Holiness of Christians in the Present Life

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

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Holiness

Of

Christians

In The

Present Life

A SERIES OF 13 LECTURES

written by

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Chapter 1

PROVE ALL THINGS

Lecture by Professor Finney.

Preached in the City of New York, and reported for the Evangelist by Rev. S.D. Cochran

Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.-- 1 Thess. 5:21.

In speaking from this text, I remark,

1. That it enjoins the duty of fundamental and thorough inquiry on religious subjects. It requires us to know the reason of our faith and practice, that our piety may not be superstition, but the result of intelligent conviction, arising from thorough investigation.

2. In order to fulfill this requirement, the mind must be free from prejudices on religious subjects. So long as prejudices exist in any mind, it is impossible that it should examine religious opinions with any such spirit as will admit of obedience to this precept. All its views will be perverted just in proportion as it is uncandid and prejudiced.

3. This precept assumes the fact of our ability to 'prove all things.' The ability to comply with any requirement is always implied in the requirement. Otherwise the command is unjust.

4. This precept implies the necessity of correct information on religious subjects. The sentiment that it is immaterial what our opinions are, seems to prevail extensively among men, but it is plainly a mistake. Men can never be expected to remain rooted and grounded in the truth any farther than their opinions are true. All observation and experience prove this, and such is the concurrent representation of the Bible.

5. This command is given to all; not merely to ministers, but to laymen and women. Each is required to examine for himself, and to call no man master, so as to receive his "ipse dixit" as authoritative. It requires each one to know for himself the reasons of his faith.

6. The great mass of mankind don't love to think closely. They would prefer to do almost any thing else. They are like school-boys who shun the labor of study, and go to be taught without having studied their lesson. What they are told they forget before the next recitation.

7. I shall address myself, in this lecture, to those, and those only, who will be at the trouble to think. To address others would but be a waste of time and strength. Those who will not think cannot be saved.

8. I will neither spend my time, nor endanger your souls, by random exhortation and appeal, but strive to follow the spirit of the text.

9. My object is not controversy; I hope wholly to avoid its spirit, and, as far as possible, even its form. On the contrary, it will be my object as far as possible, to present what I honestly believe to be the truth to the consideration of the honest and truth-loving.

10. There is but little obedience to the requirement in the text, and as a consequence great ignorance and error prevail on

many questions of fundamental importance. There are very few who can give any rational account of what constitutes sin and holiness, moral obligation, or human responsibility.

11. The terms which represent the attributes of Christian character, or what are commonly called the Christian graces, are almost never rightly defined. The definitions which are given scarcely ever represent the right idea, for example, of love, faith, repentance, self-denial, and humility. It is manifest that but few know how to define them. Why? Because they have not complied with the requirement of the text. And because these attributes of holiness are not rightly defined, they are misunderstood, and the result is that they are not exhibited in the lives of Christians. We see one picture drawn in the Bible, and quite another in real life. The former is beautiful and glorious, the latter--how sadly deformed. Why? Because the mass are mistaken, and mistaken as the result of incorrect views respecting the nature of true piety.

12. The distinction between natural and revealed theology should be understood and appreciated. Indeed, it is fundamental to an understanding of the Bible, for the Bible both assumes the truths of natural theology, and that we understand them; for example, that we exist, the existence of God, our moral agency, natural ability, the distinction between right and wrong, &c. We do not, therefore, and can not rightly understand the Bible, unless we understand the fundamental truths of natural theology, which are taken for granted in the Bible.

13. Natural theology consists in those truths that we may learn from the book of nature. God has presented us with two books--that of nature, and that of revelation, and they are equally authentic, and mutually confirmatory of each other.

14. The Bible not only assumes, and in various ways confirms the truths of natural theology, but adds many truths not discoverable by unaided reason, but which are recognized as truths as soon as suggested.

15. Many err in supposing that because a truth is seen to be such in the light of its own evidence, when suggested, therefore it might have been discovered without inspiration. There are plainly multitudes of truths revealed in the Bible, which men could never otherwise have discovered, but which, now that they are discovered, are seen to be perfectly reasonable. It is one thing to apprehend and recognize truth, when made known, but quite another thing to discover it.

I bespeak your prayers and attention, while I proceed to show,

I. HOW WE KNOW ANY THING.

II. HOW WE KNOW EVERY THING WHICH WE DO KNOW.

III. SOME THINGS WHICH WE KNOW ABOUT OURSELVES, THE TRUTH, AND OUR KNOWLEDGE OF WHICH, ARE TAKEN FOR GRANTED BY INSPIRATION.

I. How we know any thing.

1. Consciousness is a condition of all knowledge. It is the mind's recognition of its own existence, choice, thoughts and feelings. It is a knowledge of ourselves in the phenomena of our minds. The mind does not first observe its phenomena, and thence infer its own existence, for to attempt to prove this would be to assume as doubtful that which is absolute certainty and which must be so regarded in order to attempt proof or inferences, but it absolutely affirms its own existence, and consciousness testifies to this affirmation, saying, "I exist, I think, I feel, I will." Consciousness give both the I and its phenomena, that is its choices, thoughts and feelings, together with their freedom or necessity. Without consciousness knowledge would be to us impossible, for there is no other way of obtaining knowledge. How and what could one know, without knowing that he knows? and what knowledge would that be, of which you have no knowledge?

II. How we know every thing which we do know.

1. As our existence, and all our mental acts and states are given us by consciousness, it is plain that we know by consciousness every thing which we do know. For example. Suppose I have a sensation: How do I know that I have it? By consciousness. So it is with all our emotions, desires, choices, judgments, affirmations, denials, hopes, fears, doubts,

joys, and sorrows. They are all given us by consciousness. I am now speaking what every man knows to be true.

2. Nothing without us is known to us only as it makes an impression upon our minds which impression is revealed to us by consciousness.

3. What we know by consciousness we know with certainty, that is, we know that our existence, acts, thoughts, and feelings are realities.

4. Consciousness is therefore the highest possible evidence. We do, and cannot but rely upon it as conclusive. If I think, feel, or act, I know that I think, feel, or act, and know it absolutely. It is impossible from our very constitution to doubt its testimony.

5. But we should carefully distinguish between what is really revealed to us by our consciousness, and inferences drawn from such revelations. We may mistake the cause of a sensation, but not the sensation. When God spoke to Christ from Heaven, the people who heard were conscious of the sensation upon the auditory nerve. Here was no mistake. But they mistook its cause. They said, it thundered. So, in forming our various judgments and opinions we may mistake, but when consciousness testifies that we do judge or form an opinion, in this we cannot be mistaken.

III. Some things that we know about ourselves, the truth of which, and our knowledge of which are taken for granted by inspiration.

1. We know that we exist, and we know it so certainly that to ask for evidence is absurd. It is to assume that as doubtful which must be assumed as absolutely true in order to prove any thing true.

2. We know that we perform certain mental acts, and are the subjects of certain mental states. For example: we know that we originate choices and volitions, and are the subjects of thought and feeling.

3. Hence we know that we possess certain faculties and capacities, that is, we are capable of acts, thoughts, and feelings.

4. We know that these faculties, as also their products, are capable of being classified. All men naturally classify them. They never confound thinking with feeling, feeling with willing, nor willing with either of them. No child does this. Nor do they confound the power of thinking, or of feeling with that of willing, or with one another.

5. Hence all men, although they may not understand the terms employed by philosophers to represent the natural faculties, notwithstanding, fully understand the thing intended by these terms. They know themselves to possess those faculties which we call intelligence, sensibility, and free will. We think, feel, and will, and therefore we know that we have the faculties of thinking, feeling, and willing, and mental philosophy is nothing else than an analysis of what all men are conscious of. Under the general term intelligence we include consciousness, reason, and understanding. All thoughts, affirmations, intuitions[,] judgments, and inferences, are the product of the intelligence.

6. We are conscious of our own liberty in the sense of having ability to choose in any direction in view of motives--to choose or refuse any object of choice. We know this with absolute certainty. This is an intuition of reason revealed by consciousness, and however men may deny their own freedom, in theory, yet they always act upon the assumption that mankind are free.

7. We are conscious that we can voluntarily control some of our capabilities, and some we cannot; for example; the voluntary, and involuntary muscles. If I will to move my arm, it moves in obedience to my will, but if I will that my heart shall cease to beat it still continues to beat wholly regardless of my will. In like manner we know that some of our capabilities are directly under the control of the will, and some indirectly.

8. We know by consciousness that muscular action is directly necessitated by our will--that there is a necessary connection between volitions and outward action. Some have made freedom to consist in doing as we please, or as we will; but that there is no freedom in this, every one knows, for when I will to move my arm, or to perform any other

outward action, the action takes place by a natural necessity. While the volition exists, the outward action must be.

9. We also know by consciousness that thought and feeling are only indirectly subject to the will. Suppose, for instance, you wish to transfer your thoughts from one object to another. You cannot do this directly, and yet you are conscious that you can indirectly through the attention. Hence by directing the attention to any given subject upon which you wish to think, thought is the necessary result. So if you abstract the attention from an object upon which you do not wish to think you thus indirectly abstract the thoughts from it. Even children know this with absolute certainty. So with feeling of every kind. We are conscious that we cannot directly feel by willing to feel. Suppose, for example, we wish to call into being the feelings of love, hope, fear, joy, or sorrow. We are conscious that we cannot, by direct willing, create these feelings, or even modify them. But, nevertheless, we are conscious that we can indirectly regulate the feelings to a great degree. For example: If we wish to experience the emotions produced by the beautiful, we turn our attention to a beautiful object, and the emotions arise of course. On the contrary, by turning our attention to an offensive object, we can indirectly produce disagreeable emotions in our own minds. The same law operates respecting all religious feelings. They can to a very great degree be regulated indirectly by the will through the attention, but never directly.

10. We know by consciousness that whatever we can do at all, we can do by willing and that whatever act or state is not connected with the action of our will is impossible to us by a natural necessity. Suppose, for example, I will to move, but suddenly the nerves of voluntary motion are paralyzed, so that they will not obey my will. Then to move is impossible for me. The same is true of thoughts and feelings. If I will to expel certain thoughts and feelings from my mind, and to produce others, I abstract my attention from those objects on which it rests and direct it to other objects. This course will universally change the existing thoughts and feelings, but if it should not, then to change them is impossible for me. So of every thing else. Whatever we cannot accomplish by willing, we cannot accomplish at all. This is universal experience.

11. We are conscious of possessing in our intelligence a faculty, called reason, or the intuitive faculty, by which we perceive and affirm absolutely certain truths which carry with them their own evidence. This faculty gives us, when certain conditions are fulfilled, all necessary, absolute and universal truths. It is so infallible, and uniform in its affirmations, that whenever the terms of a proposition are understood, every reason in the world will affirm the same things. For example, mathematical truths, as that two and two equal four, or things which are equal to the same thing are equal to one another. These affirmations are so absolute that the mind cannot doubt them.

12. Among these self-evident truths are al[l] the first principles of morals such as--(1.) Tha[t] there is such a thing as right and wrong, and that the difference between them is fundamental. (2.) That the existence of these implies moral law. (3.) That men have moral character. (4.) That moral character implies moral obligation. (5.) That moral obligation implies moral law and moral agency. (6.) That moral agency implies natural ability. (7.) That natural ability implies the existence of intelligence, sensibility and freewill, that is, that moral agents actually know, feel, and will. The mind does not call for proof of these things, but affirms them as absolute verities, and the Bible therefore assumes them as true. It assumes that moral agents do actually know, feel and will. (8.) That moral character does not and cannot belong to the constitution of either body or mind, since it is impossible that a moral being should be either praise or blameworthy for his constitution. But moral character is necessarily either praise or blameworthy. It cannot thus belong to the constitution. (9.) That the constitutional appetites, desires and passions can have no moral character in themselves, since they are in themselves involuntary. For example, the appetite for food. Suppose yourself hungry, and in the presence of food. The appetite will naturally demand it from the very constitution, and can therefore in itself have no moral character. The same is true of desires and passions whenever you are in the presence of objects adapted to awaken them. (10.) This intuitive faculty affirms, that on the will's consenting to gratify any of these appetites, desires or passions under forbidden circumstances, there is sin. For example, when Eve saw the fruit, her appetite naturally craved it. In this there was nothing wrong, but when she consented to gratify her appetite, not withstanding it was prohibited, this was supreme selfishness. Had it not been prohibited the gratification would have been proper, but being prohibited, it was sin. It is the same respecting the gratifying of any desire or passion whatever. (11.) This intuitive faculty asserts that moral character cannot belong to any involuntary act or state of mind whatever, nor to any outward actions. If I stab a man, the moral character of the act does not belong to the dagger, nor to the hand which held it, nor to the muscles of the arm, nor to the volition which impelled the arm, but to the intention. (12.) It also asserts that moral character cannot belong to the states of the sensibility, that is, to the various emotions or feelings, for these are necessary; nor to the states of the intelligence. There is no virtue in the perception of truth. Devils, and wicked, as well as good men, perceive truth, and doubtless think correctly on many subjects, and their reason affirms moral truths, but there is no virtue in this. (13.) It also asserts that moral character

cannot belong to volitions as distinguished from choices, for choice or intuition necessitates volition for the time being. (14.) But it does assert that moral character belongs to the ultimate intention of the mind. Intention is the choice of an end. The ultimate intention is the last end chosen--that for which every thing else is chosen or done. I will illustrate the difference between ultimate and proximate intention. Suppose a young man laboring, and you inquire what he is laboring for. He says, to get money. This is one end. But ask again, what do you want of money? He says, to buy books. This is another end. Ask again, what do you want of books? He says, to get knowledge. This is another end. But continue the inquiry, what do you want of knowledge? He says, to preach the gospel. This is still another end. But you may ask farther, what do you want to preach the gospel for? He replies, to do good--because the good of the universe is valuable in itself. This is the last end--the ultimate intention, and all the previous ends are only means to this or what are called proximate ends. But in this case the whole moral character of all the process belongs plainly to the ultimate intention. In this all ethical philosophers, worthy of note at the present day, agree. It is plainly the doctrine of the Bible, and thus the Bible and natural theology are at one precisely. The truth is even children understand that character consists in ultimate intention. Pa, says the child in self justification, I didn't mean to do it. And the question between the child and his parent is about the intention. So it is in courts of justice. They always inquire for the "quo animo" or intention. In short, all men, whatever may be their theory, understand and act upon the truth of this doctrine. If a physician give medicine with a design to cure, he would be universally acquitted of blame, even though instead of curing the disease, it should take the life of a patient. In fact, this doctrine is so certain that the Bible could not be believed if it disagreed with it.

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Chapter 2

NATURE OF TRUE VIRTUE

Lectures by Professor Finney.

Reported for the Evangelist by Rev. S.D. Cochran

> Owe no man any thing, but to love one another; for he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.--Rom. 13: 8-10.
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> For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.--Gal. 5: 14.

In this lecture I propose to show,

I. WHAT IS INTENDED BY THE TERM LOVE.

II. THAT THE THING INTENDED IS THE WHOLE OF VIRTUE.

I. What is intended by the term love.

It is of the utmost importance to understand the bible meaning of the term love. It is represented in the text, and the Bible generally, as the substance of all religion, and the only preparation for heaven. What can be more important?

1. I remark, then, in the first place, that the love required in the text is not what is generally called natural affection or the love of kindred. This is manifest (1.) From the fact that natural affection is involuntary. It is true the will is employed in acting out this love, but the thing generally intended by natural affection is the strong constitutional impulses experienced by parents towards their offspring, brothers and sisters towards one another, &c. But (2.) This natural affection is common to both saints and sinners, and certainly nothing can be religion which is common to the ungodly with the saints. (3.) And I may add that it is participated by brutes.

2. This love is not complacency or esteem. Complacency is that pleasant emotion, or state of the sensibility which is experienced when we see any thing which, from the laws of our constitution, is naturally pleasing to us. For example. If you contemplate a beautiful natural scenery, you experience a pleasing emotion, or delight, from the very nature of your constitution. It is precisely the same in contemplating moral beauty. Men are so constituted that whenever they contemplate a virtuous character, provided it does not in any way conflict with their selfishness, they delight in it--a pleasurable emotion always springs up of course. Now this complacency, or esteem of virtuous character, is perfectly involuntary, and therefore can have no virtue in it. This we know by consciousness which I defined in my last lecture to be the mind's knowledge of its own existence, acts, and states, and of the liberty or necessity of these acts and states. By consciousness then we know that this complacency in the character, either in God or any other virtuous being, is involuntary, and the natural and necessary result of the mental constitution, when brought into certain relations to such characters. Again, this complacency cannot be true virtue, or the love required in the Bible, because it can with propriety be exercised only towards the virtuous, whereas the love which the Bible requires is to be exercised towards all. We are

not required to exercise complacency towards sinners, and it would plainly be unjust and absurd if we were, since to delight in a sinful character is impossible. But the text requires universal love. Therefore the love which it requires and complacency cannot be identical. Again, complacency is common to real saints, and to the self-deceived, and impenitent. Much evil is done by denying that sinners have this feeling of complacency towards God and his law, when the fact is they know that they have. Whenever they see the character of God aside from his relation to themselves, they cannot avoid it. It arises by a natural necessity from the mental constitution. The wickedest devil in hell would experience it, if he could view the character of God aside from its relations to himself. It is absurd to deny that mind would feel thus, for if it would not, it must be inconsistent with itself, which cannot be. Furthermore complacency in virtuous character is consistent with the highest degree of wickedness. It is related of a certain infidel that he would go into ecstacies in contemplating the character of God, and who has not heard the wicked insist on it that they do love God, and found it almost impossible to convince them that they did not love Him with any virtuous love? Why? Because they are conscious of these emotions of complacency towards Him, and mistake it for real benevolence.

3. The love required in the text is not what is commonly called fondness, for this is a mere emotion and therefore involuntary. I know not what else to call a certain development of the mind towards God. Persons often exhibit a fondness towards God, the same as towards any other being. They love Him because He loves them just as sinners peculiarly love those who do them a good turn. And they do not distinguish between this and true religion; but immediately after the strongest exhibition of it, take advantage of a neighbor in trade, or exhibit selfishness in some other form.

The truth is, it often consists with the most fiendish wickedness, as also with the highest irreverence. Persons in this state of mind often seem, in conversing about Him, in their prayers to Him and in every way to regard and treat God merely as an equal. I have often thought how infinitely insulting to Him their conduct must be. Again this fondness is consistent with any degree of self-indulgence. In direct connection with its exercise, persons often show themselves to be the perfect slaves of their appetites and passions. They undoubtedly feel their fondness, but do they love? They say they love, but is their love benevolence? Is it religion? Can that be religion which puts no restraint on the appetites and passions, or only curbs some of them, while it cleaves the more tenaciously to others? Impossible!

4. The love intended in the text is not synonymous with desire. Persons say they desire to love God--they desire to love their neighbor as themselves. No doubt they do, but there is no religion in this, since desire is constitutional and has no moral character. Sinners have the desire and remain sinners still, and every one knows that they are consistent with the highest wickedness. Besides, as it is mere desire, it may exist forever and do no good. Suppose God had from all eternity merely desired to create a universe and make it happy. If He had never gone further than that what good would it have done? So it will not do for us to say to our neighbors be ye warmed, and be ye fed, but give them not those things which are essential to their well being. Unless we really will what we desire, it will never effect any good.

5. The love required in the text is not pity or compassion to individuals. This is wholly constitutional, and men are strongly exercised with it in spite of themselves. It is related of Whitefield that he often appealed to men with such power in behalf of his orphan-house as to induce those to give liberally who had beforehand determined not to give, nor to be influenced by him. The truth is, his mighty appeals aroused the constitutional susceptibility of pity to such a pitch that they had to give out of self-defense. They were wrought up to such an agony that they had to give to relieve it. But so far was this mere excitement from being virtuous, that perhaps those very persons whom it induced to give the money, called themselves a thousand fools for having done so, after the excitement subsided.

6. Nor is the love required in the text delight in the happiness of mankind. We are so constituted as naturally to delight in the happiness of others, whenever there is no selfish reason to prevent. It is this same constitutional tendency which produces such abhorrence of whatever is unjust and injurious. For example: How men's feelings of indignation swell and boil on witnessing acts of injustice. Suppose, in a court of justice, a judge perverts justice, shamefully wronging the innocent, and clearing the guilty. How would the spectators feel? There was a case, sometime since, in one of our cities, where a man had been guilty of a flagrant outrage, but when it was brought before the court, the justice so insulted and abused the sufferer and showed such a disposition to clear the guilty, that the indignation of the spectators became aroused to such a degree that they could hardly be restrained from seizing, and wreaking their vengeance on him. And these were persons who made no pretentions to religion. So men universally, whether virtuous or not, abhor a liar, or the character of the devil. Who ever contemplated the character of the devil, as it really is, without abhorring it? On the

contrary, men universally, whether virtuous themselves or not, admire and delight in virtuous characters. Take, for example, the Jews in Christ's time. How they admired, and manifested their delight in the character of the prophets who had formerly perished by the violence of their contemporaries. Now how was this? Why, they now saw the true character of those prophets, without its sustaining such a relation to their selfishness as to annoy them and their constitutional delight was naturally awakened in this way. But at the same time they were treating Christ in the same manner that their fathers, treated those prophets and for the same reason. So now multitudes join in admiring and praising such men as Whitefield, and Wesley, and Edwards, who, if they had lived in their day, would have cried as loud as their contemporaries did--'away with them.' Now, why is this? Because the relations of the characters of these men to the world are now changed, and do not directly cross the track of their selfishness, as they did while living. The same principle is manifested in respect to human freedom. For example: Some years ago, during the struggle of the Greeks for their freedom, what enthusiasm prevailed--what earnestness to go and help them. The government could scarcely control the waves of excitement in their favor. But those very men, who were so enthusiastic in behalf of the Greeks, would now hiss at any error to remove slavery from this country! Now why is this? Because, I say again, men are so constituted that when no selfish reason exists to prevent it, men naturally delight in happiness, and sympathize with the suffering. But there is no virtue in this. It is mere natural emotion which is consistent with the highest wickedness.

7. The love required is not a good will to any particular individuals. 'Do not even sinners love those that love them?' They love their friends and partizans, and so do fallen spirits for ought I know, but there is no benevolence in this.

8. This love then must be benevolence. But what is benevolence? It is benevolence--willing the good of being. The attributes of benevolence are,

(1.) Voluntariness. It belongs to the will, and not to the sensibility.

(2.) Another attribute is disinterestedness. By this, I mean that the good of being is not willed for the sake of its reflex influence upon self, but for its own sake. It is recognizing the good of being as valuable in itself, and willing it for that reason. The willing terminates on the good willed.

(3.) Universality, is another attribute of benevolence. It goes out towards all beings. It admits of no exceptions. Wherever there is a being capable of happiness, benevolence wills its happiness, according to its perceived value and for its own sake. Such is God's benevolence. It is universal, embracing in its infinite bosom all beings from the highest arch angel to the sparrow which falls to the ground. He views and really wills the happiness of every being as a good. Indeed, universality is essential to the very nature of benevolence, for if good is willed on its own account, benevolence will of course cover all good known.

(4.) Another attribute is unity. Benevolence is a simple principle. It is the whole heart--an unmixed general choice, as the good of being is a unity--it is a single end, and benevolence is the choice of this one end.

(5.) It is a choice as distinguished from volition. The choice of an end always of course necessitates volitions to accomplish the end, but these executive volitions have no character in themselves, and all virtue or vice belongs to the choice or intention which they are designed to execute. We know this by consciousness.

