that my Lord has done.

But I would work like any slave,

For love to God’s dear Son.”

If this be not the motive, there can be but “dead works.” The only true good works are the *fruit* of the new life, springing from affection for Him who has said, “If a man love Me, he will keep My words.”

Has the reader given up all pretension to human merit? Has he ceased to look for blessing on the ground of his own righteousness? This is repentance: to own oneself lost and guilty, deserving of naught but judgment. If such is the ground you have taken, do you now trust alone in Him whose precious blood was shed to atone for all your black and dreadful sins? Oh, be assured, if such is the case, that all your guilt is forever put away. “To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins” (**Acts 10:43**). There can be no uncertainty about it. Every believer has been eternally forgiven, because of what the Lord Jesus accomplished, when He died to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

If thus able to rejoice in present, perfect justification by pure grace, you are now free to devote your life to good works, and thus to evidence the gratitude of your heart to Him whose loving-kindness has brought you into blessing so wondrous. But your works will be the obedience of a child to a Father, not the toil of a servant seeking to win the favor of a master. Owing all to Him who has redeemed you, your walk and

ways in this world will testify that your heart is true to the One whose grace has saved.

So may it be with reader and writer till called into His own blessed presence!