(6.) It is a choice also as distinguished from desire, emotion, or feeling. As I said in the former lecture, we are conscious that all the states of the sensibility--all desires, emotions, and passions whatever are involuntary, and therefore without moral character. Benevolence then, cannot either wholly or partly consist in these.

(7.) Another attribute is activity and efficiency. Benevolence being choice it must be efficient. Choice necessitates volition. For example; Suppose I intend to go to the post-office as soon as possible. While this choice remains, it of course necessitates all the volitions necessary to its execution. Its very nature is activity.

(8.) Aggressiveness is another attribute of benevolence. Of course if benevolence is willing the good of being, it wills the destruction of whatever prevents that good, and continually makes encroachments in every direction upon every form of wickedness however fortified. It will not only sally out against such sins as licentiousness, intemperance, and profanity, but every form of selfishness however popular it may be.

(9.)Benevolence is a disposition, or ultimate intention. Intention is the choice of an end. Benevolence is the choice of the highest good of being, and being the ultimate choice, as was illustrated in the last lecture, it is of course a disposition to promote good to the utmost.

(10.) It is supreme to God of course. Benevolence as we have already said, is willing the good of being for its own sake. Of course then it is willing the good of every being, according to its perceived value, for it is agreed by all, to be the correct definition of virtue that it is a disposition to regard things according to their perceived relative value. Now every one must perceive that the happiness of God is the greatest good in the universe, and therefore benevolence must, as a matter of course, will it supremely.

(11.) Benevolence must be equal to men. I do not mean to say that the happiness of every man is equal to the happiness of every other man or that they are equally valuable. The happiness of a man is of more value than the happiness of a brute. It would therefore be unjust to regard them as equal. So some men are of more value than others. For example, the life of Washington was of more value than that of any private soldier; therefore, if either of them must be sacrificed, it should be the least valuable. But what I mean to say is that the good of every being is to be regarded according to its relative value as you understand it.

(12.) Benevolence also regards the good of enemies, as well as friends. The Savior insists on this as essential to virtue.

9. That this love is benevolence is generally agreed, and it is also agreed that this is the only form of love which is voluntary, or can reasonably be commanded. That this, and no other kind of love is voluntary, every one knows by his own consciousness. We are conscious that our emotions are all produced, not directly but indirectly. If a parent, for example, wishes to feel about his family, he must direct his attention to them. The result will be that he will feel about them by a natural necessity, and his feelings will take the type of whatever aspect he views them in. And while his attention is fixed upon them he cannot but feel. So with every form of love except benevolence. Hatred is produced and perpetuated in the same way. An individual conceives himself injured by another, and keeps his attention upon it; the more he views it, the more emotions of hatred or indignation are felt, so that when urged to give it up, he says he cannot. And it is true that while he keeps his eye upon that particular thing--while his mind broods over it, he cannot; but he can turn his attention off and thus indirectly remove his feelings of hatred or indignation.

10. The love required in the text must be benevolence as it is required towards all beings. This is manifest from what we have already said.

11. God's love to us must be benevolence. It could not be complacency, for instead of feeling complacent towards sinners, he must abhor their character. It was benevolence then which made the Atonement, and all the provisions of salvation.

12. No other kind of love would do any real good. Without it God would never have made the Atonement, nor have done any thing else to secure the salvation of sinners, nor would any other moral being. No other love can in the nature of things be universal than benevolence, which consists in willing universal good for its own sake.

13. Benevolence is naturally and universally obligatory, and therefore must be virtue. The good of being is valuable, and therefore to will it must be virtue. To deny this is to talk stark nonsense. It is to deny that we are to treat things as they are, or according to the nature.

14. Therefore the law of God must require it, and would be unjust if it did not. It cannot be otherwise than unjust not to require all moral beings to act according to the nature and relations of things.

15. Nothing else need be required of moral beings, as every thing else possible to us follows its exercise of necessity. This follows from the fact that it consists in choice. If I will right, this will secures corresponding volitions, muscular movements, desires, and feelings as a matter of course, and whatever willing will not secure is impossible to me. To produce the right emotions, I have only to fix my attention on the right objects. If therefore I will right the whole man will be right of course. That such is the influence of the will we know by consciousness.

16. In short nothing more nor less can be justly required. That nothing less can be required is a certain intuition of every moral being in the universe. Ask whomsoever you will if every one ought not to be required to will the universal good of being, and if he understands the terms of your proposition, he will immediately cry out, "yes," "yes," from the deepest recesses of his soul. That nothing more can be required is equally intuitive. Whenever it is asserted that men can be required to do any thing beyond the power of their will, the nature of every moral being cries out against it as false. This is right and nothing else is right.

II. Benevolence is the whole of virtue.

1. We have seen that this love is disposition or intention.

2. We know that intention necessitates corresponding states and acts.

3. Virtue cannot consist in the outward act, nor, in necessitated mental acts. It must therefore consist in benevolence and this the Bible teaches in many ways.

(1.) In the text, it is asserted that love is the fulfilling of the law, and that all the law is fulfilled in one word even this, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

(2.) It is the spirit of the whole law as epitomized by Christ--'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy strength and with all thy mind and thy neighbor as thyself.'

(3.) It is the spirit of every precept of the Bible. It asserts that 'if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not,' that is, a right intention obeys the very spirit of the Bible. If we intend right, the will is taken for the deed. Suppose my intention is to do all the good I possibly can, but I am confined to a sick bed so that I can accomplish but little; notwithstanding I am virtuous. So, on the other hand, the Bible teaches that if people intend wrong, their moral character is as their intention, whatever they may do. Even if good should result from their actions, no thanks to them because they did not intend it.

4. All the attributes of Christian character are only modifications of benevolence but this will appear more fully in several

REMARKS.

1. It may be said that the Bible represents our words, thoughts, and outward actions as virtuous. Answer;

(1.) The Bible makes all virtue strictly speaking to consist in love, and it cannot be inconsistent with itself.

(2.) Words, thoughts, and outward actions are and can be virtuous only in the sense of their being manifestations of benevolence.

(3.) The same may be said in regard to words, thoughts, and actions that are called wicked. The Bible says that 'the ploughing of the wicked is sin.' Words, thoughts, and actions are holy or sinful in no other sense than that they indicate the state of the will. A word! What is a word? A breath--a motion of the atmosphere on the drum of the ear. Can this have moral character in itself? No, but it may be an index of the state of mind of him who utters it.

2. See the infinite importance of understanding that benevolence always and necessarily manifests itself--consisting in choice it is naturally impossible that it should not.

3. See the spurious nature of any religion which does not manifest itself in efforts to do good. Such religion is mere antinomianism. It may be some kind of happiness, but religion it is not.

4. All the attributes of Christian character must belong to the will, just as all God's moral attributes are only modifications

of benevolence. They are not modifications of emotion, but of will. His justice in sending the wicked to hell is as much a modification of benevolence, as is his mercy in taking the virtuous to heaven. He does both for the same reason, because the general good equally demands both. So with all that the true Christian does.

5. How false and dangerous are the usual definitions of these attributes. For example: Love is spoken of as a mere feeling. Hence religion is represented as, at one time, like smothered embers, scarcely in existence; at another, in a slight glow, which may be fanned till it breaks out into flame. Now this is not the love which the Bible requires, since it is nothing but mere feeling, and even if legitimately produced, it is only the natural and constitutional result of religion, and not religion itself.

Repentance is also spoken of as mere sorrow for sin, but instead of this, it does not consist in feeling at all. It is a change of mind. As we say, when we have made up our mind to do one thing, and then change it, and do the opposite, we say in popular language, "I changed my mind." This is the simple idea of repentance. It is an act of the will, and sorrow follows it as a result. So faith is represented as the conviction of the intellect. But this cannot be faith, for the Bible every where represents faith as a virtue, and it must, therefore, be an act of the will, and no mere belief whatever. It is a committing of the soul to God. The Bible says Christ did not commit himself to certain persons, for He knew what was in them, that is, He did not trust or exercise faith in them. The word rendered commit here, is the same as that rendered faith. Peter says, 'Commit the keeping of your souls to Him in well doing as to a faithful Creator.' When the mind apprehends the true meaning of the characteristics and relations of Christ to the world, this is often mistaken for faith. But the devil may have as good faith as that. This is a mere perception of truth by the intellect, and is, as a condition, indispensable to faith, but it is no more faith itself than an act of the intellect is an act of the will.

So humility is represented as a sense of guilt, and unworthiness. Now, Satan is doubtless humble if this is humility, and so is every convicted sinner, by a natural necessity. But humility is a willingness to be known and esteemed according to your true character. These illustrations will show how dangerous are the mistakes prevalent respecting the attributes of Christian character.

6. There is no such thing as religion, not in exercise. Persons often talk as though they had some true religion about them, although they are conscious of exercising none. They have a good enough religion to be sure, but it is not in operation just now. Now this is a radical mistake.

7. How many persons are living on frames and feelings, and yet remain perfectly selfish.

8. Many are satisfied with no preaching but such as fans into existence certain happy emotions. These are a kind of religious epicures. Whenever we preach so as to lay bare the roots of selfishness and detect its secret workings, they are not fed. They say this is not the gospel, let us have the gospel. But what do they mean by the gospel? Why simply that class of truths that create and fan into a flame their emotions. And those who most need to be searched are often most unwilling to endure the probe. They make their religion to consist in emotions, and if these are taken away what have they left? hence they cling to them with a death grasp. Now let me say that these emotions have not one particle of religion in them, and those who want simply that class of truths which fan them into existence are mere religious epicures, and their view of the gospel is sheer antinomianism. If the world were full of such religion it would be none the better for it.

9. Religion is the cause of happiness but is not identical with it. Happiness is a state of the sensibility and of course involuntary, while religion is benevolence and therefore powerful action.

10. Men may work without benevolence, but they cannot be benevolent without works. Many persons wake up occasionally, and bluster about, get up protracted meetings, and make mighty efforts to work themselves into a right state of feeling by dint of mere friction. But they never get a right spirit thus, and their working is mere legality. I do not mean to condemn protracted meetings, nor special efforts to promote religion, but I do condemn a legal engaging in these things. But while persons may work without benevolence, it is also certain that if they are benevolent they will work. It is impossible that benevolence should be inactive.

11. If all virtue consists in the ultimate intention, then it must be that we can be conscious of our spiritual state. We

certainly can tell what we are aiming at. If consciousness does not reveal this it cannot reveal any thing about our character. If character consists in ultimate intention, and if we cannot be conscious what this intention is, it follows necessarily that we can know nothing whatever about our own character.

12. We can see what we are to inquire after in our hours of self-examination. Our inquiry should not be how we feel, but for what end we live--what is the aim of our life.

13. How vain is religion without love. Those who have such a religion are continually lashed up by conscience to the performance of duty. Conscience stands like a task-master, scourge in hand, points to the duty, and says it must not be omitted. The heart shrinks back from its performance, but still it must be done or worse evil endured. The hesitating soul drags itself up by resolution, to fulfill the letter of the requirement, while there is no acquiescence in its spirit, and thus a miserable slavery is substituted for the cheerful obedience of the heart.

14. I must close by saying that benevolence naturally fills the mind with peace and joy. Mind was made to be benevolent, and whenever it is so it is in harmony with itself, with God and the Universe. It wills just as God wills, and therefore it naturally and cheerfully acts out his will. This is its choice. It is like some heavenly instrument whose chords are touched by some angelic hand which makes music for the ear of God. But on the contrary, a selfish man is necessarily, from the very nature of mind, a wretched man. His reason and conscience continually affirm his obligations to God and his universe, to the world and the Church. But he never wills in accordance with it, and thus a continual warfare is kept up within. His mind is like an instrument untuned and harsh. Instead of harmony, it renders only discord, and makes music only fit to mingle with the wailings of the damned.

Holiness of Christians in the Present Life

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Chapter 3

SELFISHNESS

Lectures by Professor Finney.

Reported for the Evangelist by Rev. S.D. Cochran.

'Israel is an empty vine; he bringeth forth fruit unto himself.'--Hos. 10:1.

In this passage the Lord complains of the selfishness of Israel; and it is my present design to show,

I. WHAT SELFISHNESS IS NOT.

II. WHAT IT IS.

III. THAT IT CANNOT CO-EXIST WITH HOLINESS IN THE SAME MIND.

IV. MENTION SOME EVIDENCES OF SELFISHNESS.

V. THAT ONE FORM OF IT IS AS INCONSISTENT WITH SALVATION AS ANOTHER.

I. What selfishness is not.

1. It is not a desire of happiness, and dread of misery. This is perfectly constitutional in all moral beings. It is involuntary as we know by consciousness, and is, therefore, destitute of all moral character.

2. It is not the desire of approbation. This desire, to whatever degree it may exist, so far forth as it is mere desire, is constitutional, involuntary, and without moral character.

3. It does not consist in the desire of any personal good, nor in the dread of any personal evil. These are perfectly natural, and have no character.

4. Nor does it consist in any constitutional appetite, passion, or impulse, or in what are generally called propensities. Some persons speak of selfish propensities, as though our propensities had moral character, and we were blamable for them. But this is absurd. There is no such thing as a selfish propensity. All the appetites, passions, and impulses are natural, and are naturally excited whenever we come into correlation with the objects adapted to excite them. They are wholly the products of the Sensibility, and have neither voluntariness, nor moral character about them so far as they themselves are concerned.

5. Nor does selfishness consist in any kind, or degree of mere desire as distinguished from choice or willing. As I have often said, every one knows the difference between desire and willing, by his own consciousness. For example; I may desire to go to Europe, and strongly desire it, and yet on the whole, never will to go, for desire does not, but will does govern the conduct.

II. What selfishness is.

1. Man, as I have before said, possesses three cardinal faculties, called Intelligence, Sensibility, and Will. This we know by consciousness.

2. The Will is influenced by motives addressed to it, either through the Sensibility, that is, by constitutional desires and impulses, or through the Intelligence, that is, by truth, and obligation to comply with it, as perceived by the Intellect. There is no other way in which will can be influenced, and it must of necessity choose between the gratification of the impulses of the Sensibility, and the dictates of the Intelligence.

3. The law of God is revealed and imposed by the Reason. Man is, in a certain sense, his own law-giver; or, as Paul expressed it, he "is a law to himself." If the grand principal of the law of God did not lie revealed in our reason, we could never be influenced by any outward precepts, and could never perceive obligation, simply because we should have no standard of either truth or morality. We could not know whether the Bible is the word of God or a lying fable, because we should have no possible way of testing it--In short, if our reason did not reveal and impose the great principle of the law of God, all religion and morality would be to us naturally impossible. All precept and instruction therefore are valid to moral beings, only because, when addressed to them, their reason recognizes their truth, and imposes obligation to conform to them; and whatever the Reason will not thus recognize as true, cannot be obligatory. All the commands, and truth of God are addressed to moral beings through their reason. I should perhaps say here, that by reason, I mean that power of the mind which affirms all necessary and absolute truth: or, in other words, the intuitive faculty. All moral influences then come to the will through the Reason, and all virtue consists in the conformity of the Will to its requirements.

4. The Sensibility always invites the Will to seek gratification from the objects which awaken its susceptibilities. For example; The appetite for food is awakened by the perception of its appropriate object; and whenever awakened, and to whatever degree, is impulsive to the will. The impulse will be strong or weak in proportion to the degree in which the susceptibility is excited, and in proportion to its strength, will impel the will to consent to the gratification. So it is with all the appetites, desires, and passions. That this is true we know by our own consciousness.

5. There are then two, and only two directions and occasions of human action, between which the will must make its election.

(1.) The law of the reason requires the exercise of benevolence, that is, of supreme love to God, and equal love to our neighbor. It requires that this should be the ultimate intention, or supreme choice of the Will.

(2.) The Sensibility invites to gratification irrespective of the law of the reason. The Sensibility is naturally blind. It impels towards every object, which awakens its susceptibilities, for its own sake, that is because it will afford gratification, and for no other reason. Now every man knows by his own consciousness that such are the relations of his reason, and his sensibility to his will and that he is under the necessity of choosing between them.

The way is now prepared to state directly what selfishness is.

6. It consists in willing the gratification of the Sensibility--in the mind[']s consecrating itself to its demands in opposition to the law of the reason. It is a disposition to gratify self instead of seeking a higher and holier end. It is a state of the Will, as distinguished from the Sensibility.

7. It must then always consist in what I called in the last lecture, an ultimate intention. The ultimate end chosen by the mind is self-gratification. This, in some form or other, is preferred to every thing else. It is not selfishness to have a capacity of gratification, nor is the gratification itself selfishness. Brutes have a sensibility like men, and when the demands of their awakened susceptibilities are met they are gratified, but there is no selfishness in them, nor are they capable of selfishness, because they have no reason to impose on them a higher law than the mere impulses of their sensibility. These impulses, are, however, regulated in them by instinct. But moral beings have a higher faculty which reveals to them a higher end of life, and imposes on them obligation to choose it. It requires them to regard all personal gratification as a means, and not an end, and therefore to be held in perfect subordination to the law imposed by the reason. The Bible only repeats the demands of every man's own reason, when it says-- 'Whether ye eat or drink, or

whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' That is, hold all your appetites, desires, and passions, with a steady rein, and under perfect control. Now selfishness, consists in preferring self-gratification to the demands of this higher faculty, that is, making personal gratification an end--the ultimate end of life.

8. This is just what the Bible calls the 'carnal mind,' 'walking after the flesh.' That is, the carnal mind consists in the mind's choosing the gratification of the Sensibility as the end of pursuit. I have said already, that every object of desire, is desired for its own sake, that is, because it is capable of affording gratification. Selfishness therefore consists in choosing desired objects because they are desired; or to gratify self, and not as a means to the glory of God.

III. Selfishness and holiness cannot co-exist in the same mind.

1. In the preceding lecture, I showed that holiness, or true virtue consists wholly in disinterested benevolence, that is, in willing every interest according to its perceived relative value. Benevolence must be a supreme choice, or ultimate intention; for if it wills every interest according to its perceived value, there is nothing else in the universe which it can will. If every good is willed for its own sake according to its perceived value, it is naturally impossible to will any thing beyond that, or aside from it. To say that you can is a contradiction. It is the same as to say that you can will every interest according to its perceived value, and not will it at the same time.

2. Now what is selfishness? As we have already seen, under the previous head, it is also an ultimate intention. In other words it is the preference of self-gratification to the law of the reason, that is, to benevolence. Instead of willing every good according to its perceived value, it is willing one good more than all other goods. Whenever an individual prefers his own gratification to the demands of his own reason, he does it in the face of the law of God, and in defiance of his authority.

3. But these are, self-evidently, opposite choices and therefore cannot co-exist in the same mind. Is it possible that there can be two supreme, ultimate conflicting choices in exercise by the same mind, at the same time? This cannot be.

I may add that benevolence and selfishness regard and treat every perceived interest in the universe, in an order exactly the opposite of each other. Benevolence regards God's interests first, and aims at his glory as the supreme good; next the well being of the universe; then of this world; afterwards of its own nation; then of its own community; next of its own family; and lastly of itself. Now selfishness exactly reverses all this. The selfish man places self first, and regards his own interest as supreme; then he regards the interest of his family and special friends, but only so far as supreme devotion to himself on the whole prompts; next he regards his own community or city in opposition to all other communities and cities, whenever their interests clash; then he regards his own nation, and is what men call very patriotic, and would sacrifice the interests of all other nations, just as far as they interfere with his own; and so he progresses till finally, God and his interests find the last place in his regards. That this is so, is a simple matter of fact as every body knows, and how then is it possible that these two opposite choices should co-exist in the same mind? Believe it, who can.

IV. Several evidences of selfishness.

1. A want of zeal for God's interests. Men are always zealous for that which they supremely choose, and if they are not zealous for God's honor, it proves that it is not the object of their supreme regard. To deny this is absurd.

2. The absence of pain and indignation when his interests are disregarded. If they were willed as the supreme good, it would be impossible to witness his commands and authority set at nought without the keenest sense of pain and indignation.

3. More zeal and labor in promoting self interest, than the interest of God, is an evidence of selfishness. It proves to a demonstration that your own interests are preferred to his. Men universally manifest the most zeal in behalf of that in which they are most interested.

4. If, therefore, persons think they have piety, while they are more zealous in promoting self interest than the interest of God, they are deceived, and are probably mistaking mere desire for religion. Let me here remind you that the will

necessarily governs the conduct, while desire does not. I may strongly desire to go to Ohio, and never go, but if I really will to go there, I go of necessity unless my volition is overcome by superior force. So if a man is really benevolent, he prefers the interest of God and his universe to his own, and manifests a zeal accordingly.

5. Where persons pay more attention to their own personal interests than to the eternal interests of others, it is evidence that they are selfish. They certainly are not regarding things according to their relative value.

6. The absence of a spirit of prayer is an evidence of selfishness. In a world like this prayer is the very breath of benevolence. How can a benevolent man walk through the streets, and mingle in society, without his spirit being stirred within him, and venting itself in earnest prayer? It cannot be.--What! thousands around us, jostling us at every step, in all their sins, already suffering many evils the consequences of transgression, exposed to eternal death! Who that believes there is any help in God for them, can avoid prayer? Certainly none but those who are supremely selfish.

7. Another evidence of selfishness is spiritual epicureanism. There is a certain class of persons who are always wanting something to make them happy, and whatever measures or preaching will not secure this result, they of course reject. Now what state of will does this indicate? Why, a selfish state to be sure. They do not want to have their minds enlightened, and their duty pointed out because this renders them unhappy; but they delight to sit and have their emotions fanned till their sensibility is all in a glow, and the preaching which does that, is to them the only gospel. Now this is nothing but a refined selfishness.

8. Where persons are more zealous to defend their own reputation and character than the cause and honor of God, it is an evidence of selfishness. There are multitudes even of professors of religion, who, if men should say anything against their character, or if in any way, their reputation was about to suffer, would be thrown into an agony, lie awake all night, and wet their pillow with tears; but if they should hear a ribald infidel rail against God, and cover his character all over with foul reproaches, it would scarcely catch a passing notice. Now why is this? Plainly because they prize their own character more than the honor of God, and are supremely selfish.

9. Unwillingness to make personal sacrifices to promote a higher good is another evidence of selfishness. This needs no illustration.

10. Another evidence of selfishness is the dominion of any appetite or passion over the will. There are some who pretend to be religious, who habitually gratify certain appetites and passions which they admit to be wrong. Ask them if they do not believe it to be wrong; they say, yes, but they cannot overcome it. And mark me, that is a selfish man; that is the very definition of selfishness. It is preferring self gratification to the known will of God. It is what the Apostle means by "minding the flesh."

11. A want of interest in the prosperity of others, is another evidence. Selfish men do not know what they lose, by neglecting to interest themselves in the good of others. The benevolent man enjoys the happiness of others, and thus all the well-being of the universe, of which he is the spectator, contributes to his own enjoyment. Myriads of rills of happiness pour into his own bosom. Why? Because the prosperity of others is the very thing on which his heart is set, and it is a contradiction to say that he will not be gratified in witnessing the realization of that which he supremely chooses.--Whenever, therefore, an individual manifests a want of interest in the happiness of others, it proves that he does not really will it, and is therefore supremely selfish.

12. Another evidence is a disposition to envy and murmur, if others possess what you do not.-- What state of mind is that? It cannot bear to see anybody live in a better house, have better accommodations, superior endowments, or richer equipage. Instead of rejoicing in their good, it repines that they are not on a level with itself. It says, let no one have more than I. Now this must be supreme selfishness. How would benevolence feel and talk? Plainly it would rejoice in their good, and its language would be, "I thank God that others possess these good things if I do not."

13. A spirit of speculation is another evidence of selfishness. By this, I mean a disposition to make bargains out of others. Now would benevolence represent the article above its real value--would it attempt to get rich by taking the advantage of others? I have been amazed whenever I have tho't of the perfect mania, which swept like an epidemic over all the length and breadth of the land some years since. It was the great object to make money by speculation. Christians, and even

ministers rushed headlong into the general scramble after money. When asked why they did so, they replied, they wished to make money for God, that is, in plain English, they wished to promote the glory of God, by trampling upon his law. Why, the principle is as absurd as to become a pirate to get money to give to the Bible Society. Suppose a man should turn pirate, and go out upon the high seas to run down, and destroy every vessel that came in his way under pretense of getting money to give to the Bible Society! And when remonstrated with, suppose he should urge the importance of sending abroad the Bible, and that he could make more money by piracy in order to accomplish this object, than in any other way! Who would give him credit for any benevolence in this? So to attempt to justify speculation on the ground of acquiring means by it, to spread the Gospel, is to put on an impudent face and baptize rebellion against God, with the name of holiness. Rob your neighbor to give to God!!

14. Squandering time and money to gratify artificial appetites is another evidence of selfishness.-- There are certain appetites which must be gratified that is, the things desired are necessary to our existence and usefulness, and where gratification under appropriate circumstances is proper. To expend money for the gratification of these, is to make a proper use of it, so long as it is done in accordance with the dictates of reason. Such are all the constitutional appetites which are really such.-- But when they are not natural, but artificial, their gratification can be nothing else but selfishness.-- To illustrate, take the appetite for ardent spirits, tobacco, or any other unnatural stimulant.

15. An unwillingness to bear your part in making public improvements, is another evidence of selfishness. Suppose roads are to be made, or churches to be built, or anything else to be done which is essential to the public good, what else can it be but selfishness to stand back from bearing your part in the labor and expense necessary to accomplish it? I have sometimes seen cases of this kind: A church has become deeply involved in debt, and certain individuals seem to want to leave it. They manifest peculiar anxiety to change their relations, when it is as manifest as can be, that their only reason is they wish to avoid doing their part towards paying the debt.

16. When self interest must be appealed to in order to excite to action, it is evidence of selfishness. When a man is benevolent, all that is necessary to move the deep foundations of his moral being, is to lay before him some real good to be achieved. It is enough for him to have his intelligence enlightened. But in vain do you attempt to move the selfish man by appeals to his benevolence. If you wish to move him, you must exhibit an entirely different class of motives, such as take deep hold on his sensibility. If he be a professor of religion, perhaps it will be impossible to move him until you can shake his hope. Duty must be brought, with such persons, into such relation as to appear the least of two evils, one or the other of which they must endure, and then their very selfishness leads them to perform it. Or it must be so placed before them as that its performance will advance their own special interests. For example: Suppose a church is to be built. Now if you are obliged to go to a man and tell him how it will increase the value of his own property, or in some other way promote his own peculiar interests, you may depend upon it, that man is supremely selfish. It is the same with this class of persons as it respects their eternal interests. Nothing will move them so effectually to any kind of religious effort, as a representation of the personal good which will accrue to them in the future world. In short, the only way in which you can influence such men, is by appealing either to their hopes or fears.

17. Increasing expenditures as your income increases, instead of doing more good. During the great speculation, it was my lot to talk with men very frequently upon the principles by which they were actuated in driving after wealth. They all said, they were seeking to do good with it. But I observed that with scarcely an exception, they increased their expenditures, and equipage, their coaches, and fine horses, and rich furniture, just in proportion as their means increased, so that they were no more able to do good than before. It would be the same if their wealth were increased by thousands, and this uniform result proves that the principle which they adopted was radically wrong. The truth is, you may as well talk of stealing for God as of speculating for Him. The one is just as consistent as the other.

18. A disposition to suspect others of selfishness. This is an almost universal characteristic of selfish minds, and never of a benevolent one. It is for this reason that selfish men so generally, deny that there is any such thing as disinterested benevolence. Mankind are disposed to regard others in the light of their own character. This might be illustrated by the case of Satan and Job. Job was an upright man and served God disinterestedly.-- But Satan, being supremely selfish, did not believe it. Said he, "Doth Job serve God for naught?" intimating that the only reason for Job's apparent obedience, was the personal advantages which would accrue to him from it, and even when he had stripped him, by the permission of God, of almost all that he held dear, and Job remained unmoved, he still intimates that his only reason for doing so was a selfish one. "Skin for skin, yea all that a man hath, will he give for his life. But put forth thy hand now and touch his bone

and his flesh and he will curse thee to thy face." The truth is, a benevolent man is naturally unsuspicious-- 'thinketh no evil.' But show me a suspicious man, one who is always attributing the worst motives to others, and I will show you a man who is himself supremely selfish.

19. An indisposition to do as you would be done unto, is another evidence of selfishness. I gave very high offense to certain persons in one of our cities, not long since, by pressing this thought. Suppose yourself and family to be enjoying all the blessings of liberty, suppose you have a wife whom you dearly love, and children, upon whom have centered the affections of your heart, but in a woful day, they are wrested away from your embrace, and plunged into slavery. How would you feel? How would you talk? Would you say we have nothing to do with slavery? Nothing to do with it! Would you say it is nothing to me? Nothing to me! You may depend on it, in that case you would bring up no plea of the delicacy of the subject, as an excuse for refusing to interest yourself in their behalf and to condemn the outrageous system by which they were oppressed. In this way every one may learn his duty towards those who are enslaved in this nation. Put yourself and your family in their place and inquire how you would wish others to regard your condition and to act in reference to it. Now mark, the very thing which you would judge to be their duty in the circumstances supposed, is your own in your present circumstances. Suppose it were now, as it was some years ago, that the Algerines were enslaving our fellow citizens--how would it be regarded by this nation? It would be the signal for instant war. Thousands would press forward to enlist in the work of vengeance upon the oppressors, and if they could not otherwise accomplish the rescue of those in bondage, they would wade through an ocean of blood, and desolate with fire and slaughter their whole territory. But alas! the winds of heaven may come over from the south, laden with the groans of thousands of our fellow men, daily suffering the wrongs of slavery, in its worst forms, and with thousands scarcely a feeling is enlisted in their favor. Is that loving their neighbor as they love themselves? Is this the religion of Jesus Christ? My soul come not thou into the secret of such religion as that! And stranger still, multitudes even attempt to make the Bible sanction and authorize this accursed system. They say the Bible has really authorized it as an institution. But who can believe it? What! the same God who uttered the fiery law, requiring man to love his neighbor as himself, and denouncing death on all who will not comply with the requisition, authorize and sanction a system, which tramples on this law at every step, by which, one man seizes his brother,

"Chains him and tasks him,

And exacts his sweat with stripes, that mercy,

With a bleeding heart, weeps when she sees inflicted

on a beast."

Who does not regard such a supposition, when fairly stated, as downright blasphemy, and who would not reject the Bible as a gross imposition, if it really did thus contradict itself and belie its pretended author.

20. Another proof of selfishness, is covetousness. Some cannot bear to see others have what they have not without coveting it, and often to such a degree, that they can scarcely keep their hands from it.--Now wherever this spirit exists it is supreme selfishness.

21. A disposition to get the best seat in church or the prominent place in assemblies. For example, in churches where they sell their seats, you will see them striving to get the best seat and the best cushion, and the most convenient location, and if they fail of this they are more distressed than if a soul were lost. So, often, when churches are formed instead of trying to secure a house best adapted to the service of God, and instead of trying to promote the conversion of sinners, they lay themselves out to get the best house, and the best organ and the best choir, and the best minister, and then sit down to be preached to heaven. But how shall a minister preach to them? He will utterly fail to do them any good, and to save them from death, if he does not put his finger into their very eyes, and rebuke their horrible selfishness.

V. One form of selfishness is as inconsistent with salvation as another.

Remember that selfishness consists in obeying the propensities, appetites, passions, and desires.--This devotion to self gratification developes itself in a great variety of ways without changing its character. With one, one propensity

predominates, with another, another. One for example is an epicure. His desire for pleasant dishes predominates over everything else, and he does not value money only as it contributes to his gratification. Another is a miser, and is entirely too much devoted to the desire of wealth to be an epicure. Indeed, he thinks his ruling passion contemptible. One is fond of dress, and values money only as it contributes to the gratification of this desire. This is his form of selfishness. He thinks of it all the year round, and labors with his eye on self gratification in this form. Right over against this, another is fond of power or influence to such an extent as to wonder that any can be fond of such a trifling gratification as dress affords. But he is as much enslaved by his desire of power as the other by his devotion to dress, and is equally selfish. Again, some are so fond of reputation, as to do anything that public sentiment requires, rather than to fail of popularity. This is their form of selfishness.--Their reputation is preferred to the well-being of the universe. But others have such a large development of some appetite or passion as to sacrifice reputation for it. For example: the drunkard.--He regards his appetite for intoxicating drinks above everything else, and his character weighs not a straw when brought into competition with this. Now each of these different forms of selfishness is a violation of the law of God. One just as much so as the other. They all lord it over the will.--And yet those devoted to one form take great credit to themselves because they are not devoted to all the others. The truth is in all cases the sin lies in the indulgence of any appetite, desire or propensity whatever, in opposition to the law of love.

REMARKS.

1. It matters not which of the propensities prevail over the will in order to constitute selfishness. None of them has moral character in itself. To prefer the indulgence of anyone of them to higher interests is what constitutes sin. It is minding the flesh. It is enmity against God.

2. If we are asked why we have these propensities if they are not to be gratified? I answer, (1.) Those which are natural are given to serve and not to rule us. For example, the appetite for food. Without an appetite for food we should never take it, but it is essential to our existence, and therefore the appetite serves to secure life. So the desire for knowledge. Were there not a constitutional desire for knowledge, who would ever seek it. But knowledge is essential to our highest good. The desire for it therefore, serves to secure this essential to our well being. (2.) Farther, these propensities are not only given to serve us, but to afford us gratification. The benevolence of God gave us these constitutional propensities, so that we might find pleasure in that which is for our well being. Were we destitute of appetites, desires, passions, and susceptibilities we should be as incapable of pleasure or pain, gratification or happiness as a marble statue. Had the human race remained innocent the gratification of these susceptibilities would doubtless have afforded them exquisite pleasure. That we possess them, therefore, must be regarded as a proof of the divine benevolence towards us, not withstanding the fact that they render us liable to various and strong temptations. (3.) Many of the propensities that are most despotic, God never gave. They are wholly artificial, and are produced by a voluntary perversion of those which are natural.--For example, the use of intoxicating drinks, or tobacco, and various narcotics.

3. Indulgence in any form of selfishness is utterly inconsistent with salvation. It is sin, and the Bible declares that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

4. A man who is selfish in his business can no more go to heaven than a pirate can. How should he? They are both living for the same end, self-gratification, under different forms, and are both therefore directly opposed to the will of God.

5. A vain man or a vain woman, can no more be saved, than a licentious man or a licentious woman. They prefer the gratification of their vanity, to the end of life which the law of God requires, while a licentious man or woman prefers the self gratification afforded them, in this grosser form, to the same end.

6. There is so little discrimination, as to the nature of sin, that endless delusions prevail. For example: while it is known that drunkenness, licentiousness, theft, robbery, murder &c. are utterly inconsistent with salvation, various other forms of sin are regarded as consistent with a profession of religion. But the truth is, as I have said before, a man who is selfish in his business, or who practices selfishness in any other form, however slight it may seem, can no more be saved than a drunkard can. Why cannot a drunkard be saved? or the licentious man, or the thief? Because he is selfish. So it must be with any other man who is selfish, whatever may be the type which his selfishness has put on. If a man were drunk but once a week he would be excommunicated as hopelessly lost, but he may be habitually avaricious, vain, or an epicure, and yet be regarded as a good christian in the estimation of the church. If any church should continue the drunkard in its

communion, it would bring upon itself the frown of Christians universally, and yet persons indulging various forms of selfishness are to be found in almost every church, and regarded as true Christians. Scarcely any one suspects that they will not be saved. Now this must be delusion. But why is this mistake? It is because there is so little discrimination respecting the nature of sin. The truth is, if any appetite, desire, or propensity whatever, rules over the will, it matters not what it is, the man is in the way to death.

7. To suppose religion to consist in obeying any feeling whatever, merely as feeling, is a most ruinous error. And yet multitudes know no other religion than this. They suppose happy feelings to be religion, and generally do just as they feel, irrespective of the demands of their reason. Now these persons have never yet apprehended the true idea of religion, namely that it consists in the entire consecration of the will to the law of God, as it is regarded and imposed by their reason. Feeling is not that to which the will should bow, for it is blind; but reason, as it perceives the law of God with its intuitive eye, should be heeded in its faintest whisper respecting the application of that law.

8. Selfishness was the first sin of man; that is, his first sin consisted in preferring his own gratification to the will of God. Now see whether I have given the right definition of sin. The first pair were placed in the garden in which were many trees bearing an abundance to supply their wants, but in the midst was one upon which God laid a prohibition. It is an important question why God laid this restraint[.]? It is a question which is often asked, and it is important that it should receive a right answer. The design undoubtedly was to teach them that they must control their sensibility--that they must keep their appetites, desires, and passions in subjection to the law of reason. This lesson it was of vast importance they should learn, and learn too as soon as possible, before their sensibility had such a development, that is, before their appetites, desires, and passions, should acquire such strength, during their ignorance of the tendency of gratifying them, as to render it certain that they never would deny themselves of their gratification when they came to see its tendency. For this reason God prohibits their eating the fruit of one particular tree. Now here Satan steps in, and being well aware of the relation of the Sensibility to the Will, and of both to the Reason, he suggested to our mother Eve, that God was selfish in laying restraint upon the constitutional propensities, and then presents such considerations before her mind as awakens two of the strongest of them, the appetite for food, and the desire of knowledge. This placed the demands of her reason which echoed the prohibition of God, and the demand of her constitutional desires in opposition. Between these her will was compelled to choose. And in that evil hour she preferred the gratification of these appetites to the will of God, and thus

"Brought death into the world, and all our woe."

This was the first sin. Observe now, these constitutional appetites were perfectly innocent in themselves, but the sin consisted in her consenting to their gratification in opposition to the requirement of God.

9. Selfishness is the first sin of every human being. Children come into the world in perfect ignorance both of the law of God and of the tendency of their sensibility. Now what is the process by which they sin. See the little child. At first it can scarcely turn its head or open its eyes. It is hardly conscious of any thing. Soon its sensibility begins to be developed, and foremost its appetite for food. As soon as you give it any thing, no matter what, it puts it right into the mouth. Gradually other appetites are awakened, equally constitutional, and therefore without moral character. At what age their reason begins to be developed we cannot know. But it is doubtless very early. But as soon as it is developed and affirms obligation then its very next is a moral act. Hence the appetites, desires, and propensities of its sensibility which have previously been developed, and its perception of obligation are both placed before its will, and it prefers the former to the latter. This is its first sin, and this is the first sin of every human being. But why does it always choose wrong? Because previously to the development of its reason, its will has constantly been under the control of its appetites, and it has acquired a habit of consenting to them. On the contrary the first affirmations of its reason are necessarily feeble. He therefore chooses self-gratification in opposition to it.

10. Selfishness constitutes sin in every instance. It is easy to show that this must be so.

11. We can see what regeneration is. It is turning from selfishness to benevolence. It is the act of the will preferring the well being of the universe to self-gratification to which it has always previously consented.

12. It is easy to see the necessity of regeneration. Who does not know that unregenerate men are universally selfish? And

who does not know that selfish men thrown together could never be happy? I have often wondered what those persons mean who deny the necessity of regeneration. The truth is it is self-evident.

13. We can see why men are commanded to regenerate themselves. If regeneration is an act of the will, nothing can be more rational than this requirement. It is of necessity their own act.

14. See why the Spirit of God is needed in regeneration. Men have been so habituated to gratify themselves, and their attention is so absorbed with this that the Spirit of God is needed to develop their reason, and to throw the light of heaven upon its eye, that it may see at once the nature and beauty of religion in contrast with the nature and deformity of sin. This is conviction. Then the sinner needs to be charmed away from his selfishness by correct apprehensions of the character of God, and the love of Christ. This it is the Spirit's office to effect.

15. Finally we can see what is meant by the Apostle, when he speaks so often of being led by the flesh and by the Spirit. An individual is led by the flesh when his will is in subjection to the Sensibility. This is the carnal mind. On the contrary, an individual is led by the Spirit, when his will is in subjection to the law of his reason, which is developed and applied by the Spirit of God.

And now, beloved, where are you? Are you led by the flesh, or by the Spirit? Are you selfish, or are you benevolent? What would you say if you were called to appear before God to-night? Could you say, I know that I am led by the Spirit of God and therefore am a child of God? O! beloved, search yourselves, lest you be deceived!

Holiness of Christians in the Present Life

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Chapter 4

HABITUAL HOLINESS THE TEST OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

Lectures by Professor Finney.

Reported for the Evangelist by Rev. S.D. Cochran.

> 'Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.'--1 John 3:9.

In this discourse I shall,

I. INQUIRE WHAT SIN IS NOT.

II. WHAT IT IS.

III. WHAT TO BE BORN OF GOD IS NOT.

IV. WHAT IT IS.

V. WHAT THE SEED SPOKEN OF IN THE TEXT IS NOT.

VI. WHAT IT IS.

VII. WHAT IS NOT INTENDED BY THE ASSERTION THAT WHOSOEVER IS BORN OF GOD DOES NOT AND CANNOT COMMIT SIN.

VIII. WHAT IS INTENDED BY IT.

IX. HOW A CHRISTIAN MAY BE DISTINGUISHED FROM A SINNER.

I. What sin is [not].

1. Sin is not a part of the soul or body.

2. It is nothing infused into either soul or body. Some talk as if they supposed the whole being, soul and body to be saturated with sin, than which, nothing can be more absurd.

3. It is no taint of corruption in, nor a lapsed state of the constitution. The Bible does not make it so, and reason certainly affirms it to be something entirely different from this.

4. It is nothing which is or can be transmitted from parents to children by natural generation.--This would contradict the Bible definition of sin, and the supposition is in itself a ridiculous absurdity.

5. Nor does it consist in any weakness, debility, or inability, either natural or moral, to obey God. The Bible no where makes it consist in this, and certainly common sense does not.

6. Nor does it consist in any appetite, passion, or mere feeling. These we have already seen, in a former lecture, are constitutional, involuntary, and in themselves wholly destitute of all moral character.

7. Nor does it consist in any degree of excitement of these in appropriate circumstances; for in the appropriate circumstances, they are excited of necessity.

8. Nor does it consist in any state or act of the intelligence; for this also acts of necessity, and we can only be responsible for its operations just so far as we can regulate it by willing.

9. Nor does it consist in any outward actions; for these are necessitated by the supreme end chosen, and in themselves are wholly destitute of all moral character.

II. What sin is.

1. As was said in a former lecture, the primary faculties of the mind are Intelligence, Sensibility, and Free Will. This we know from consciousness. The Intelligence is that power which thinks, affirms, reasons, and reflects. The Sensibility, is the power of feeling. To this power are referred all appetites, desires, passions, or emotions whatever. The Free Will, is the power which wills.

2. The will is always influenced by motives originating either in the intelligence or the sensibility. The will always chooses some object, or acts in reference to some motive; and we know by consciousness that these motives are either duties perceived by the intelligence, or the awakened susceptibilities of the sensibility, which always invite the mind to seek the gratification of its appetites and passions for their own sake. I do not mean that the action of the intelligence and the sensibility are so isolated from each other, that either of them acts in perfect independence of the other; for we know that every thought and affirmation of the intelligence is accompanied by some feeling of the sensibility, and on the contrary that every feeling awakens in the intelligence, affirmations, thoughts, and reasonings to a greater or less extent. But what I mean is, that some motives originate in, and are addressed to the will by the intelligence, and some on the contrary, originate in the sensibility, and as such, influence the will. The distinction of which I am speaking is just what every one means, when speaking of the difference between being led by propensity or passion, and reason.--The intelligence and sensibility mutually influence each other, but one or the other takes the lead. In other words, the mind, which is a unity, in thinking feels, and in feeling, thinks. When the intelligence reveals and imposes obligation, it is always echoed by the sensibility; and on the contrary, when some appetite or desire is excited in the sensibility, the intelligence is awakened into thought respecting it. In the one case the sensibility follows in the wake of the intelligence, and in the other, the intelligence in the wake of the sensibility, but in all cases the action both of the sense and intelligence is indirectly under the control of the will, which by its sovereign power always determines which shall be the ascendant.

3. The mind affirms itself to be under obligation to obey the law of the reason just as I suppose the mind of God imposes obligation on Him. The holiness of God consists in his obeying the law revealed and imposed on Him by his own infinite and eternal reason, and so the holiness of all moral beings must consist in their voluntary conformity to whatever their own reason affirms to be obligatory. Holiness then is that state of the will or heart which consists in the voluntary consecration of the whole being to God.

4. Sin is the exact opposite of this, and consists in the consecration, by the will or heart, of the whole being to the gratification of self. This is selfishness, which we have already endeavored to show is the substance of all the sin in the universe.--Whatever, in the action of the will or heart, is not conformed to the law of love, as perceived by the reason, is sin, whether it be omission of duty or the commission of that which is positively prohibited. Entire conformity of heart and life, therefore, to all known truth is holiness, and nothing short of this is, or can be. If persons deny this, it is because they do not know what they say, and have not the idea of holiness before their mind at all. The law of God is one--a unity, and to talk of being partly conformed to it, and partly not, is to overlook the very nature both of the law and of conformity to it. The law of God requires perfect conformity of life and heart to all the truth perceived, and this is moral perfection in

any being, and is the only sense in which any being can be morally perfect in any world. Suppose there is a moral pigmy whose standard of truth is No. 1. Now if he fully conforms to that, he does his whole duty. So you may increase the scale to 2, 5, 10, 20, and moral perfection will still consist in conformity to the light possessed. Suppose you ascend the scale to ten thousand or a million, it is still the same until you arrive at God Himself, and this is just what constitutes the moral perfection of God. All the truths in the universe are known to Him with absolute certainty, and He conforms to all He knows. Since his knowledge admits of no increase, his holiness admits of none, while that of all finite beings does and will to all eternity. Angels doubtless sustain innumerable relations of which they are totally ignorant, and to which they are not morally conformed, but their state of will is such, that as fast as they learn them they conform to them , and hence their holiness is constantly increasing; and so it must be from the lowest to the highest degree of moral capacity. Every thing, then, short of living up to the light we have, is sin, and every moral act is either right or wrong.

III. What to be born of God is not.

1. Regeneration does not consist in the creation of any new faculties. We have faculties enough, more than we use well, and do not need any more.

2. Nor does it consist in a constitutional change. A constitutional, would be far enough from a moral change, and it would be hard to tell what good it would do.

3. Nor does it consist in implanting, or infusing any piece, parcel, or physical principle of holiness into the soul. What can be meant by a principle of holiness, when such language is used to designate something aside from holiness itself?

4. Nor does it consist in a change of the constitutional appetites and propensities. These have no moral character in themselves and need no change. They only need to be rightly regulated.

5. Nor does it consist in the introduction or implantation of a new taste. There could be no virtue in regeneration if it consisted in any of these things, and they all are mistakes overlooking the nature of virtue. But,

IV. What is it to be born of God?

1. To be born of God is to have a new heart.

2. We have seen that the old or wicked heart is the same as the carnal mind, and that the carnal mind or wicked heart consists in the devotion of the will to self gratification. Self gratification is the ultimate end chosen.

3. Now to be born again, or of God, is to make a radical change in the ultimate intention, or choice of an end. It is called being born again because it is a change of the whole moral character and course of life. Christ says, 'except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall, in no case, enter into the kingdom of heaven.' The phraseology is figurative and emphatic, because when a moral being has changed his ultimate intention, he must of necessity live an entirely new life, perfectly the reverse of what it was before.

4. It is called, a being born of God, or from above; because sinners are influenced to make this voluntary change by the word and Spirit of God. I say voluntary change, because every one is perfectly conscious that he was voluntary in it, and because it must of necessity be voluntary, if it has any moral character in it; and I might add, that unless it is voluntary, backsliding from it would be naturally impossible, and obedience necessary, which are as false in fact, as they are absurd in theory.

V. What the seed which remaineth in Christians is not.

1. It is not a physical germ, root, sprout or taste, inserted into the soul. If so, then falling from grace is naturally impossible, and perseverance naturally necessary. This theory robs religion of all virtue whatever.

2. It is not love nor any other holy exercise. In other words, it is not religion at all. Religion is voluntary conformity to the

law of God, and to say that this remains in the christian could have no meaning. The truth is, the Apostle, in the text, is asserting why this voluntary conformity is continued. It then cannot be the seed.

3. It does not consist in any new principle implanted in the soul.

VI. What this seed is.

1. It is the word or truth which re-generated him--that is, in view of which he changed his ultimate intention or heart. Truth is frequently called seed in the bible,--'Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.' 'Of his own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.'

2. This word or truth is called the seed of God, because it is introduced and made known to the mind by the Holy Ghost. Hence we are said to be 'begotten of God.' It is his truth that quickens the mind into right voluntary action. Now every one knows, by his own consciousness, that this is the way in which he was born again. Hear a young convert tell his experience. He begins to tell of some truth which arrested his attention, and convicted him; how he thought of one thing after another, that he perceived this, and that and the other thing to be true as he never did before, and that finally he made up his mind, in view of what he thus saw was true, to repent. Now what is he doing? Why, he is giving the history of his regeneration, and giving it in the detail. But does he know the history of his regeneration? As well as he knows any thing else under Heaven. To be sure he did not see the Spirit, no[r] did he perceive that it was the Spirit, because the Spirit directs to Christ, but he is conscious that he did see the truth as he never saw it before. And he is conscious that he was perfectly voluntary under its influence.

3. This seed, which has once broken the power of selfishness, remains in him, that is, in his memory, so that he can sin only by letting it slip. 'Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father.' This truth, as I said before, is not a piece of something which God puts into you, nor is it religion, nor love, but it is that which once subdued your will and will not cease to influence you, only as you let it slip.

VII. What is not intended by the assertion that whosoever is born of God does not and cannot commit sin.

1. It cannot mean that a holy being has not power to commit sin. Adam was a holy being and he sinned, as did also the "Angels that kept not their first estate." If there were a lack of natural power to sin, there would be no virtue in obedience. This position would contradict facts innumerable. Perhaps very few have ever been born of God who have not afterwards been guilty of sin. This is a matter of consciousness. Most of the histories recorded in the Bible of good men, show that they did fall into sin, and the Bible everywhere assumes that there is danger of this. It would destroy free agency and the possibility of being sinful or holy.

2. It would make John contradict himself, for he was writing to regenerate persons, but he all along assumes that they could sin, and were in danger of sinning. Nor can it mean that one who is born of God never does in any instance sin under the force of temptation. This would contradict all the rest of the Bible.

VIII. What is intended by it.

1. It is intended that since the truth has once broken the power of passion, and appetite, and gained the consent of his will, and since it remains in him, that is, in his memory, he will not, as a matter of fact, consent to indulge himself in any form of sin.

2. Cannot is here used in its popular sense, as it generally is in the Bible. Such language must not be strained nor cut to the quick. It is used just as it is now used in popular conversation. Suppose I say I cannot take twenty-five dollars for my watch. What do I mean? Not that I have not power to take it, but that I am unwilling to take it. If I say I cannot throw this table across the room, the nature of the case shows that I use cannot, to indicate a natural impossibility, but in the former case I use it merely in the sense of a strong unwillingness. It is in this sense that it is used in the text, just as it is used

every day in every store on Broadway.

3. It is intended then that with all Christians, holiness is the rule and sin the exception--if there be sin at all, that sin is only occasional as opposed to habitual, that it is so unfrequent, that, in the strong language of John, it may be truly said, that they do not sin. If sin is not so rare as to be merely occasional instead of habitual, the text is absolutely false. For example; Suppose I should say that such a man is not a drunkard. I should not be understood to say that he had never been drunk in his life, but I should certainly be understood to say that at most his fits of intoxication were extremely rare. John, as a writer, expresses himself very strongly, and I might read many passages from his writings, showing that he does not intend such terms in an absolute sense, but to state, that, in Christians, their aversion to sin, and their purpose of obedience are so strong and fixed, that it may be said in strong language they cannot sin. 'And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: For sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not; whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him neither known Him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot commit sin, because he is born of God.'

4. It must be intended that Christians only sin by being diverted from the consideration of the truth by the force of temptation. This is the least that this and similar passages can mean. It is not intended to assert what ought to be true of Christians, but what is so as a matter of fact. He is drawing the very portrait of a Christian and hanging it up for all the Church in all ages to look at.

IX. How a Christian may be distinguished from a sinner.

1. They cannot be distinguished by profession. For doubtless many sinners make profession and some Christians do not.

2. Nor can they be distinguished by their observance of the forms of religion, nor by their creeds or opinions, nor by their church standing, nor by the emotions or feelings which they manifest. Emotions are as natural to the impenitent as to Christians, and are no distinguishing test. But,

3. The Christian is benevolent, while the sinner is selfish. These are their ultimate states of mind, and will manifest themselves in both by a natural necessity.

4. The Christian is influenced by reason, and the sinner by mere feeling. If you wish to influence a sinner, you must appeal to his feelings, for nothing else will move him. He has not learned to yield his will to the dominion of truth. But the Christian has devoted himself to truth, and is always influenced by it. He knows that the feelings effervesce, boil or freeze, just as circumstances vary; while truth is forever the same. Said a brother to me not long since, "I am distressed about my wife. She is very full of feeling, and can be affected by appeals which are calculated to awaken it; but I cannot influence her by truth." I replied, that this was truly a dark sign; and I now say, that I should have no hope for my wife nor anyone else, who cannot be influenced to duty, by the simple truth, unaided by appeals to the Sensibility.

5. The Christian obeys all known truth, on all subjects, while sinners conform to truth only on those subjects that are enforced by public opinion. Truth is the christian's law, and he conforms to it as fully in opposition to, as in conformity to public opinion. But mark! a sinner will conform to some truths outwardly, but not to all, nor really to any in his heart. Public sentiment is a god which most people obey and worship.

6. Christians adhere to principle in the face of all opposition, while sinners quail before it. Let opposition rise ever so high, you will see the true Christian stand like a rock, and breast the dashing wave--he will not shrink or quail. Not so with the sinner. He will go along well enough, while all is smooth, but when the tide begins to rise, you see him yield to its force and drive along with it withersoever it goes. "By and by he is offended."

7. It can never be said of a true Christian, that, 'sin has dominion over him.' But some form of sin has dominion over sinners universally. Sometimes it assumes one type and sometimes another, but sin is their master.

8. Christians obey the spirit and letter of the moral law, but sinners obey only the letter, even if they do that.

9. Cause a Christian to see the truth on any subject and he will obey it; but a sinner will see and acknowledge it, and continue on in his sins. His appetites, and not his conscience, are his master.

REMARKS.

1. Every real Christian lives habitually without sin. Nothing is more common than to find large classes of professors of religion who acknowledge that they are living in sin. You ask them--Do you not know that this is wrong? Yes, they say, but no person is expected to live without sin in this world. We must sin some. Now, as the Bible is true, such persons are deceived, and in the way to hell. If that is religion, what is Christianity? But, you will say--"I know what you say of this text cannot be the meaning, for it is not my experience." Poor soul! this excuse will do you no good, for God's word is true, whatever your experience is, and in the day of eternity, where will you be if you rely on this? Now do you cry out and say, "why this is awful; for if it be true what will become of the great mass of Christians?" Let me tell you all true Christians will be saved, but hypocrites God will judge. Said a woman to a minister not long since, "Do you confess your sins?" confess your sins! What did she mean by that? Why, she meant to inquire whether every time he prayed he confessed, not that he had been a sinner in times past, but, that he was now actually sinning against God? She, with many other professors, actually seemed to think that Christians should sin a little all the while in order to keep them humble, and to have something to confess. Indeed!

2. It is a dangerous error to inculcate that Christians sin daily and hourly. It sets the door wide open for false hopes, and the effect on the Church is that it is thronged with the victims of delusion.

3. Equally dangerous is it, to say that their most holy duties are sinful--that "sin is mixed with all we do." What! Then John should have said--'Whosoever is born of God commits sin daily and hourly, notwithstanding the seed of God remaineth in him, for sin is mixed with all he does!' It is a palpable matter of fact that whatever is holy is not sinful. Holiness is conformity to all perceived obligation--it is an act of the will, and must be a unity. If then holiness be a unity, a compliance with all perceived obligation, there is not and cannot be sin mixed in it. Says Christ, 'Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.' And James says--'For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.' A person therefore, knowing obligation to rest on him, and not discharging it, is living in sin and is not a Christian. It is in vain to appeal to experience against the Bible.

4. All who live in the omission of duty or commission of what is contrary to known truth, are living in habitual sin and are not Christians.

5. How infinitely different is the doctrine of this discourse, from the common view, and what is generally inculcated. Said a celebrated minister in giving the definition of a Christian--"He has a little grace and a great deal of devil." Now where did such a sentiment as that come from? From the Bible? No. But from a ruinous accommodation of the Bible to a false standard. And yet so current is such a sentiment, that if you deny it, they look astonished, and say--"Why, I guess you are a perfectionist." Now read the language of the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church, right along side of what John says. Says the Confession of Faith--"No mere man since the fall, is able, either of himself, or by any grace received in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but doth daily break them in thought, word, and in deed."--And to this almost all the standards of the Church agree. It is the common sentiment of the Church. Now I would ask how this accords with what John says, in the text and in many other places in this epistle? Let me say he is not here speaking of some Christians who have made rare attainments, but of the common attainment. Now, which is right? By which will you be tried at the Judgment? By the Bible or the common standards? You know very well which.

6. When any, therefore, live in the omission of known duty, or commission of what they know to be contrary to truth, we are bound to say they are not Christians. This is not a want of charity but a love of the truth. Suppose an infidel should meet you with the Bible in his hand and should point out what it describes a Christian to be, and should ask you, "do you believe the Bible speaks the truth?" And should then point to those Christians who live daily and hourly in the omission of known duty, in a violation of perceived obligation, and ask you if you believe they are Christians, what would you say? What would you feel bound to say to maintain the honor of the Bible? The answer is plain. The truth is, the common

views on this subject are a flat denial of the Bible, and are a ruinous accommodation to the experience of carnal professors.

7. Now, beloved, if this is so it becomes us, to ask ourselves, whether our experience accords with the Bible or the popular standard. Not whether we think we were converted some time ago, not what feelings we may have had: but are we at present conformed to all the truth we know. Does the seed remain in us? The test is a habitual perfection of moral character. He who has it is a Christian. He who has it not is not a Christian. Now where are you? Where would you be to night if summoned to the Judgment? Could you lay your hand on your heart and say, 'Lord Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love Thee?' Thou knowest that my life is a life of conformity to all thy known will?

Holiness of Christians in the Present Life

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Chapter 5

CHRISTIAN WARFARE.

Lecture by Professor Finney.

Reported for the Evangelist by Rev. S.D. Cochran.

'This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things ye would.'--Gal. 5:16, 17.

This passage has been greatly misunderstood, or else the Apostle has contradicted himself. Leaving out of view the 16th verse, and that the design of the 17th is to assign the grounds of the assertion in the 16th, many of the expounders of the Scriptures have understood the 17th to declare, that in consequence of the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, persons who really wish to be holy cannot. So it has all along been generally understood. Now I repeat, that if this interpretation be true, the Apostle contradicts himself. The 16th positively asserts that those who walk in the Spirit shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. This interpretation of the 17th verse, makes him say, that in consequence of the opposition between the flesh and the Spirit, those who walk in the Spirit, after all, cannot but fulfill the lusts of the flesh. But this interpretation entirely overlooks the fact, that the 17th verse is designed to establish the assertion made in the 16th. In the 16th, the Apostle says, 'walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.' Why? 'Because,' says he, 'the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other,' that is, they are opposites. What then? Why the obvious inference, 'that ye (that is, who walk in the Spirit,) cannot do the things that ye would,' in case you were not walking in the Spirit. In other words, you who are walking in the Spirit cannot fulfill the lusts of the flesh. The simple principle is, that you cannot walk after the Spirit, and fulfill the lusts of the flesh at the same time, because it is impossible to perform two opposites at once.

In further remarking on this text, I design to show,

I. WHAT THE CHRISTIAN WARFARE DOES NOT CONSIST IN.

II. WHAT IT DOES CONSIST IN.

III. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CARELESS AND CONVICTED SINNERS.

IV. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SAINTS AND CONVICTED, BUT UNCONVERTED PROFESSORS.

V. THAT A WARFARE WOULD HAVE EXISTED IF MAN HAD NEVER SINNED.

VI. TO POINT OUT THE CAUSES OF THE AGGRAVATION OF THIS WARFARE SINCE THE FALL.

VII. HOW IT MAY BE MODIFIED AND ABATED.

VIII. THAT IT WILL, UNDER A MORE OR LESS MODIFIED FORM, CONTINUE WHILE WE ARE

IN THE BODY.

I. What the Christian warfare does not consist in.

1. It does not consist in a conflict between the will or heart, and the conscience: for the Christian has a new heart, and the new heart and the conscience are at one. The new birth consists in the will's rejection of self-gratification as the supreme end, and adoption of the law of reason. Therefore regeneration harmonizes the will and the conscience, for the conscience is nothing else but the reason in a given function.

2. It does not consist in a war with inward sin, but with temptation. Some persons talk about fighting with inbred sin. But what do they mean by such language? I have no objection to such persons using such language, if they will only tell what they mean, but the truth is, to talk of a Christian's fighting with inbred sin, is to talk stark nonsense. What is sin? Sin is an act of the will. It is choosing self-gratification in preference to the will of God. This, and nothing else is sin. To talk therefore of fighting inbred sin, is to talk of the will fighting itself. It is a choice warring upon itself, than which nothing can be more absurd. We may fight with temptation, but not with sin in ourselves.

II. In what the Christian warfare does consist.

1. It consists in a conflict between the will and the sensibility. By the sensibility, as I have repeatedly said, is intended that primary faculty of the mind to which all feelings, desires, and passions belong. The desires and passions of the sensibility are generally called propensities. The Christians warfare, is a warfare kept up between the will and these. For example: the appetite for food seeks its own gratification, and so do all the other propensities of the mind. Inasmuch as gratification is the only end at which the sensibility aims, it of course is blind to every thing else. It knows nothing of measure or degree. To give the will up to the gratification of these, therefore, is to subject it to a lawless power, and wholly to set aside the law of God as revealed in the reason. This is sin, it is giving the will up, to seek gratification for its own sake. This is the whole business of sinners. But in regeneration, the will rejects the gratification of these for its own sake, as an end, and gives itself up to the end demanded by the reason: that is, to universal well-being. It takes ground right over against these. But they still exist, and must be resisted. That the sensibility and its susceptibilities still need a curb, after regeneration, is a matter of universal experience with Christians, and is directly asserted in the Bible. In the text the Apostle says, addressing Christians, 'Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not obey the lusts of the flesh.' The term flesh in the Apostle's time, represented what we now mean by the sensibility. The reason why I use the term sensibility rather than the term flesh, is, I think it expresses the idea intended more definitely at the present time. When a term which once definitely expressed an idea, has, in the wear of time, become less exact, it is our duty to adopt modern language representing the same idea. To express the idea of the text, I would say, 'Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the propensities of the sensibility.'

2. The Christian warfare is a war between the will and Satan. It is his great object to keep the will in subjection to the propensities of the sensibility. Hence he directs all his efforts to arouse these propensities, and through them to enslave the will.

3. This warfare is a warfare between the heart and the world. The world presents ten thousand allurements on every hand, adapted to arouse the propensities and to lead the will to gratify them. Against these allurements, therefore, a war must be kept up.

4. It is a warfare against constitutional temperament. How many temptations originate in peculiar temperaments; for example, in persons of peculiarly sanguine and impetuous temperament, or of a nervous temperament. Few have failed to observe the influence of temptation arising from this source.

5. It is a warfare with habit. When habits have been formed, every one knows the difficulty of overcoming them. Why is this? Because habit naturally originates temptation and this temptation is great in proportion to the strength of the habit.

6. It is a warfare with a polluted imagination. Many persons have kept their imagination upon such objects, and brooded over them so long, that it almost spontaneously creates the most polluting pictures and presents to the will the most

seductive conceptions. Who does not know this? A warfare must be steadily maintained against all these creations of a polluted imagination.

7. It is a warfare with temptations arising from the law of association. By the law of association, I mean that capacity of the mind by which one tho't suggests another, and that again another, until a whole series have passed before the mind. Now where the associations are corrupt, they present powerful temptations to the will, and with these a warfare must be maintained.

8. It is a warfare for the control of the attention and thoughts. How many things there are in a world like this, within and without, to catch the attention and carry off the thoughts and through them to arouse clamorous temptations. Every one is aware, to a greater or less extent, of the effort which it costs, in certain circumstances and relations, to restrain and keep under control the thoughts and attention. All these temptations, in the last analysis, arise in the sensibility, and Satan, the world, constitutional temperament, polluted imagination, the law of association, and vagrant thoughts are but different forms in which the susceptibilities of the sensibility are peculiarly aroused and inflamed.

III. The difference between careless and convicted sinners.

1. The careless sinner has no warfare between his will and his sensibility at all. He is not convicted of the evils of self gratification, and sees not where his propensities are leading him. Hence he is led along without even attempting resistance. The convicted sinner, on the contrary, sees the evil of sin--that the reign of his propensities is a ruinous despotism from which he must have deliverance. Hence he attempts to resist their demands, but is continually overcome. All his efforts are unsuccessful and his resolutions are blown away as chaff before the wind.

2. The careless sinner does not know what temptation is. While floating upon the current he is unconscious of its strength, and because he moves with it, even fancies that he does not move at all. But the convicted sinner has learned its nature. He has become aware that he is floating on the stream of death, and of the necessity of escaping from its current. He therefore attempts to stem it, but finds it all in vain. He finds that when he would do good, evil is present with him.

3. Careless sinners make no effort to amend, and consequently do not know what resistance they would meet with if they should. They are like a man who has been bound in his sleep, who even when he awakes remains ignorant of what has been done and consequently makes no attempt to break his bonds. But the convicted sinner does make strenuous efforts. He sees himself standing on a slippery place from which he must immediately escape or perish. He is on an inclined plane, moving rapidly towards the verge, from which he must plunge to the depths of hell. He therefore makes mighty resolutions of amendment; but without success. He slides downward with an accelerated ratio, finding that the commandment which was ordained to life, is unto death, for sin taking occasion by it, deceives and slays him.

4. Both are slaves, but the careless sinner is not aware of his bondage. He knows not to what an imperious tyrant he is subject; but a convicted sinner does. He sees that he is a captive sold under sin. He is alarmed, and exerts himself to escape from his bondage. He arises to flee, but is overtaken by his master, and dragged back to his service.

Such are the prominent differences between careless and convicted sinner. The 7th of Romans is an illustration of the warfare of a convicted sinner.

IV. The difference between saints, and convicted but unconverted professors and backsliders.

1. Both have constitutional appetites, passions, and propensities, which are liable to be excited in the presence of those objects to which they are correlated. Hence both are liable to temptation from these sources. These appetites and propensities have in themselves, no moral character in either case. Since they are wholly involuntary, how should they be sinful. A man would be called deranged, who should talk of the appetite for food being sinful. But it is as much so as any other appetite, desire, or propensity whatever. Sin, therefore, neither in the true nor deceived professor, consists in these, but in consenting to indulgence under forbidden circumstances.

2. Both see the necessity of resisting their excited appetites and propensities, and both make resistance of some sort. But

the Christian's resistance is effectual. He holds them in subjection. This is the uniform representation of the Bible. The text says, 'walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.' So in Romans 6:14, it is said, 'sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace.' On the contrary, the unconverted professor or backslider's efforts are ineffectual, and his temptations continually overcome him. In the 7th of Romans, the Apostle is speaking of exactly this state. He is there putting a case to show the ineffectual struggles of the mind attempting to overcome sin by resolutions, but without love, and therefore uniformly overcome. Nothing can be more certain than that the Apostle here designed to show that the law could not sanctify the mind. He is manifestly speaking, all along in the chapter, of the relations of the law to the selfish mind. When he says I, he merely supposes it to be his own case as an illustration, just as any other speaker or writer often does. We say I, not intending to describe our present actual state, but to set the case before the mind of those we address. The representation undeniably is, that he is continually overcome of temptation, which in the 8th chapter, and in numberless other places in the Bible, is denied to be true of a real Christian. The truth is, this chapter is an exact history of the experience of every mind laboring under conviction, and I may add, it is the exact opposite of the gospel experience.

3. The unconverted professor or backslider's heart is with the temptation. This is the real difficulty with him, and his conscience only distresses and leads him to wish and resolve, in opposition to the real choice of his heart. Now while his heart remains devoted to self-gratification, of course all the resolutions and efforts which he makes in opposition to it, must be without love, and therefore legal. They are wrung out of him by the action of his conscience arousing his fears, and since his heart remains unchanged, and since the heart or ultimate intention always governs the conduct, his resolutions always fail of course. It is impossible that any resolution or effort should stand and be effectual against the supreme preference of the will. But the Christian's heart, on the contrary, is with his conscience, and therefore his resistance is effectual. Since he really chooses what his reason demands, temptation is in direct opposition to his supreme choice, and if he yield to it, it must be by a radical change of his ultimate intention. He is therefore able to put down temptation, and to keep it under his feet.

4. The convicted professor resolves and tries in the absence of love, and of course fails and is overcome, but the Christian does not make resolutions. He has tried them effectually and found that they avail nothing. Perhaps there never was a sinner converted, nor a backslider restored, until he had tried his resolutions and legal efforts so thoroughly as to be compelled to give them up, absolutely despairing of ever escaping by them. But when he has used up all his own stock, and finds himself totally bankrupt, then he will come to Christ for capital--he goes directly to Him as the only deliverer. This leads him away from himself, renders him benevolent, and makes him free. While, therefore, the legalist depends on watchfulness, prayer, and resolutions, to keep him from falling under temptation, the Christian knows better and depends wholly on the strength of Christ.

5. The unconverted professor or backslider calls upon Christ, and thinks he depends upon Him, but in fact, he really knows not what dependence is, while the true Christian actually depends on Christ. It is remarkable that those who have no faith call themselves in their prayers, poor creatures, make their promises, tell Christ they will trust Him, and yet after all do not overcome. But the true Christian knows he once made this mistake, and now makes it no more. He now knows what it is to depend on Christ by faith, and by love to serve Him. He is sustained by the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Spirit.

V. A warfare would have existed had man never sinned.

1. Because the constitutional appetites and susceptibilities would have existed. They did exist before the fall, otherwise our first parents could not have fallen. In our mother Eve, for example, these appetites could be excited into a temptation by their appropriate objects; otherwise, objects of temptation might as well be presented to this table. These excited susceptibilities had no moral character in themselves, they were excited in her, in her pure state, and if she had resisted them she would not have sinned. So they would have existed in all the race if we never had fallen, and in presence of their appropriate objects would have invited the will to seek their gratification. They are an inherent part of the constitution, and all moral beings, doubtless, find it necessary to curb them in conformity to the demands of their higher nature. Satan and all his angels actually fell under the temptation which they presented to them; and, as I showed in my last lecture, every child, in beginning to act morally, does the same.

2. Temptation, under some form, may, and doubtless will exist forever. As long as moral beings have constitutions, this

must be so always, and in all worlds. As we have already said, Satan and all his angels, and our first parents were actually tempted in their holy state, and we know that Jesus Christ was, and had a mighty warfare--to such a degree as to have no appetite for food, and to seek the wilderness in his distress, just as you and I have often, under similar circumstances, gone into the woods or some other seclusion to be alone. What Christians has not often felt so? They are beset so tremendously, and such a struggle created, that they can have no peace day nor night, and often seek a place where they can give vent to their prayers or groans alone. Thus was Christ tempted, and thus, in his warfare, did He fly from the face of man and seek the solitude of the wilderness, where He might contest the point even unto death. He seems to have been assaulted in all the weakest points of human nature, and when, in his agony, He had fasted till He was well nigh famished, then He was besieged through his appetite for food, and in every other way the devil could invent, until he saw it was all in vain and left Him. The apostle says, 'He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.' It is in vain then, to think that temptation is peculiar to a fallen state, and if men had understood this, they never would have fallen into the ridiculous blunder, of calling their constitutional susceptibilities indwelling sin. They would have taught men to control and regulate, rather than call the nature God has given them, sinful.

VI. Several causes that have aggravated this warfare.

1. The sensibility originally responded with equal integrity to all the perceptions of the mind, whether of sense or reason. It was alike susceptible to all its objects. We all know that when we look at certain objects, corresponding feelings begin to glow in the sensibility. For example, if we look at a beautiful object, the corresponding feelings will naturally be awakened. Now all the susceptibility of the constitution, were naturally equally linked to their objects, and excited with equal ease, by the perception of these objects. The sensibility responded with equal readiness, to an affirmation of duty, as to an object of sensual desire. It was not clamorous, and uproarous, in any thing, but duly and sweetly balanced.

2. But it is capable of sudden and monstrous developments in any given direction. To explain myself; Suppose a mother loses her child. There is a sudden crash, and in a moment her little blooming babe, lies before her face pale in death. Now what will be the effects of this? Why, always afterwards, the sight of a dead child will produce a greater effect on her sensibility, than it ever did before. She indeed used to be affected--even to tears; but now such a sight seems to absorb her whole sensibility--she stands convulsed whenever she looks upon it, and sobs, and pours forth her scalding tears like rain. Now why is this? Because there is such a development of her sensibility in that direction as to overbalance every thing else. She sits, thinking and weeping, and goes sighing about the house, and every object her eye rests on connected with her darling, opens up anew the subject of her grief. Just so it is in other things. The susceptibility to fear may be instanced. A man is thrown from a horse, or run away with his wagon, in circumstances of great danger, and he is peculiarly fearful in similar circumstances all his life after. Perhaps his house is enveloped in flames when he awakes in the night, and it is with great difficulty he makes his escape. Now this event may bring his sensibility into such a relation to fires, that all his life after, whenever the fire bells ring, he is thrown into a tempest of agitation, and finds it as much as he can do to control himself. It is said of a young man, one of those who escaped from the Erie, which was burnt on Lake Erie several months since, that he cannot even hear it named, without going well nigh distracted. I am now speaking of facts which every one knows respecting monstrous developments of the sensibility, and these facts incontestably prove that the balance of the sensibility may be destroyed. Now whenever such a development exists, it seems to put out the eyes of the sensibility on other subjects, so that such persons don[']t feel as much respecting them as formerly. The mother, in the case supposed, will never feel towards multitudes of other things as she formerly did, and so it is in every case, in exact proportion to the strength of this absorbing peculiarity of feeling.

3. In most cases, the sensibility is greatly developed in respect to objects of sense, and very slightly in respect to truths revealed by the reason. In presence of objects of sense, every one knows how readily the feelings respond to such objects. I need not stop to illustrate this. On the other hand, it is equally known that the Reason itself is but slightly developed, and the sensibility which was originally designed to wake up and respond, with instant readiness, to reason's voice, is scarcely disturbed into unquietness by its loudest utterance. Now why is this? Because the monstrous development of the sensibility, respecting objects of sense, has turned its eyes away from the reason and its demands. It has given all its love to sensual objects; and this has greatly aggravated the power of temptation arising from such objects.

4. In some, one appetite or passion is more largely developed, and in others, some other; hence, one has, as we say, a passion for one thing, and another, for another. One, for example, has a passion for money, or for company, or for novel reading, or for gaming; but cares very little for traveling, or intemperance, or licentiousness; but almost every one has

some ruling object of gratification to which his sensibility peculiarly responds, and the stronger this passion, or monstrous [its] development becomes, the more certain it is mightily to influence the will, and of course to be an aggravated temptation.

5. The imagination of some is greatly polluted. They have allowed themselves to read such books, to converse on such subjects, and to muse on, or perhaps mingle in, such scenes, as have filled their associations with the most fiery combustibles, and the least incident kindles the sensibility, through these, into a flame, and temptation is thus greatly aggravated.

6. A diseased nervous system is often the source of great temptations. Perhaps there is scarcely any one whose nervous system is not, in some degree, diseased, but in some it is peculiarly so. Now, since the mind developes itself through the nervous system, and an intimate connection exists between them, it often happens, that the nerves become the source of the fiercest temptations. Cases have come under my observation most strikingly illustrating this point.

7. Another source of aggravated temptation is, that the will has not subjected the thoughts, appetites, desires, and passions to its control. Instead of control[l]ing, it has consented to them in almost all their demands, except where they conflicted one with the other, so that the mind was compelled to choose between them. Now it is of vast importance that the will should early acquire the ascendency and control of all the susceptibilities, and this it may be taught to do as readily as any thing else that will accomplishes. Many do not seem to see this. Now how is it that the will of a human being gets possession of any of his own powers and susceptibilities? The process is easily seen. See the child--at first it hardly knows how to move any of its muscles, and it is not till after sundry efforts that it can control its little hands. Next it undertakes to walk, but it don[']t know how, and must learn how to control its voluntary muscles. But by many efforts it at last succeeds in getting them under its voluntary control. So with the use of its tongue. All the various uses and movements to which the tongue is appropriated are actually learned, and to control it by the will, is as much an art, as the movement of an organist's fingers is an art. Thus a continual effort is going on in the child, to get itself under its own control, and its succeeds respecting its physical powers, but does not get the control of its mental susceptibilities. Now why is this? Because there is a defect in its training, and not because there is naturally an insuperable difficulty in the one case more than the other. That he can, to some extent, acquire control of his mental powers, is well known. What is the object of sending the child to school? To discipline his mind. One of the great difficulties with undisciplined minds is that they have not mastered themselves, but in process of time they will acquire such self-control as to concentrate attention for hours on the driest mathematical problems. But having never attempted, nor acquired the art of controlling the various propensities of the sensibility, the full grown man finds himself at as great a puzzle to regulate them, as the infant is to control his muscles. He has not learned the art, and hence in their turbulent outbreaks, they are continual temptations.

8. As I have already intimated, the fact that the reason is so very slightly developed, gives the sensibility with all its monstrous developments full swing. By the reason I mean that power of the mind by which it reveals and imposes the law of benevolence upon itself, and also the application of this law as fast as new relations are discovered. Now where moral relations are not sought after, nor the attention given to the affirmations of the reason, of course, it must remain in very slight development. I wish here to notice a subject which every body sees, but which is peculiarly delicate. It is said that females generally are influenced by feelings, but not by reason. A certain gentleman said of his wife, if I wish to carry her will, I can never do it by reasoning with her, but must always appeal to her feelings. The question is, why is this? Not because they have not reason, not because it cannot be developed in them to operate as powerfully as in the other sex, but because, for ages, their whole training has been directly calculated to develop their sensibility, until, as it is said, they are a bundle of nerves, and their reason left to remain uncultivated and undeveloped. Now the same is true of men. Were their reason but developed as it should be, you might throw off a string of self-evident propositions, as fast as an auctioneer would knock off articles under the hammer, and they would without difficulty, at once perceive their truth. But as things are, they don[']t perceive them. Why? Because, while there is a monstrous development of their sensibility, their rational development is almost wholly neglected, and now instead of influencing them by simply appealing to their reason, you find such labor all in vain, unless you can also powerfully arouse their sensibility in favor of the object you are enforcing.

9. Another thing which has aggravated this warfare, is the manner in which parents train their children. In most cases, their training is exactly adapted to monstrously develop certain appetites and passions. Instead of parents, and others who have the care of children watching over them and keeping them from circumstances, and conduct calculated to arouse their sensibility unduly, they give them up to just about as much excitement as possible, until the sensibility becomes so

outrageous in its demands as to carry the will in favor of whatever it demands.

10. These and other things which I might mention, show how fearfully that warfare is aggravated, which the Christian, in becoming such, enters upon with temptation. I may add to the above specifications the fact that parents have entailed diseases on their children, which continually operate to tempt their will to sin.

VII. How this warfare may be modified and abated.

1. By restoring health. If health be restored, of course all the temptations arising from disease will disappear.

2. By the development of the Reason. As the Reason wakes up, the sensibility begins also to be developed in the same direction. This is the very way in which persons become awakened and convicted, and after conversion, in proportion as the Reason lays cross breaks in the way of the sensual propensities, is their strength and tendency broken and subdued.

3. This warfare may be especially abated and modified by a great development of the sensibility, produced by a revelation of the love of Christ. It is often the case when the character of God in Christ comes to be apprehended in its true light it leaves no room for any thing else. The Reason stands on tip-toe, gazing steadfastly with its intuitive eye, and the sensibility turns its whole surface right out to receive the full impress of such a glorious vision. I recollect the case of a very ungodly man, who seemed to take delight in manifesting the highest contempt for religion. His wife was a professor of religion, but he opposed and forbade her attending meeting at a time of a revival in the church. He went so far, and things came to such a pass, that he could no longer find material and opportunity to keep himself in sport, and finally one day thought he would go to meeting that evening, and see if he could find something there to make sport about, especially as he heard a great many things about the meeting that seemed to him to promise such a result. Just before meeting time his wife went to her closet and poured out all her heart to God, and prayed Him to open the way for her to go to meeting. As she came out she met her husband, and he asked her if she wanted to go to meeting that night. Astonished, and rejoiced, she was soon ready, and they were off. While the minister was preaching, the man's attention was arrested, and about the middle of the sermon, he groaned out and fell down in his seat. He was in such agony, it seemed as if he would die, and the sermon was arrested. He exclaimed, over and over, "Oh Jesus, how I have abused Thee!" "Oh, Jesus, how I have abused Thee!"--until at last, his agitation passed off, leaving him in a state of most perfect submission. Now here was a case, where by the manifestation of his character, God as it were, almost immediately revolutionized a man. He said it was a view of the character of God in Christ which produced the effect. By degrees his convictions rapidly arose, until he could endure it no longer, and when he bowed his will, it seemed as though God said to all the propensities which formerly ruled him--'peace, be still'--and he has been a flaming light ever since. His tongue seems to be tuned with the praises of God. I have known him long and he seems always the same. Doubtless his warfare was greatly abated by that apprehension of the character of God in Christ. I know the effect of this by my own experience. When I was converted, for some time I did not know that I had any appetite left, all my susceptibilities seemed so perfectly absorbed in the things of the gospel. And in all this there is nothing strange. It is perfectly natural and just what might be expected.

4. There is one truth particularly which when the Spirit has revealed it to the mind, seems forever after to exert a powerful influence on the sensibility, and that is the relation of the death of Christ to our sins. People often talk about the Atonement, without seeming to understand its real meaning, and especially its relation to their own sins. But let them once see that their own sins actually caused his death, and where's the mind that can contemplate the fact unmoved? I have known that single thought to excite all the nerves into a quiver, and as it were, set the sensibility all on fire, so as to throw a strong man almost in a fit of apoplexy.

VIII. This warfare will, under a more or less modified form, continue while we are in the body.

Some have supposed that when persons are entirely sanctified, all the passions, desires and appetites of the sensibility will impel the will in the same direction that the reason does, invariably; but such persons do not know what they say, for all their propensities seek their objects for their own sake, and are blind to every thing else. They always and necessarily urge the will to seek their respective objects for the sake of the gratification. This is temptation, and creates a warfare. The appetite for food, for example, seeks food for its own sake, and so does the desire of knowledge. It is nonsense, then, to say that they will not solicit the will to gratify them under improper circumstances. But when the mind is entirely sanctified, instead of the various propensities creating such a fiery and turbulent warfare when excited, the will will have

them under such control as to easily keep their places, so that all the actions will be bland and tranquilized. The most that will or can be done is to harmonize them, and it is by no means desirable that they should be annihilated. Suppose, for example, the desire for knowledge were annihilated. What a calamity would that be? Or the desire for food. The truth is, all the constitutional desires should remain. They were all given for useful purposes, and all call for their appropriate objects, for food, for knowledge, &c., and are thus constantly feeling after those things which are essential to our existence, and that of our race. Besides to regulate them is a good exercise for the will, and it is difficult to see how a mind could be virtuous at all, were all the susceptibilities of its sensibility destroyed; and were any of them removed, it would doubtless be a great evil, otherwise God was not benevolent in our creation, and did not make us in the best way.

REMARKS.

1. The common notion of warring with inward sin is nonsensical and impossible. Those who use such language confound temptation with sin. They call their natural appetites and propensities sinful, and when resisting these, they say they are indwelling sin, and multitudes, doubtless, mistake the actions of the conscience, its warnings and reproofs, for the resistance of the heart to temptation. The truth is, the Christian warfare consists in a struggle between the will and temptations from without and within, and in nothing else.

2. The deceived professor's warfare is between his heart and his reason or conscience. His heart is devoted to self-gratification, and the reason constantly disapproves of and denounces the service as wrong, and thus a continual struggle is kept up within, between his heart and reason, and this he calls the Christian warfare. If so, every sinner has the Christian warfare, and doubtless the devil also.

3. The Christian overcomes in his warfare. This is an habitual fact. Rom. 6:14. "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law but under grace." Also 8:1-4. See also the text and context, besides numberless other passages directly asserting the same thing.

4. What a ruinous mistake it is to suppose the 7th of Romans to be Christian experience. I hesitate not to say that it has been the occasion of the destruction of more souls than almost any other mistake in the world. It is fundamentally to mistake the very nature of true religion.

5. The warfare of the true Christian greatly strengthens his virtue. When he is greatly tried and obligated to gather up all his energy to maintain his integrity, when he wrestles, until he is all in a perspiration, with some fiery trial, as it is sometimes necessary for him to do, it must be that when he comes out from such a scene as this, his virtue is greatly strengthened and improved.

6. We can see, from this subject, why sinners often doubt the reality of temptation, and when they hear Christians talk of their temptations, they think that Christians must be worse than they, for they do not experience such. But the reason why they are not conscious of temptations is because they have not attempted to regulate their propensities by the law of God. A man floating on a current is not conscious of its strength until he turns round and attempts to stem it. The same principle applies to those professors of religion who entertain the same doubts. Talk about temptation! Why, they say, I am not so tempted. Indeed! Perhaps you have never done any thing else but to yield to it.

7. See why the Apostle said so much about the opposition of the flesh and Spirit. He represents them as at hostility, throughout his epistles, especially in the 6th, 7th, and 8th chapters of Romans.

8. Many struggle for a while in their own strength, and, through continued failures, become discouraged, and give it up. The temptations of their appetites and propensities are too strong for them, while they have not learned by faith to derive strength from Christ.

9. Many despair of ever becoming sanctified, because they suppose their constitutional propensities are, in themselves, sinful. They say it is in vain to talk of entire sanctification in this life, and well they may say so, if their constitutional appetites and propensities are sinful, for we know of no promise that our nature shall be revolutionized in this life or the next.

10. Others are brought into distress and despair because they cannot control their thoughts when their will is weary. The will is that power of the mind which originates all that control which it is possible for the mind to exert over itself. But it becomes weary, or perhaps it would be more correct to say, that the brain, through which it acts, grows weary and wants rest. In sleep, the will is suspended, and hence in dreams the thoughts run lawless and without direction. It is a matter of experience with students who study hard, and for a long time, that they find it extremely difficult, after long and severe application to keep their attention and thoughts on their studies. Why? Because their will is wearied out, and needs rest. So it is with Christians who undertake to pray when they are jaded out with weariness. Their thoughts fly every where. They try to restrain their wanderings; they struggle, and, for a moment seem to get the control, and then they lose it again. They try it over and over again, but with no better success, until they are well nigh in despair. Now, what is the matter? They need rest, and ought to take it rather than attempt to force their jaded will into action. Let your will rest. God will have mercy and not sacrifice. What's the use, when a man has walked sixty miles in a day, and his will can scarcely force his exhausted muscles into further action, of his attempting to use them further, and blaming himself because he cannot? Suppose a man should never go to sleep for fear he should dream and his thoughts ramble heedless of his will! Why call such things sin? Don't mistify forever and mix up sin and holiness, light and darkness, heaven and hell, so that people cannot tell which is which.

11. Some bring forward, the fact that this warfare is presented as continuing, as an argument against the doctrine of sanctification. Just as if a soul in order to be sanctified must get beyond a warfare! What! Then Adam was not sanctified before he sinned, nor Satan; nor was Jesus Christ while on earth, for it is a simple matter of fact that He had temptation. What would you think of the argument, if it should be said that Jesus Christ had a warfare and therefore He was not wholly sanctified? And yet it would be just as good as this.

12. However sharp the conflict, if the soul prevails there is no sin. What trials had Jesus Christ? But He prevailed. 'He was tempted in all points like we are, yet without sin.' So if temptation should rush like a tornado upon any of you, if you will only hold on, and fight it out, you have not sinned. Nay the sharper the conflict, the greater the virtue of resistance.

13. The saints are no doubt preparing in this world for some high stations of usefulness, and where they may be exposed to strong temptations. I infer this from the fact that they are placed here in such circumstances as are exactly calculated to ripen and fit them for such a destiny. God never acts without design, and He surely has some design in this.

14. The sanctified are sometimes in heaviness through manifold temptations if need be. Now don't infer, if you see them so, that they are not holy. Christ had his sorrows, and knew what it was to resist even unto blood, striving against temptation to sin; and the servant need not expect to fare better than his Lord. The truth is, these trials are useful--they are but for a moment, but they prepare for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Sorrows endure for the night but joy cometh in the moming. Under the pressure of the temptations the soul is in an agony, and cries out "Help, Oh Lord, help," and He comes forth and scatters the insulting foe, and the soul bounds up like a rocket, giving glory to God.

15. Many have supposed for a time their enemies were dead, but were mistaken. The fact is they are never dead in such a sense, that we do not need to watch lest we enter into temptation. But let us never overlook the distinction between temptation and sin, and ever keep in mind that the Christian warfare in not with sin, but temptation. Nor forget that Christ alone can give us the victory. O for the Spirit of Christ to baptize the Ministers and the Churches.

Holiness of Christians in the Present Life

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Chapter 6

PUTTING ON CHRIST

Lectures by Professor Finney.

Reported for the Evangelist by Rev. S.D. Cochran.

> 'But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.'--Rom. 13:14.

It is my purpose to show,

I. WHAT IS INTENDED BY THIS COMMAND.

II. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN OBEYING IT.

III. SOME OF THE ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS OF OBEDIENCE TO IT.

IV. OBLIGATION TO OBEY THIS COMMAND IS UNIVERSAL.

V. OBEDIENCE TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS TEXT IS NATURALLY INDISPENSABLE TO SALVATION.

VI. SOME OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF OBEYING THIS REQUIREMENT.

VII. CONSEQUENCES OF DISOBEYING IT.

I. What is intended by this command.

I observe that the idea is taken from the drama; 'To put on a person,' is to assume his character, and peculiarities, as an actor does on the stage. This commandment, therefore, enjoins the imitation of Christ, as actors imitate those whom they represent.

II. What is implied in obeying this command.

1. It implies the putting away of selfishness. Christ was not selfish. Selfishness is the preference of self-gratification, to the will of God, and the good of the universe, and Christ never did this. The Apostle adds, 'and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.' Here, he contrasts 'putting on Christ,' and 'making provision for the flesh,' which is the same as selfishness. Paul was more philosophical than any of the sacred writers, and employs the language--'works of the flesh,' 'following after the flesh,' 'carnal mind,' & c. to designate the nature of sin. But the whole Bible condemns self-seeking as wrong, and inconsistent with the true service of God, or imitation of Christ.

2. It implies living for the same end for which Christ lived. What was his end? Not the gratification of self, but the well-being of the universe, and whoever puts Him on must adopt the same end.

3. It implies the same singleness of eye. Christ's eye was not double, but exclusively directed to one end, the glory of God.

4. It implies such a sympathy with Him, as to beget an imitation of Him. A profound sympathy is necessary to, and naturally begets imitation.

III. Some of the essential conditions of obedience to this command.

1. The first thing essential, is a deep and intense study of his character, until the great principle of his action is clearly perceived--the real idea of the end for which he lived clearly developed. Persons attempting to imitate others, must give the closest attention. This is essential to the success of a dramatic actor, or any other artist. Who, when looking at a picture by West, and observing all its delicate shadings, has not been struck with the deep attention which the artist must have given to his subject? One shade is stronger, and another weaker, exactly exhibiting the position, and form of each limb, and the various expressions of countenance and attitude, appropriate to the circumstances of the person represented. Now in order to express these things, by colorings on the canvass, the artist must have studied most intensely. So it is with a good actor. He does not merely commit and rehearse his piece as a school-boy does on the stage. He does not stand and spout it off in recitation style, but seeks to represent his character in dress, habit, spirit, style, manner, and every thing, and in this consists the perfection of the dramatic art. Now the Apostle commands us thus to put on Christ--to imitate Him--to give intense thought to get at the true idea of his character, and to commit the mind fully to the same end, to which He was devoted. To enjoy a piece of poetry, you must put yourself into the same state of mind in which the author was when he wrote it. Then as you read it, your tone and manner will naturally represent him. This is the difficulty with so many in reading hymns. They read as though they did not at all apprehend the sentiment, and without emotion. The reason is, either they have not the spirit of devotion, or they have not at all given attention to the sentiment of the hymn. But to represent Christ we must catch his spirit, and make his grand end and aim ours. Then we shall act as He would under like circumstances.

2. Another essential is, you must fully believe that through grace you can put Him on. While you don't believe you can, of course you cannot. No one can intend to do what he believes he cannot do. It is absurd to suppose the contrary. No one intends to fly. Why? Because every one knows he cannot. We may wish to fly, while we do not believe we can, but to intend it is impossible. So unless you believe you can put on Christ, it is utterly impossible that you should intend to do it, and this is the great reason why so many never actually put Him on.

3. You must, therefore, not only fully believe that you can, but you must actually intend to put on Christ--to make Him your whole example. Unless it is intended, it will never be done by accident.

4. You must be fully prepared to make any sacrifice--you must count the cost, and make up your mind to meet the expense necessary to the accomplishment of this end. You must make any sacrifice of friends, property, or credit, which stand in the way. The Lord Jesus Christ teaches this, and warns persons not to make themselves ridiculous by beginning to build, without being able to finish. The truth is, unless persons have made up their minds to the absolute sacrifice of whatever hinders their fully putting on Christ, they have not got hold of the very first principle of religion.

5. You must realize the importance of doing this. Suppose a dramatic author should write an admirable drama, adapted powerfully to awaken the attention, and arouse the passions of the spectators of its exhibition, but the actors should so poorly prepare themselves, and so poorly act it, as perfectly to misrepresent him. It is easy to see how they would injure the credit, both of the author and drama. So persons who do not fully put on the Lord Jesus Christ, while they profess to be his followers, are doing Him, and his cause, the greatest injury of which they are capable. They should then realize the infinite importance of fully representing Him.

6. Another condition of putting on Christ is, that you should keep up a constant intercourse with Him. You must commune with Him in prayer without ceasing. Who does not know that an actor needs to drink into, and commune with the spirit of the author profoundly, if he would truly represent him. He must get the state of mind of the man who wrote it; in short he must 'put on' the writer. If he does not he will misrepresent him. So there must be constant communion with the Spirit of Christ, in order to put Him on and act just as He would.

7. You must not rest while there is any unrepented, unconfessed sin between your soul and Him. You must keep a clear

medium. I will explain what I mean. You have seen two friends who have been for a long time agreed, and have taken sweet counsel together, but by and by a little difference creeps in between them--a little mist begins to obscure the medium, and now, when they meet, you will begin to see it in the eye and countenance; there is a little flutter in their manner; and unless it be immediately removed, it will increase, until, finally, they will turn their backs upon each other. So with a husband and wife; how careful should they be to keep a clear medium of mental intercourse. Suppose a husband has grieved his wife. Now, if he is a man of sensibility, he cannot be at ease; he goes to pray, he remembers the wound which he has inflicted, he can pray no further; he rises from his knees, and goes and confesses to his wife the injury he has done her. The cloud is now removed from the medium, and he is happy. So with the Christian. If he has grieved Christ, and injured his tender feelings, he can have no farther communion with Him, until he has repented, and confessed his faults, and the tender breathings of mutual love are again restored.

8. You must cease from all self-dependence. So long as you depend on yourself, you will see no need of putting on Christ.

9. You must avail yourself of his exceeding great and precious promises. You must realize what the promises were given for; and that they were given for you personally. The Apostle Peter says--'Whereby are given unto us, exceeding great and precious promises, that, by these we might be partakers of the divine nature; having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.' The design of the promises, then, is, to beget in us a universal likeness to the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, a promise is good for nothing unless it be fulfilled. Ten thousand promises, of such a character, would be of no more use, than a book of checks given to a poor man, by Mr. Astor, which he carries about closed up, and never uses.

IV. Obligation to obey this command is universal.

1. By this, it is not intended, that all are to do exactly the same things which Christ did, for no one, is, in all respects, in the same circumstances. As circumstances vary, outward duties differ. Christ practiced celibacy; and, in the circumstances in which He was placed, this was his duty. But it never could be the duty of mankind, generally, to imitate Him in this particular, and in many other things.

2. But it is intended that all are bound to do as He did, so far, as their circumstances are the same, that they are to do what they suppose He would do, if He were in their circumstances: For example; if He were a father, a merchant, a mechanic, a lawyer, or a citizen. In early life He was a carpenter, and labored with his father at his trade. Let a carpenter ask these questions,--"What sort of a carpenter was Jesus Christ? How honest was He? How did He do his work? How did He associate, and converse with his fellow workmen?" Now just that, which you suppose Him to be, you are to be. Suppose the Lord Jesus Christ were a merchant, upon what principles would He conduct his business? Or, if He were a physician, how would He practice? Would He avoid visiting the poor, and seek to engross a practice among the rich?

3. You are to consider, how He would act in your circumstances, and do, as you think He would. How important for a minister of the gospel, to inquire what kind of a pastor Christ would be if He were in his circumstances; and so with every other man, for the same reason. If Christ were a physician, what would He do? Would He try to reject the custom of the poor, and obtain that of the rich? Would He say, when a poor man came soliciting his aid, I shall not get much money for this; therefore, I do not care whether I attend to it or not. Now, beloved brethren, in this congregation, who are physicians, are you such as you think Christ would be, taking into the account the difference of circumstances? So, you may take any other occupation, even the lowest; for none that is honest, is too low to forbid the supposition, of his being in similar circumstances. It was with a design to illustrate this, that He washed his disciples' feet. In the East they wear sandals, which expose their feet to the hot sands, and it was customary for the lowest servant of the house to wait at the door with water, to wash the feet of visitors. Now the Savior did this, to inculcate the lesson of lowliness of heart, and to show the spirit with which all should perform the duties of life. Whatever may be your condition, whatever you suppose Christ would be in your place, just that, you ought to be. And it is an important question, for each one to ask, "Would Christ pursue my calling, if placed in my circumstances, and would He pursue it as I do?"

4. That it is a universal duty to put on Christ, is evident from the following facts--that it is just right--that all can do it by his grace--that universal reason demands it--that it is essential to the good of the universe, and that sinners are as really commanded to do it, as saints are.

V. Obedience to the requirement of this text, is naturally indispensable to salvation.

1. By this, it is not intended, that no one can be saved who has not always done this.

2. But, so far as their knowledge extends, they are to put Him on, and live devoted to the same end.

(1.) Because every thing short of this is sin.

(2.) Nothing short of intending to be, or do, what He would be, or do, with our light, and in our circumstances, can be acceptable to God.--'Ye cannot serve God and mammon.' What does this mean? Not that ye cannot serve God at one time, and mammon at another; but that you must be entirely devoted either to one, or the other, and cannot serve both at the same time.

(3.) Benevolence, is a unit, and will always manifest itself alike in all, so far as their circumstances are similar.

(4.) Christ was no more than virtuous, and you must be no less, or you cannot be saved. I have often been astonished, that people talk as if Christ did something more than his duty, and performed works of supererogation, as if such a thing were possible. Duty, is what benevolence requires. Now, if Christ should do more than benevolence requires, it could not be benevolence, nor duty, and consequently, not virtue. I would ask, was God in making the Atonement, any more benevolent than He ought to be? If so, He was not virtuous in it. The truth is, people are in the dark on this subject. No being in the universe can perform works of supererogation; for every one, is required to do his whole duty. Christ was perfectly benevolent, and this was his duty; and so must you be if you put Him on.

(5.) You must be like Him, or you never can be with Him.

VI. Some of the consequences of obeying this requirement.

And here, I wish to be exceedingly candid, and keep nothing back. I have often marked how much the Lord Jesus Christ differed from many who set themselves up as reformers. He would often press his hearers, till almost all of them would forsake Him. Once, all left Him but his twelve disciples, and He turned to them and said, 'Will ye also go away?' Implying that he would rather lose them than to keep back the truth. And we must not preach a false Christ, or you will have the livery of heaven, and the temper of the world.

1. The first consequence I mention, is, you will have much opposition. You can expect no better usage than Christ received. 'It is enough for the servant that he be as his master.'

2. You may expect great trials. This is the inheritance of all who will live godly in Christ Jesus. Look at Paul. While he was a Pharisee, he went on smoothly. The gales of popular favor swelled his sails. But when he became the preacher of the cross, ah! then he knew what it was to go against wind and tide.

3. Men will accuse you of having a bad spirit. They have always brought this charge against the true followers of Christ, and especially against Christ Himself. He said so much about their teachers, creeds, and traditions, and rebuked them so plainly, that they finally tried, and executed him as a blasphemer.

4. You will need great meekness, and at the same time great decision of character. Without both of these qualities, you cannot endure the shock of a world arrayed against you.

5. You will subject yourself to much misapprehension. Men will not understand you. Many wonder, why Christians are so misunderstood. But it is not at all wonderful. Who was ever more misunderstood than Jesus Christ? The simple fact is, a selfish mind does not understand the principle upon which a true Christian acts.

6. If you are misunderstood, you will of course, be misrepresented. This you must expect.

7. It will subject you to the loss of many friends. They will think you are ultra, extravagant, and carrying matters too far.

And every new step you take, you will see an additional falling off. They will walk no more with you. But all the consequences are not evil. For,

8. You will inherit his peace of mind; and this is worth more than all the world can give. You will sleep just as sweetly, eat with just as much relish, and enjoy the tranquil hours just as really, as if you had all the world's favor. Persons often wonder, whether such are not unhappy. I answer, nay. They are the only persons who know what true happiness is.

9. His joy will be fulfilled in you. This is his promise; and his true followers sympathize with Him in all the joys He had.

10. You will share his glory in being the representative of the true God. 'And the glory which Thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved me.' Christ was sent to reveal the true character of God. He took the law which lay on tables of stone, and acted it out; thus showing mankind just what God was. Without such a manifestation, as was thus made of his true character, men must have always remained in ignorance. What is God? A glorious, infinite, and invisible Spirit, lying back in the bosom of eternity, where no eye can reach. What finite mind could comprehend Him? He must reveal Himself; and to this end, He concentrated his glory in Christ, and sent Him forth among mankind. Every one, then, who puts on the Lord Jesus Christ, will share this glory with Him, of making known to the world the true character of God.

11. You will be able to say, with Paul, 'For me to live, is Christ.' The Apostle seems to have had this idea in his mind, that Christ lived his life over again in him. So it will be with you. Christ renews his life in his true followers.

12. You will be able to say from your own consciousness, as John says,--'Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.'

13. You will be happy in the highest degree of which you are capable in this life. And you will be no less useful, than you are happy.

VII. Consequences of disobeying this requirement.

1. If you are a professor of religion, you will be a hypocrite, and people will know it. There are, perhaps, some, who are successful in keeping on the mask. But most, betray themselves sooner or later, and are known in their true character.

2. You will render peace of mind impossible.

3. You will render yourself justly despicable. All love to see men live up to their profession, and naturally cry out against hypocrisy.

4. You will ruin your own soul, and do the most you can to ruin others.

5. You will bring upon yourself the endless execration of all beings in the Universe, both good and bad.

REMARKS.

1. Inconsistent professors sometimes gain the hollow applause of the unthinking, and ungodly.

2. But they never gain the solid respect, of any class, for any considerable time. Instead of this, they really lose it. For as soon as their true character appears, mankind cannot but condemn and abhor it. Their inward want of confidence in such professors, is often exhibited in a trying hour. A fact related in my hearing by a Methodist minister, made a deep impression on my mind. A wealthy man in the South, who had sat under the preaching of a worldly minister, was taken sick, and about to die. His friends asked him, if they should send for his minister. He said, no, I do not want him now; we have been together at the horse-race. They urged him to send for somebody, and mentioned several. But he rejected them all; and at last told them to call in Tom, one of his colored men; for, said he, I have often heard him pray alone. Tom

came, laid his little hat at the door, and inquired what his master wanted. Said the dying man, "Tom, do you pray?" "Yes, master,--in my weak way." "Can you pray for your dying master?" "I'll try," he repeated. "Come here, then, and pray for me." And Tom drew near, and poured out his soul to God for the dying man. Ah! the master knew, in his inmost soul, that his minister could not pray. Poor Tom, was the man to pray.

3. The lives of many professors, are a most terrible burlesque on Christianity. Satan, it would seem, has pushed these into the Church to disgrace it. Persons who have a strong sense of the ridiculous, are often tempted to laugh at the absurd notions of religion which some manifest. They never seem to think of asking how Christ would do. I have sometimes seen servants, in families where they were called to family worship, come in cowering, and get behind the door, altogether away from the family circle. I wonder if they think it will be so in heaven. In some families I know, it is not their wish, but the choice of the servant, and of course they are not to blame. Since I have been here I have seen persons take up their hats and leave the house, when they see the colored people sitting among the whites. I wonder if such people would do so in heaven. Do let me ask, is not this the direct opposite of the spirit of Christ? How would Christ treat the poor slaves, and the colored people, if He were in this country?

4. See the importance of always bearing in mind the person whom you have undertaken to represent, and the part you are expected to act. For example; all can see that a minister in the pulpit, and every where, should bear this in mind, and so he should; but no more, really, than any other Christian should in his vocation.

5. It becomes us to inquire, whether we have so represented Christ as to give those around us the true idea of religion. Suppose a minister should never ask himself, what idea of religion his people get from him. It is easy to see that he would not be able to convey a very definite idea of it to his people. So every professor should do. And now beloved, do you live so as to make the impression, that religion is disinterested benevolence? Who would get that idea from you? Said a man not long since, if religion is benevolence, I know of but one man in our church who seems to be religious. How many do you know in this City? Nothing else is religion--Do you live so? Do I? If not what will become of our souls?

6. Those who do not put on Christ, are the worst kind of heretics. There is no heresy so bad as a false profession.

7. Inconsistent professors are the greatest curse to the world, that there is in it.

8. Professors who have not put on Christ should confess to those around them and instantly reform. Confess to your wife, your children, your church, your neighbors. Will you do it?

9. Sinners are altogether without excuse, and are as much bound to put on Christ as professors.

10. Unless every one of us, in his calling, fully intends to put on Christ, and keep Him on, we are in the way to hell. If you are not what you think Christ would be in your calling, you are not a Christian. How different is this from the common religion. All that we see is pride, and starch, and fashion, and death. Oh! brethren, let us put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and 'make no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof.'

Holiness of Christians in the Present Life

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Chapter 7

WAY TO BE HOLY.

Lectures by Professor Finney.

Reported for the Evangelist by Rev. S.D. Cochran.

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

In this lecture I am to show,

I. WHAT IS NOT INTENDED BY THE ASSERTION THAT CHRIST IS THE END OF THE LAW FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

II. WHAT IS INTENDED BY THIS ASSERTION.

III. HOW CHRIST BECOMES THE END OF THE LAW FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

I. What is not intended by the assertion that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness.

1. Not that He abolishes the law in respect to believers. I am aware that some antinomians in the Church, affirm this, but it cannot be true for the following reasons.

(1.) The moral law is not founded in the arbitrary will of God, for if it were He would have no rule of conduct, nothing with which to compare his own actions. But every moral agent must have some rule by which to act. Again, He must have no character at all, for character implies moral obligation, and moral obligation implies moral law. Again, unless the law is obligatory on Him, benevolence in Him is not virtue, for virtue must be compliance with obligation. Nor should we have any standard with which to compare his actions, and by which to judge of them, so that we could know whether He is holy or unholy. Moreover, if He is capable of Benevolence, it is impossible that He should not be under a moral obligation to be so, and if so, the law cannot, of course be founded in His arbitrary will. Furthermore, He could, if the law were founded in his arbitrary will, by willing it, make benevolence vice, and malevolence virtue, right wrong, and wrong right. But this is absurd and impossible.

(2.) The moral law is founded in God's self-existent nature. He never made his own nature, and consequently never made the law, and it must therefore be obligatory upon Him, by virtue of his own nature which imposes it. It is as really obligatory on Him as on us.

(3.) He requires benevolence of us because it is naturally obligatory on us. He made us in his own image, that is, with a nature like His own, and therefore He could not discharge us from obligation to keep the law if He would, for our own reason would still reveal and impose it on us. We should perceive its obligation.

(4.) If He could and should abolish the moral law, then we could have no moral character. We could neither be sinful nor holy any more than brutes can. Observe then, Christ cannot be the end of the law in the sense that He abolishes it.

2. It is not intended that He abolishes the penalty as it respects believers, so that they can sin without actual condemnation. Some have this view of justification, that at the first act of faith, God so sets aside the penalty that it never

afterwards attaches to the individual. But this cannot be, for:

(1.) If the penalty is set aside, the law is repealed, for law consists of precept and penalty.

(2.) If it were so set aside, then Christians, when they sinned would not need pardon, and could not, without folly, and even wickedness pray for forgiveness. It would be nothing else but sheer unbelief. But every Christian knows that when he sins he is condemned, and must be pardoned or damned. Christ, therefore, is not the end of the law in this sense.

3. Nor is He the end of the law for justification merely, for,

(1.) He does not obtain for them a legal justification. Legal justification is the act of pronouncing one just in the estimation of law. This Christ cannot do in respect to any transgressor. Gospel justification is pardon and acceptance. But it never was the end or object of the law to pardon sinners. In this sense, then, it is impossible that Christ should be the end of the law, for the law never aimed at pardoning transgressors. The word righteousness sometimes means justification, but cannot mean that here, as Christ never aimed at legal justification, nor the law at pardon. He cannot, of course, then, be the end of the law in this sense.

4. Nor is He the end of the law in the sense of procuring a pardon for those that believe, for this was never the end proposed by the law. The law knows nothing of pardon.

5. Nor is it intended that He imputes his own righteousness or obedience to them. Some suppose that Christ was under no obligation to obey the law Himself, and that He can, therefore impute his obedience to believers. But,

(1.) The law never aimed at imputation. This was no part of its object. Did the law require Christ's righteousness or personal holiness to be imputed?

(2.) The doctrine of imputed righteousness is founded on the absurd assumption that Christ owed no obedience to the law. But how can this be? Was He under no obligation to be benevolent? If not, then his benevolence was not virtue. He certainly was just as much bound to love God with all his heart, and soul, and strength, and mind, and his neighbor as Himself, as you are. How holy should God be? As holy as He can be. That is, He should be perfectly benevolent, as the Bible says He is.

(3.) This doctrine assumes that Christ's works were works of supererogation. Is this what the Apostle means when he says--'For such a High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners?'

(4.) This doctrine is a mere dogma of Popery, born, bred, and supported amid its darkness and superstitions. The sufferings and death of Christ were for us, and constitute the Atonement. His obedience was necessary to his making an atonement, as a condition, since none but a holy being could make it. Holiness is benevolence, and Christ must of necessity have been benevolent, in order to make the Atonement which is a work of benevolence.

(5.) The doctrine of imputed righteousness represents God as requiring,

(a) That Christ should render a perfect obedience for us.

(b) Then that He should die just as if no such obedience had been rendered.

(c) That, notwithstanding the debt is thus paid twice over by our substitute, we must repent as though it were unpaid.

(d) Then that we must be forgiven.

(e) And after all this, that we must ourselves obey, or be personally holy.

(f) And finally, that we must count it all grace.

What a jumble of nonsense is this! Is this the gospel of the blessed God? Impossible!

(6.) The doctrine of imputation utterly sets aside the true idea of the gospel. The true idea of pardon does not enter into it. It is rather a fivefold satisfaction of justice. We are not restored to the favor of God, according to this doctrine, by a free pardon, but by imputed righteousness. It is not at all wonderful that thinking men, when they hear such slang as this, say, "O, nonsense!--If that be the gospel, we can have nothing to do with it."

(7.) Imputation is not, and never was, the end or object of the law. The end which it seeks is righteousness or true obedience.

II. What is intended by the assertion that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness.

The text affirms that he is the end of the law for righteousness. Righteousness is obedience to the law. He is, then, the end of the law for obedience. He secures the very end aimed at by the law; that is, He makes Christians holy; as it is said--'There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.'What have we here? Why, an express assertion of the Apostle, that Christ, by his Atonement, and indwelling Spirit, had secured in Christians, the very obedience which the law required.

III. How Christ becomes the end of the law for righteousness or obedience.

1. Confidence or faith is essential to all hearty obedience to any law. An outward conformity to its requirements may be secured by fear, but not love.

2. Christ, then, must secure love or true righteousness by inspiring confidence in the character and government of God. God had been slandered by [S]satan, and the world believed the slander. Satan represented to our first parents that God was insincere in forbidding them to eat of the tree of knowledge, and that the result of their eating of it would be just the reverse of what God had threatened. Said he, 'God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil!'This was a most taking temptation! 'And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat.'Now the thing to be done, is to remove this prejudice which has existed in all ages. How shall it be effected?

3. Christ came to reveal the true God and the true character of his government for this express purpose. He came not only to teach, but, by his example, to give an illustration of what the law meant; and to possess the human mind of the idea that God is love. He knew very well that confidence was the thing needed; and that to reveal the character of God, so as to beget confidence, He must hold it out in strong relief, in a life of love before them. There was a greater necessity for this, because many of the dispensations of God, towards mankind appeared severe. He had poured out the waters of the flood upon the old world, and destroyed it; He had frowned upon the cities of the plain, and sent them down to hell; and in many other instances, He had been obliged to resort to such measures as were calculated, in the circumstances, to beget a dread, and slavish fear, rather than to inspire confidence and love. It was, therefore, necessary to adopt measures of a different nature, adapted to beget faith.

4. The nature of faith, renders obedience certain, so far as it is implicit. A wife, for example, is always perfectly under the influence of her husband, just so far as she has confidence in him. Suppose he is a business man; if she has confidence in his business talents, she does not concern herself at all in his business transactions. So, if they are going a journey, suppose she knows him to be careful, and attentive to his affairs, she will not be in a fret; she will never ask whether he has taken care of their baggage, and whether he has procured tickets, and accommodations. She expects all this, as a matter of course, and is happy in her reliance on him. But suppose we turn this over, and she has no confidence in his character. If he is a man of business, and she lacks confidence in his judgment, she will be all the time in distress for fear

he will take some step which will ruin their affairs. If they are going on a journey, she will, perhaps, fear that he will start off without his pocket-book, or forget some of his baggage, or that he will lose them on the way. It is easy to see, that so far as this lack of confidence extends, its tendency is to diminish her affection, and if it extend to his whole character, she cannot love him. I might illustrate this in a thousand ways. If you call in a physician, and you have confidence in him, you will take any medicine which he may prescribe. I recollect a case, which, perhaps some of you are familiar with. A certain king was sick, and sent for his physician. The physician examined his symptoms and found his disease a dangerous one, and requiring a peculiar treatment. He told the king he would go home and prepare a certain medicine, which would make him very sick, while in its operation, but would remove the disease. While he was gone, the king received a letter, warning him against the physician, as tho'he designed to poison him. When the physician returned and presented him the medicine, he immediately swallowed it, and then handed his physician the letter he had received. That was faith; and it placed him entirely under the control of his physician. It is easy, therefore, to see, that if Christ could only restore faith among men, He would, of course, secure obedience.

5. Faith in God's character, is the foundation of faith in his promises. Many people seem to go the wrong way to work. They try to exercise faith in the promises, with[out] faith in his general character. But Christ takes the opposite course, revealing the character of God as a foundation of faith in his promises.

6. He baptizes them by his Spirit, and actually works in them to will and to do. How wonderfully Christ seems to work, to get the control of believers. Unless He can get into their confidence, He cannot do this, but so soon as He can inspire faith, He has them under his control. We see the same law among men. See a human pair, by securing mutual confidence, wind imperishable cords around each other's hearts. Then, for one to know the will of the other, is to do it. They do not need to be bound down nor driven by the force of penalties. This is the way of the seducer, who can "smile and smile and be a villain still." He lays his foundation deep in the confidence of his victim, until he may laugh at all her parents may say and do against him. He gains such an ascendency, as to control the will more absolutely than if he could wield it by his hand. Such is the natural result of getting into the confidence of another. They will, and do, at our bidding. Thus Christ gains the heart, and works in us to will and to do, of his good pleasure.

7. The way to be holy, then, is to believe. 'Then said they unto Him, what shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus said unto them, this is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent."That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."This only would I learn of you; received ye the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye made perfect by the flesh? Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain? He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, forseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. For 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. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God it is evident; for the just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith; but the man that doeth them shall live in them. 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; That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."What shall we say, then? That the Gentiles which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith; But Israel which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the law; for they stumbled at that stumbling-stone; As it is written, behold I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone; and rock of offense, and whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed.'In Christ, then the believer is complete; that is, He is all we need. His offices and relations meet all our necessities, and by faith we receive their redeeming influence.

REMARKS.

1. From this subject, we may see why the gospel lays so much stress on faith. It is the only way of salvation.

2. This method of saving men is perfectly philosophical. And as we have seen, Christ thus works Himself into the very

heart of believers.

3. It is the only possible way, in the very nature of the case, to secure love. God might command, and back up the command with threatenings. But this would only fill the selfish mind with terror, leaving its selfishness unbroken, and even grasping at its objects amid the roar of its thunders. In the very nature of mind, then, to secure obedience, He must secure confidence. Why, look at Eve. The moment she doubted, she fell. And so would all heaven fall if they should lose confidence in God. Yes, they would fall! They would no more retain their obedience, than the planets would retain their places, if the power of gravitation were broken. Every one knows that if the power of attraction were destroyed, suns, and stars, and planets would run lawless through the universe, and desolation would drive her ploughshare through creation. So, break the power of confidence in heaven, and every angel there would fall like Lucifer, and universal anarchy prevail.

4. What I have said, does not represent virtue or holiness as consisting in mere emotions of complacency; or in loving God merely for his favors; but the exhibition of his character in Christ begets in us real benevolence. It shows us what benevolence is, and stimulates us to exercise it. Nearly all preachers and writers, of the present day, confound religion, with mere complacency in God for his favors. Both gratitude and complacency may, and often do, exist in the impenitent mind. It must, therefore, be a fundamental mistake, to confound these with true religion.

5. Christ, by exhibiting his benevolence, begets his own image in them that believe; that is, they are naturally led to yield themselves up to the transforming tendency of this view of his character. This, the law could never secure in a selfish mind.

6. I said the doctrine of imputed righteousness, is another gospel, or no gospel at all. And here I would ask, is not this quite another way of salvation? According to this way, instead of imputing righteousness to them, God makes them righteous.

7. The gospel is not an evasion of the law. It comes in as an auxiliary to accomplish what the law aims at, but cannot effect, because it is 'weak through the flesh.'

8. We see who are true believers. Those who love God supremely and their neighbor as themselves; and unless your faith begets obedience, it is not the faith of the gospel.

9. We can see the sustaining power of faith. This is not well considered by many. If the head of a family secures its confidence, he controls it easily; but if not, there is a perpetual tendency to resist him. The same principle operates in state governments. They are firm, just so far and no farther, than they are based upon the confidence of their subjects. So it is in the business world. Every thing is prosperous, so long as confidence is secured. This gone, and the tide immediately sets forth the other way. Why are so many houses in this country, which were once supposed to be perfectly stable, tumbling down around the heads of the merchants? Because confidence is destroyed. Restore that, and immediately things will assume a different aspect. Every merchant in New-York will feel the impulse; and ships from abroad will come freighted down with merchandize. This principle is equally efficient and necessary in the divine government. This, the devil well understood. Hence his first effort was directed to its overthrow. But ministers too often put it in the back ground, and hence the reason of so much failure in the work of reforming the world. Christ, on the other hand, always put it foremost, and his declaration, 'He that believeth shall be saved,'is the unalterable law of his government.

10. Unbelievers cannot be saved, for their want of confidence, necessarily keeps the soul from hearty obedience.

11. Do you ask, "How can I believe?" I turn on you, and ask, "How can you help believing?" Christ has died for you to win your confidence. He stands at your door, offering blessings, and assuring you of his good will. And can't you believe! What! And the Son of God at the door! But perhaps you stand away back, and say, Christians can believe, but how can I? a poor, guilty wretch. And why not you? Come, let your anchor down upon the character of God, and then if the winds blow, let them blow; if the ocean tosses itself, and yawns till it lays bare its very bottom, you are secure, for God rules the wind and the waves. But I hear some one say, I am such a backslider. Yes, and you are like to be. Unless you believe, you will continue to go right away from God. Come, instantly, and believe. Come all you professors; come, all you sinners; come now, and He will write his law in your hearts; and it will no longer be to you a law on tables of stone. Can't you believe it? Yes, O yes. Then let us come around the throne of grace, and receive Christ, as the end of the law for

righteousness.

Holiness of Christians in the Present Life

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Chapter 8

WHAT ATTAINMENTS CHRISTIANS MAY REASONABLY EXPECT TO MAKE IN THIS LIFE.

Lectures by Professor Finney.

Reported for the Evangelist by Rev. S.D. Cochran.

> "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it."--1 Thess. 5:23, 24.

In this lecture I shall consider,

I. WHAT SANCTIFICATION IS.

II. WHAT IS NOT IMPLIED IN IT.

III. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN IT.

IV. WHAT IS INTENDED BY THE SANCTIFICATION OF BODY, SOUL, AND SPIRIT.

V. WHAT IS NOT IMPLIED IN THE SANCTIFICATION OF BODY, SOUL, AND SPIRIT.

VI. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN IT.

VII. WHAT ATTAINMENTS CHRISTIANS CANNOT EXPECT IN THIS LIFE.

VIII. WHAT ATTAINMENTS THEY MAY REASONABLY EXPECT TO MAKE IN THIS LIFE.

I. What Sanctification is.

1. To sanctify, is to make holy, to set apart, to consecrate. Both the Old and the New Testaments use the word in this sense. For God to sanctify us, is for Him to secure in us the consecration of ourselves to Him. To sanctify ourselves, is to consecrate ourselves wholly to Him.

2. Sanctification, then, is holiness, purity, or benevolence. Benevolence, as we have seen in former lectures, is good willing, and is the ultimate intention of the mind; in other words, it is obedience to the requirements of the law of God; it is what the Bible means by love, which it declares to be the fulfilling of the law.

II. What is not implied in it.

1. It does not imply any change in the constitution.

2. Nor any such change in the temper, disposition, or state of the mind, that we cannot sin. To suppose this is absurd. The angels which kept not their first estate, were certainly sanctified, but they sinned, and so did Adam.

3. Nor is it implied in sanctification that we are not liable to sin.

4. Nor that it is certain that we shall not sin, immediately, and surely, unless supported by the Spirit of God. There is no evidence that even the saints in heaven, would continue their obedience, if the Holy Spirit were withdrawn.

5. Nor is it implied that a sanctified soul has no farther warfare with temptation. I showed, in my lecture on the Christian warfare, that this would have existed if man had never fallen, and will exist, in some form, forever.

6. Nor, that there is no farther growth in grace. The Lord Jesus Christ, all admit, was sanctified, but He grew in grace. And so shall we, as fast as our knowledge increases, not only in this, but in the future world.

7. Nor does it imply freedom from errors in judgment, or opinion. I don't know how it could be shown either from the Bible, or the nature of the case, that this is implied in sanctification, even of the saints in heaven.

8. Nor does it imply a uniform state of the emotions. Christ's emotions were not always the same. He had his sorrows and his joys, and, from the very nature of the sensibility, the feelings must vary as the circumstances do.

9. Nor does it imply a constant, and great excitement. The idea that a great excitement of the emotions is essential to sanctification, has arisen out of a radical mistake respecting the nature of religion. It has been supposed that the love required by the law of God, consists in the highest possible state of the emotions. Now, if this is so, or if emotion constitutes any part of religion, then Christ was often in sin, for He did not exhibit any more excitement than other men. Those who maintain this sentiment, then, overlook the fact that religion consists in benevolence, and that emotion is no part of it.

10. It does not imply the same degree or strength of love which we might have exercised had we never sinned. There is not a saint in heaven who does this, and the law requires no such thing. It only requires us to exercise all the strength we have.

11. It does not require a constant tension or strain of the mind.

12. Nor does it imply a state of mind of which we cannot be certain by consciousness. It would be strange legislation indeed which should require such a mysterious, intangible state of mind as that. The truth is, it is naturally impossible that such a state should be required by an intelligible law. Indeed, how could one repent, or know it if he did, under such a requirement, or perform any other duty?

III. What is implied in it.

1. It does imply present obedience to the law of God, that is, benevolence. Benevolence, consists in regarding and treating every known interest according to its relative value, and as I have shown in a former lecture, it is a unit--a simple choice--a choosing good for its own sake.

2. We have also seen that bodily actions are connected with, and controlled by the will, so that willing necessitates corresponding outward actions. Sanctification, therefore, implies outward obedience--a correct life. We have also seen that emotions, desires, and thoughts, are connected with and controlled by the will indirectly. Sanctification, therefore, implies thoughts, desires, and feelings, corresponding to the state of the will, so far as they can be regulated by it. Some have less control over their attention, and consequently over their thoughts and emotions, than others, but whatever is possible to any one, he can do by willing, and nothing beyond this is obligatory.

3. It implies an honest intention to promote the glory of God, and the highest good of being, to the full extent of our ability. Such an intention necessarily embraces the following elements.

(1) It is disinterested. It chooses universal well-being for its own sake.

(2) It is impartial respecting all interests, whether of friends or foes, rich or poor, bond or free, alike; that is, in exact accordance with their perceived value.

(3) It embraces all future time with the present.

(4) It is supreme to God, because his happiness is the supreme good.

(5) It is equal to men.

Now if you drop either of these elements, it is no longer virtue.

4. We have seen that intention, or the choice of an end, necessitates the adoption of corresponding means, therefore, sanctification implies the choice of appropriate means to the universal good of being.

5. It implies charitable judgments--these are the natural results of benevolence. 'Charity thinketh no evil.' When you see a person making severe and harsh judgments, you at least have reason to fear he is not sanctified.

6. It implies peace of mind. 'My peace I leave with you,' says Christ.

7. Joy in God.

8. Absence of condemnation-- 'There is, therefore, now, no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.'

9. Implicit faith. The sanctified soul really believes, so far as he understands the truth of God.

10. Delight in all the ordinances and duties of religion so far as they are understood.

11. A compassionate temper, and whenever it is seen that persons have not this spirit, you may know that they are not sanctified.

12. The absence of all selfishness. Selfishness, in any degree, is inconsistent with sanctification.

13. Implicit and universal reliance on Christ for support and aid. You cannot remain obedient any longer than you remember where your strength is.

14. The holding all we are and have entirely at the divine disposal. Sanctification must include all these, fully up to the light possessed by each individual.

IV. What is intended by the sanctification of body, soul, and spirit.

1. By the language, 'body, soul, and spirit,' we are to understand, the whole being, and the thing intended is, the perfect subjection of all the appetites and propensities, to the entire control of the will of God. Some of these appetites and propensities originate in the body, and some in the mind; but all must be controlled in reference to the highest good of being.

2. The harmonious development of the sensibility so that it shall respond to all perceived truths and relations, is intended in this language. In my sermon, on the Christian warfare, I spoke of the monstrous development of the sensibility, and of the influence it has upon the will, in the direction in which it is developed. I there remarked that a perfect balancing of all its susceptibilities, would greatly abate the force of temptation. Every one knows how forcibly the appetites and passions

wake up and clamor for indulgence. Now, although neither holiness, nor sin, belong to these, in themselves, yet it would be vastly favorable to virtue, if they were all brought into harmonious subjection to the law of the reason. Here let me say that no physical influence is exerted on the mind or body by the Spirit, to change the sensibility. The mother, whose sensibility is so developed by the loss of her child, is not brought into such a state, by any physical influence; nor is such an influence needed to secure such effects. Let sinners see the love of Christ in its real relation to themselves, and it is directly adapted to enkindle their emotions. It is the Spirit's office to take the things of Christ, and show to them; and thus secure this result. This He actually effects in Christians. To be sanctified, then, is to have not only the will consecrated to God, but the sensibility brought into harmonious action under the control of the will.

V. What is not implied in the sanctification of body, soul, and spirit.

1. It is not implied that the constitutional appetites, passions, and propensities, are extinct. They certainly were not in the Lord Jesus Christ, and whoever supposes this necessary in order to sanctification, has not well considered the matter. Without their continued existence, we should be incapable of any moral action whatever.

2. Nor that their nature is so changed, that they all exclusively impel the will to obey the law of the reason. It belongs to their very nature, each to seek its appropriate object. for its own sake: For example, the appetite for food, seeks food, not for the glory of God, but for its own sake. So it is with every other appetite and desire of the soul. Each is blind to every thing else than its own object, and seeks that, for its own sake. To say then, that they must be so changed, as to impel the mind only in the right direction, is to say that their very nature must be changed. Each of them, naturally, impels the will to seek its object, for its own sake, and it is the province of reason to give direction to their blindness, and of the will to gratify them in strict subjection to the law which reason prescribes.

3. Nor that they are so far suppressed or annihilated, as to be in no degree a temptation. They were not so in Eve, for she fell under the temptation presented by her appetite for food; and we need not expect ever to get into any such state.

VI. What is implied in it.

1. That these propensities are all harmoniously developed according to the light enjoyed; and,

2. That they become easily controlled by the will, as in the person of Christ.

VII. What attainments Christians cannot expect in this life.

1. They cannot expect to get above what Christ was. It is enough for the servant to be as his Master.

2. Of course they cannot reasonably expect to get beyond a state of warfare. Christ had a warfare, not with sin, not with conscience, for it would be nonsense to call this Christian warfare, but with temptation, and no one will deny that He was entirely sanctified. And here I wish to notice a very singular fact. Those who deny this doctrine say that if Christians were perfect, they would have no further warfare. But where do they get that idea? Not from the Bible, for there is not a single passage in it, that I know of, which teaches any such thing.

3. They cannot expect to get beyond the necessity and capacity of growth in grace; I mean growth in degree, not in kind. We shall doubtless grow in grace to all eternity. The Bible says that Christ grew in favor with God, that is, grace, and so will every Christian.

4. They cannot expect to get beyond the possibility or liability of sinning. This would be to get beyond the possibility of obedience, and to cease from being a moral agent.

5. Nor, may they expect to get so far as not to need the means of grace. They must, of necessity, need the assistance of the Spirit, of the ordinances, of prayer, and of the Sabbath. To deny this is downright nonsense. While human nature remains what it is, it must need the means of grace, as much as it needs food, or light, or any thing else which is indispensable to well-being. God never makes minds holy by physical force, but by means, and therefore, means will always be necessary.

Did not Christ Himself use them?

VIII. What attainments they may reasonably expect to make in this life.

1. God does not, and cannot, reasonably, require impossibilities of moral agents.

2. It is reasonable, then, to think that we can do whatever He requires of us, and to expect to do it. Our ability to comply with his requirements, is implied as strongly as possible in the command itself. If not, it can be of no binding force upon us.

3. God cannot lie. It is, therefore, reasonable to expect to receive any measure of grace, which He has expressly promised. Not to expect such grace, is to distrust God.

4. God has commanded us to obey his law; and we must intend to obey it or we are not Christians. But we cannot intend to obey it unless we consider it possible; this is naturally impossible. I appeal to every hearer. Can you really intend to render a hearty obedience to what you regard as impossible? We cannot intend to obey, unless we believe it possible to obey the spirit of the law. We may, therefore, reasonably expect to keep the law.

5. The first verse in this text is the prayer of an inspired Apostle, for the sanctification, in this life, of the whole body, soul, and spirit of Christians, and that they may be preserved in this state, blameless, until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, if this is an inspired prayer, it reveals the will of God on this subject. It is admitted that it includes all that I have said; that is, sanctification in the higher sense. Now observe, it is added, "Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it." It is reasonable, then, to expect its fulfillment.

6. But to this it is objected, that, although it is true that this, and kindred promises, do really pledge sufficient grace to secure this result, yet, as they are conditioned upon faith, it is unreasonable for us to expect to avail ourselves of them, unless others have done so before us. And in confirmation, you are pointed to the great and good men, who have lived in different periods of the Church, and told that they did not attain it. I waive, for the present, the answer to this objection, and pass to make several

REMARKS.

1. This must be an important question. I have been astonished beyond all measure, that this doctrine has been called a hobby. What! Is the fundamental doctrine of the degree of holiness attainable in this life, to be called a hobby? If so, then it is the hobby of the universe, and God, and every angel is intensely interested in securing its success.

2. We must hold up some standard. If you tell a sinner to repent, you hold up before him the standard to which he ought to conform, and even if he should deny that any had actually repented, you would still insist upon it, that it is his duty, whether others had or not, and also, that if he did not repent, he could not be saved.

3. Christians must aim at some standard, but they cannot aim at any state which they deem impossible; as well might they aim to fly. How essential then, that we should ascertain what the true standard is, and hold it up before them.

We have seen that sin consists in choosing self-gratification as the supreme end, and that holiness, on the contrary, consists in supremely choosing the glory of God and the good of his universe. We have also seen that they cannot co-exist in the same mind--that while the will or heart is right, that nothing can, for the time being, be morally wrong; and on the other hand, while the heart is wrong, all is wrong; that is, it is totally depraved. The only question then, is, can we reasonably expect to remain in that state. I said this expectation was supposed to be unreasonable, unless others could be pointed out as examples. But if no one has ever availed himself of these promises, it by no means follows that no one ever will; on the contrary, the progressive state of the world, and the progressive nature of religion, warrant and demand the belief that future generations will make indefinitely higher attainments than the past. The golden age has not gone by; those who think so, have not well considered the matter. If any one will compare the time of the Apostles with the present time, and take in all the characteristics of both, he will see, that on the whole, the human family have made great

progress. There is a radical error in the custom of looking back, instead of forward, for the golden age; and the common notion that the world is in its dotage, is exactly the reverse of truth. Every successive era is marked by a decided advance in science, art, philosophy and civilization; and this is in exact accordance with the whole tenor of prophecy, which warrants and demands the expectation of vastly higher attainments, in future, than have ever yet been made. The Temperance Reformation, shows that it is now common for drunkards to make attainments, which were once regarded as almost impossible. Who has not witnessed the Washingtonian, almost working miracles, in pulling the drunkard out of the gutter. And shall we extinguish hope respecting the Church, and make it an exception to the progress of the world?

4. One of the greatest obstacles in the way of both physical and moral improvement, is the existence of false opinions and expectations in regard to the degree of elevation, to which God desires to bring mankind in this world. I have examined Mr. Miller's theory, and am persuaded, that what he expects to come after the judgment, will come before it. Read the 65th chapter of Isaiah. The Prophet there speaks of the advancement to be made, as the creation of a new heavens and a new earth. The reason men have so little idea of the thing intended in such predictions, is that they have such meager views of the grace of God. If the world is to be converted to the present standard, it is true that such predictions cannot represent its state. What are the Church dreaming about, if they cannot see the necessity of a higher standard? The man who cannot see that, is as poor a philosopher as he is a Christian. Why, brethren, what would it avail, if the whole world were converted to the standard of the current religion?

5. Suppose this promise had been read to those to whom it was given, how could they have believed it, on the theory that they were not to expect higher attainments in the future than they then witnessed. Why they would have said, the world never will be converted, because it never has been; and what would you reply to that? Suppose the same objection were made now, and it were said, it was not done in the days of the Apostles, nor at any time since, and are we to expect to accomplish what never has been done? Suppose, farther, ministers were engaged in pointing back, to prove that the world can never be converted. Why, they would say, the Church never has converted the world, and therefore, it never will. You must be getting proud, if you think we shall do more than good men before us have done. And then, suppose they should go back, and hunt up all the fanaticism, and enthusiasm, and extravagancies of the Crusades, and other attempts to propagate the Christian religion, and instead of pointing out these evils, to guard the Church against similar ones in time to come, as they ought to do, they were doing it to prevent any attempts to convert the world now. What would be thought of all this? It would justly be regarded as ridiculous; and yet this is exactly the course adopted respecting the doctrine of sanctification. The fact, that the promises have not been considered as meaning so much, sufficiently accounts for the fact, that they have not been more generally realized in the experience of Christians.

6. To deny the reasonableness of this expectation, is to lay a stumbling block before the Church. Suppose you should exhort sinners to repent, and then tell them they could not, neither in their own strength, nor by any grace received. What else would that be than a stumbling block, over which, if they believed you, they would stumble into hell. So to tell Christians, that they ought to be sanctified and that it is attainable, and yet, that no one can, in this life attain it, is the very way to prevent them from attaining it. If they believe such instruction, it will as certainly prevent their spiritual progress, as a general outcry against missions would prevent the conversion of the world.

7. But if this expectation is unreasonable, what is reasonable? What may we expect? How much higher can we rise? Who can tell? Who will point to some definite standard?

8. Doubts as to the truth of the view I have here maintained, arise,

(1) From a false philosophy of depravity and holiness. When men make holiness consist in emotions instead of benevolence, they overlook the very nature of virtue, and are deluded as a matter of course.

(2) From unbelief. Our opinions on such questions, must depend on our faith, and the state of our hearts.

(3) From radically defective Christian experience, or rather, having had none but a legal experience.

(4) From overlooking the fulness of the Gospel provision.

(5) From confounding it with antinomian perfectionism.

(6) From false views with respect to what constitutes entire sanctification. Many say, the Bible represents the Christian warfare as continuing till death, and that this warfare consists in fighting with sin. Now where do they learn this, not in the Bible. The Bible does indeed represent the Christian warfare as continuing till death, but it never represents it as consisting in fighting with sin. What is sin? Why, sin is a heart, or will, or choice, contrary to the will of God. To fight with sin then, would be to fight with our own present choice or voluntary state of mind--a choice warring on or against itself--this is absurd. The Christian warfare consists in warring with temptation, not with sin. They say that christians are commanded to grow in grace, and if they once arrive at perfection, progress is at an end. They thus set up a man of straw, and then fight it.

9. This is a serious question to all christians, and I cannot tell how I feel, when I hear professors of religion say they cannot give time for its examination. Said a professor of religion to me not long since, "I cannot take time to examine this subject," and yet he had the strangest misapprehensions respecting it. It is enough to make one weep tears of blood to see the darkness which prevails, and yet the apathy and unwillingness to inquire. Beloved, let us know the truth that it may make us free. Let us give ourselves up to the teachings of the Spirit, that we may be 'sanctified wholly, and preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

Holiness of Christians in the Present Life

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Chapter 9

NECESSITY AND NATURE OF DIVINE TEACHING

Lectures by Professor Finney.

Reported for the Evangelist, by Rev. S.D. Cochran

'Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.'--Phil. 2:12, 13.

'Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.'--Heb. 13:20, 21.

'Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth, for He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.'--John 16:13, 14.

'But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.'--John 14:26.

I. NECESSITY OF A DIVINE INFLUENCE IN REGENERATION AND SANCTIFICATION.

II. THE KIND OF INFLUENCE NEEDED.

III. THIS KIND OF INFLUENCE IS ACTUALLY EMPLOYED.

IV. THE CONSISTENCY AND CO-OPERATION OF DIVINE AND HUMAN AGENCY IN THE WORK.

I. Necessity of a divine influence in regeneration and sanctification.

1. A selfish mind will, as a matter of fact, never recover itself to holiness. This will appear evident from the nature of selfishness. Selfishness consists in the committal of the will to self-gratification, or the indulgence of the constitutional propensities.

2. Now observe that selfishness is the supreme choice of the mind. It is choosing self-gratification over and above all other and higher interests. It is making self-gratification the ultimate end--the thing to which every other thing is made, by the mind, to sustain the relation of means, and which is therefore chosen for its own sake.

3. I have shown, in a former lecture, that choice necessitates outward actions--the attention, and through it the thoughts, emotions, and desires. The choice of an end, necessitates the use of means for its accomplishment, and gives direction to

the action of all the mental powers. As choice directs the intelligence, it, of course, in a great measure, decides the motives that shall be addressed to the mind through it. As desire and feeling are dependent, to a great extent, upon the intelligence, and as that is directed by choice, it follows that choice, to a very great extent, decides the motives that shall address the mind through the sensibility. Thus all the actions and states of mind are necessarily controlled by choice. Hence, while a given choice exists, it of course shuts the mind, to a great degree from the influence of all objects inconsistent with itself, and gives the attention to all those things which accord with it. A man, for instance, who gives himself up to making money, will naturally so direct his attention to things connected with that object, as to be but very little influenced by any thing else.

4. Choice is necessarily an act of the will, and is, therefore, free; but the freedom of the will consists in the power, not to choose without motives, but to choose one way or another, in view of any given motive--to choose or refuse any object presented to it. But no mind can choose an object which it does not perceive. Hence, whatever prevents from perceiving, of course, prevents from choosing--whatever prevents from apprehending a motive, or object of choice, renders it impossible for the mind to choose that object.

5. If it be an existing choice, which diverts the mind from one class of objects or motives, and directs it into another channel, although the mind is entirely free, yet failing to perceive objects from which it is thus diverted, it does not possess within itself the means that will ever secure its choosing in accordance with them. I do not mean to say that an existing choice, whether selfish or holy, absolutely prevents the mind from perceiving any motives to a choice contrary to itself; for, as I showed in my lecture on the Christian warfare, our sensibility will always lay us open to temptation, however holy we may become. But a holy choice naturally shuts out motives hostile to itself as far as possible, and keeps its attention upon the opposite class. So, on the contrary, a selfish choice cannot utterly hush the voice of reason, and shut out all motives to holiness, but it naturally does so as far as it can; and, as a matter of fact, we find selfish minds so much open to motives to selfishness, and so diverted from all others, that selfish motives have the entire influence over them. Unless, therefore, some agency external to itself is employed to engage the attention, and cause the mind to apprehend and consider another class of motives, than those to which it has committed itself, the case is hopeless. While it is thus taken up and engrossed, it will not perceive objects of a different character so as to come under their influence, but will be drifted along to the depths of hell. All its choices will be between different forms of selfishness. It has committed itself to the stream, and notwithstanding the spontaneous remonstrances of reason, it will float onward. Persons may even hear daily the best of instruction, and the most solemn warnings, and yet so divert their attention from it, as to feel its power but little if any. Thus Judas was always thinking of money, so that even the preaching of Christ did him no good. So, multitudes of persons have so employed themselves in selfish pursuits that although they hear, every Sabbath, the most pungent and solemn truths, they do not seem to be in the least degree affected by them, but even sit in the house of God plotting schemes of selfish enterprize, and thus, by the action of the laws of their own minds, rush on to certain destruction, unless arrested by some foreign influence.

6. Another point to be considered is, that spiritual truths are not addressed to us through the senses, and since sensual objects are constantly appealing to the propensities, and calling off the attention, a spiritual influence is constantly needed to keep up the attention to the great truths of religion. It is therefore certain, that even converted persons need a constant divine influence to keep them from relapsing--to hold up to their view constantly the motives to holiness.

II. Show the kind of influence needed.

1. It needs to be spiritual in opposition to material. It needs a spirit to gain access to the mind, and draw it off from the material objects around us.

2. The influence necessary, is moral as opposed to physical. It must be something which can influence to choice, the will is not like a steel spring which can be bent by force; it must be influenced by motives. Physical power cannot move will; it moves freely.

3. It must be an enlightening influence so as to supplant and put away the darkness of the mind. Not only does the sinner move in an envelope of darkness which must be driven away, but there needs to be a constant blaze of light poured upon the Christian, to detect his deficiencies and lead him forward. When a Christian has backslidden, and become selfish, what but the light of heaven, can remove his darkness and delusion?

4. It needs to be sufficiently wise and powerful to arrest and keep the attention. It is manifest that an influence is needed, not merely to argue and gain the assent of the mind, but so to convince, as to gain and keep the attention. Nothing is more common than for persons to assent to arguments without really perceiving their true force, and an influence is therefore needed, that can actually show the truth to the mind, quicken the conscience, and develope the sensibility in its favor. Where any truth is presented to the mind, it gives increased power to the truth if a corresponding feeling can be aroused. An agency is therefore needed that knows perfectly the laws and whole history of our minds, and just how to approach them in order to make them feel--and to possess them of the true knowledge of God. Who has not been struck with the difficulty of making sinners understand the true nature of religion? Even professors of religion stumble at the true character of God. I was astonished at this, on hearing of certain objections made to my sermon about putting on Christ. You recollect I said in my sermon, that we ought, in all circumstances, and in every calling, to inquire how Christ would do were He in our place--even were He a physician, a mechanic, or even a street-sweeper. "What!" say certain ones, "compare Jesus Christ to a street-sweeper, or a washer-woman! It is blasphemous! I can't go to hear him again." Now, do let me ask, what such persons know about religion? Why if they had seen Him washing his disciple's feet, they would at once have declared He could not be the Christ! What! suppose any necessary and honest labor below Christ! I wonder if they do not think it was below Him to be a carpenter. Some Infidels maintain that it is altogether below God to take any notice of this world. That is their notion about God. They think it would lower his dignity to concern Himself about it. Shame! So professors of religion do not know the nature of true religion. If they did, they would never indulge their foolish prejudices against people of color, and on a thousand other points on which they should be as honest and solemn as the Judgment. They need an agency to teach them the truth about God and his service.

5. This agent must be able to reveal to the mind such truths as are calculated to inspire confidence and love. Otherwise all his testimony will only confirm their selfishness, and leave them stil[l] 'carnal, sold under sin.' He must also possess immeasurable patience. Men often get out of patience, and even parents with their own children. What patience then is necessary in order to influence men to obey the will of God. Moreover, He must also be Omnipresent, and characterized by vast benevolence. Just think what benevolence is required. The Atonement is made, but sinners heed it not, and here something additional must be done to remove the blindness, and overcome the sottishness of man--to lead him to accept its offers and obey its precepts.

III. This kind of influence is actually employed.

1. The Holy Spirit strives with every generation, and with every individual altogether gratuitously. He receives no pay for it. Oh how great must be his benevolence! His influence has all the characteristics above specified. It is spiritual, John 16:7-8. 'Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.'

It is moral, as opposed to physical. He works in us to will and to do, by motives, by truth. See the texts. Also, James 1:18. 'Of his own will begat He us, with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.' 1 Pet. 1:23. 'Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.' Jn. 17:17. 'Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.' All these passages, not only assert that the Spirit exerts an influence, but plainly teach that it is moral in kind. The Atonement of Christ, furnishes the motives by which to effect the work, both of converting sinners, and sanctifying saints. If it should occur to you, that there were persons converted before the Atonement was made, I answer, that it was through that class of truths which the Atonement presents, and they were shadowed forth in the Jewish ritual, and revealed in prophecy. It certainly was not by merely legal influences. Law only drives a sinner to despair. What! a selfish sinner brought to love by the threatenings of the law? Impossible! Conscious of his selfishness and guilt, he looks up, and sees God clothed in terrors and frowns, with the red thunderbolt in his hand to dash him to hell. Has this a tendency to induce in him a disinterested submission to, and love for God? No, but directly the contrary. It condenses his selfishness into fiercer opposition. But how different the manifestation of love in the Atonement. It is, as Paul says--Romans 12:20. 'If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.' If you meet your enemy, you may scold and threaten to shoot him; and while you upbraid him, he may blush; while you threaten, he may tremble; but he will not love. We know the influence of such a course, by our own consciousness. But if we manifest benevolence towards him, we heap coals of fire on his head. We change him into a friend. So, when the sinner sees God all love instead of frowns, with what a magic power it wilts

him all down! While he sees only the signs of wrath, he stands as unbending as a marble pillar, and if he weeps, his tears are the tears of a rock; but as the Spirit takes and shows him the things of Christ, he is instantly all unbraced--his stubborn knees bow, his heart breaks, and he lies all along, subdued at the foot of the cross. Such is the work of the Spirit.

IV. The consistency and co-operation of divine and human agency in the work.

1. We are conscious of being active in every step of the work. The Spirit does not first convert men and they then become active. We are conscious that we are perfectly active all along, every step of the way; just as much so as in business, or any thing else in the world.

2. The Spirit is not employed to suspend, or set aside our own voluntary agency, but to secure the right direction and use of it. He could not make us holy, and save us without our own agency, for holiness consists in right voluntary action. To talk of being made holy passively, is to talk stark nonsense. The thing is impossible.

3. Without his agency, though perfectly free and responsible, yet being selfish, and voluntarily shutting ourselves up to the consideration and influence of motives to selfishness, we should do nothing to recover ourselves out of the snare of the devil. He works in us to will, and to do of course, since willing necessitates doing. He addresses Himself to the work of influencing the will, because that is just the place to begin. All the actions we perform which are good, are truly ours, but the agent who persuades us to them, is the Holy Spirit. He wisely charms our wills into conformity to the will of God.

REMARKS.

1. In all this work, we are conscious only of the influence of truth, as the Spirit presents not Himself to our view, but the truth. We are conscious of perceiving, and acting, and feeling, in view of the truth, but of nothing else.

2. See the error of those who are expecting and waiting for a physical change, and a physical sanctification. A great multitude of impenitent persons are waiting to be passively converted, and professors of religion encourage them in it. They are also waiting to be sanctified in a similar way. Now, prevalent as this notion is, and extensive as has been its sway in the Church, I do not hesitate to say that there is nothing more absurd, and unsupported by the Bible. It is a superstitious notion. As though the divine influence were like an electric shock, or some such influence. It is to overlook the very nature of religion, and of the Spirit's influences, and has ruined thousands, and, I may say, millions of souls.

3. Whenever we find our attention drawn to the consideration of spiritual things, we may know that the Spirit is at work with us, and conduct ourselves accordingly. If a sinner would know whether the Spirit strives with him the way is easy. Does truth seem to have a stronger influence than formerly? Do solemn influences come in upon the mind from abroad? It must be the work of the Spirit. Walk softly lest you grieve Him away.

4. The truths of the Bible never influence us inwardly, only as they are revealed to us individually, and set home upon us by the Spirit. I have feared a great many overlook this. They read the Bible as they would a catechism or lesson, and often wholly overlook its real import. They must have the Spirit to make it plain to them. They never seem to have a passage brought home to them by the Spirit. But to read the Bible so, does them no good, but infinite hurt--the mind hardens under it, and this is the reason so many read it without finding its spirit. The truth is, it is not enough that it has been revealed to Isaiah, and Paul--it was never meant to be a rule of life as a mere outward thing; you might as well have it on tables of stone; it is a mere savor of death unto death, unless it is so revealed to you as to be spirit and life. You must be taught what its meaning is by the Spirit of God. What Christian does not know this to be true in his own consciousness? You have sometimes read a hundred passages and they seemed to do you no good. Nay, it seemed as though you could find nothing to suit you in a whole volume of promises. But, by and by, God makes one come home to you like electric fire. It sets you all in a glow and becomes food for many days. It serves also as a key to many other of the deep things of God. We observe the same thing in the biographies of distinguished Christians. How often we hear them talk about the Spirit giving them the meaning of a passage. They had read it before a hundred times, and it seemed to possess no special meaning--they had only an outside view of it. But suddenly they saw in it a profoundness of meaning that they had never conceived of; it is as light from heaven.

5. We have power to resist the Spirit. The will has the command of the attention, and if, when the Spirit presents truth the

will averts the attention, and continues to do so, the Spirit might present it forever, and it would do no good. Hence we are commanded not 'to resist'--not 'to grieve' the Holy Spirit, and to 'work out our salvation with fear and trembling for it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure.'

6. Objects of sense, habits, the world, the flesh and [S]satan, render divine influence constantly indispensable.

7. See the vast patience, pains-taking, compassion, perseverance and love of the Holy Spirit. I shall never forget the impression made on me by the thought that came into my mind once when reflecting on the work of the Spirit. I asked myself how long it had been since I was converted and what the Spirit had done for me during all that time; and I could testify that, during all that time, through all my provocations, He had continued to strive, to lead and guide me, faithful till that moment, in his work of love. Oh, how could I ever grieve him again!

8. How greatly our ingratitude must grieve Him. I have been afraid Christians did not think enough of their indebtedness to the Spirit. They often seem to regard the Savior with great complacency, the Father with less, and the Spirit with none at all, or but little; whereas all the persons of the Trinity, are equally interested and engaged for our salvation, and have equal claims to our gratitude. The Father gave the Son, the Son made the Atonement, and the Spirit secures our acceptance of it.

9. See what Rom. 5:6, means. 'For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.' But for the Atonement, the Holy Spirit could not sanctify us for want of motives adapted to slay our selfishness. But the Atonement gives Him that power over us.

10. God is often employed in influencing the decisions of our will, when we are not at all aware of it. How often men find themselves having arrived at thoughts and made up decisions, for which they cannot account to save their lives. This is often the case with even impenitent sinners. Perhaps some of you can remember instances of decisions which even saved your life. I can remember such instances in my own history. It would be extremely interesting to gather up facts on this point. We should, doubtless find many wonderful things coming to light, respecting the intervention of the Spirit.

11. The Spirit is always in his people, but often his inward, gentle teachings and whisperings, are drowned in the din of outward objects. He loves to lead the mind in his own strait way, by breathing, gently, his influences upon the soul, but often times the mind is in such great excitement and bustle that it cannot hear Him speaking in his own inward sanctuary.

12. The mind is often diverted from his teachings by the teachings of those who are not under his influence. I have often heard people say that they had a sweet time in their closet on the Sabbath morn, but they have gone to meeting and by the time it was through, have found it all dissipated. The teachings they heard there conflicted with those of the Spirit of God, and they grieved Him by giving it their attention.

13. Excitement, measures, and talk often quench his influences. When persons give themselves up to much talk, there is little inward communion; and when there is so much that is outward in means to promote religion, the mind grows poor and lean, and takes up with the flummery and show of outside religion.

14. See the importance of having the inward ear open, and of understanding that the senses are not to be confounded with the outward organs of sense. The ear is not a sense but the organ of the sense of hearing. It is no more to be confounded with the sense, than is the trumpet you hold to the ear. So the eye, the bodily organ of sense, is no more the sense itself, than are your spectacles. The glasses do not see, nor does the eye, but the sense of sight sees through them. Hence, you can keep your senses awake and active while you dispense with the outward organs. Why do you shut your eyes when you pray? To prevent your attention from being caught away from God. In like manner you can close your outward ear, so that you may hear God speak. Did it never seem to you as if you actually heard Him speak?--sometimes a Bible passage? I recollect a time, a number of years ago, when the Lord showed me his glory. So sensible was his presence that I never suspected, at the time, that I did not see his glory with bodily eyes. Soon after I was converted, I used to go about before, or at the break of day, to get brethren up to pray, (and I may say that was the first morning prayer meeting I had ever heard of.) One morning I could not get them up; I felt distressed, and in my agony was going away to pray, when all at once the glory of God blazed all around me, and it seemed as if all nature praised the Lord, and none but men looked down and were mute. I wondered they could not see. It seemed to have been some such view that Paul had, when he

could not tell whether he was in the body or out of it. When persons experience this, it seems more than a figure of speech to talk of seeing God, but if you want to see Him, you must let the inward senses be awake to the influence of the Spirit.

15. See how the soul is sanctified by the Spirit, and belief of the truth. When the Spirit presents the truth you must believe it. Sanctification is, and must be by faith.

16. See the importance of understanding the ground of the necessity of the divine influence. The reason is that the mind has so shut itself up to selfish influences that the Spirit alone, can break the spell that binds it. Its greatness is manifest by the same reason.

17. The necessity for the Spirit's influence, is our sin, and hence never ought to be brought up as an excuse.

18. All the holiness on earth is induced by the Spirit.

19. If you grieve away the Spirit, you are lost. Nothing else in the universe can save you.

20. See what it is to be led by the Spirit. It is to yield to his influences.

21. How amazingly careless many persons are, in disregarding the influences of the Spirit. Until you are more careful how you talk and act, you will never know what it is to be taught of the Spirit. There is a man who would not grieve his wife for any consideration, but will daily grieve the blessed Spirit. The Spirit stands away back from such a man, knowing it will do no good to interpose. Poor man! If he continue to grieve Him, he will soon do it once too often, and never be forgiven.

Holiness of Christians in the Present Life

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Chapter 10

FULNESS THERE IS IN CHRIST.

Lectures by Professor Finney.

Reported for the Evangelist, by Rev. S.D. Cochran.

> 'For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power.'--Col. 2:9, 10.

The connection in which this text stands, shows that the Apostle is laboring to establish the distinction between an outside legal religion, and religion by faith in Christ. For this purpose, [he] warns them in verse eighth to 'beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.' And in the twentieth verse, by an earnest and solemn appeal, he strives to tear them away from 'subjection to ordinances after the commandments and doctrines of men.' Indeed the main design of the whole epistle was to shut up the Colossians to the religion of faith, and cut them off from that of legality.

In the present discussion it is my design to show--

> I. WHAT IS NOT INTENDED BY THE DECLARATION THAT CHRISTIANS ARE COMPLETE IN CHRIST.
>
> II. WHAT IS INTENDED.
>
> III. TO POINT OUT SOME THINGS WHICH ARE DEMANDED BY OUR NATURE, CIRCUMSTANCES, AND CHARACTER, IN ORDER TO COMPLETE WELL-BEING.
>
> IV. THE CONDITIONS ON WHICH THIS COMPLETENESS MAY BE REALIZED IN OUR OWN EXPERIENCE.

I. What is not intended by the declaration that Christians are complete in Christ.

1. When it is said we are complete in Him it is not intended that we are complete in the sense of an imputed righteousness. The other evening, you will recollect, I labored to show that the doctrine of imputation is at once an absurd and pernicious dogma. It is not necessary here to dwell on that point again. It is enough to say that God could no more perform works of supererogation than any other moral being, and that therefore there could be no righteousness to impute. Moreover, a transfer of moral character is naturally impossible.

2. It is not intended that all Christians have, as a matter of fact, so received Christ, as to realize this completeness in their own character and experience; nor is it asserted in the text that any body ever did or ever will.

II. What is intended.

It is intended that in Him all the demands of our being are met--that a full provision is made, and set forth by God to meet all our wants, and make us all that God desires we should be.

III. Some things which are demanded by our nature, circumstances, and character, in order to complete well being.

The question is, what do men really need--what must belong to a Savior in order to his being a Savior to us such as we need?

1. Our nature and circumstances expose us to innumerable trials and temptations. I have dwelt, in these lectures, to a great extent on the trials arising from our peculiar nature in the circumstances in which we are placed. None are exempt from them. Even in the garden of Eden, man's nature and circumstances occasioned trial. Nor is this, on the whole, to be regretted. Such trials are to our advantage if we use the help afforded us in meeting them. They 'work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' But as a matter of fact, the circumstances are such, and men have so abused their nature, that the trials which they endure are extremely great, and the help which they need must be both adapted and adequate to meet all their wants in this respect.

2. Our frailties and infirmities are great, in consequence of our long abuse of ourselves. All the appetites and passions are greatly aggravated in their demands; the nervous system rasped up to the highest pitch; the habits inveterate; each successive generation placed under some additional besetments: until like the reed, man is liable to be swayed by every breeze, or carried adrift on the ocean of life, like a vessel torn from its moorings, and driven by a tempest. Hence, we need strength for our frailty, and grace sufficient for our infirmity.

3. Our ignorance is very great, and since men are influenced by motives, they can be influenced towards God and holiness, only in proportion as they are enlightened. The motives to sin are bold and obtrusive and seen by the ignorant, but the reverse is true of motives to holiness. Hence men must have a Savior able to enlighten and charm them away from the influence of things seen and temporal, and bring them under the influence of things unseen and eternal. The longer I live, the more I am astonished at the ignorance of men in reference of religious truths. Even Christians scarcely know their A, B, C. Very few of them are able to give any good reason for the doctrines of their faith. Hence, the great mass of them readily receive dogmas published by the press, and promulgated from the pulpit, which, to thinking minds, are palpably at war with human reason. Take, for example, the doctrine of imputed righteousness. Is it not astonishing that it was not at once seen that there can be no work of supererogation and of course no righteousness to be imputed? What more could God do than benevolence demanded of Him? The Atonement and all his other works are virtuous, only because they are carrying out the law of benevolence. Jesus Christ was bound to be benevolent as much as any other being, and of course his righteousness could no more be imputed, than that of any other holy moral agent--no more than Gabriel's. Now, how does it happen, how can it be that men should believe such an absurd dogma as this, unless from sheer ignorance? Why the whole gospel is another gospel if this doctrine be true. It was Christ's object to save men from their sins, and not to throw over their filthy, ulcerated backs, a robe of imputed righteousness. I call it ignorance to hold such a dogma, because an intelligent being understanding it, and the objections to it, can't believe it. And this is but a specimen of many other things equally gross which are sanctified in the creeds and common faith of the mass of the Church. It is full of superstition, errors, and ignorance on a thousand subjects. The reformation cast off many, but many were left, some of which time has outgrown, and others yet remain. Now, we only get right, by getting an insight into the gospel. It is truth coming in that thrusts error out, and we therefore need somebody to deliver us, to teach us the very A, B, C, of religion. We want some patient instructer [sic.] who will be willing to teach us over and over even the same things. "What's that?" "A." "What's that?" "B." Now go back to A again, and ask, "What's that?" "I don't know," says the pupil. "Well," says the kind hearted teacher, "That's A," and thus, again and again, till he remembers it. Thus Christians need to be instructed by some kind agent who will not tear their souls, and sternly frown them away, but who will sooth them all down into love, and then gently remove their errors, and ingraft the word of truth.

4. We have a subtle adversary of great power and malignity. It has become unpopular to say much about the devil, people have become so incredulous respecting his existence. This state of things is doubtless the result of his infernal agency, since, if men doubt his existence, they will the more readily become his prey. But the Bible holds other language. It requires men to pass the time of their sojourning here with fear--'to be sober and vigilant; because our adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.' It represents him as possessing great subtlety, and being ready to take ten thousand advantages, even turning himself into an angel of light, to delude and destroy souls. And what man is able to resist him?--to detect all the villanies and sophistries of a mind as old and malevolent as his? I have often felt that the devil would just as certainly have my soul, in spite of all my endeavors against him, if Christ did not save me, as I existed. As well expect to escape a devouring lion, whose strong power had already encompassed you about. Who

has not found that sometimes the devil has made a lie appear so much like truth, that we would be ready to take an oath it was truth. No doubt ten thousand times, persons have thought the Lord was leading them, when in fact, it was the devil who had involved them in a web of lies and sophistries, and was hurrying them on to the precipice of ruin. Now, a man who does not know these things, will never make much effort to get away from him. From him? From thousands of them, all leagued to destroy. Who can protect us? Our Christian journey lies all the way through an enemy's country, and throngs of devils are prowling about on all sides, and if the Lord does not deliver us the devil will have the whole of us.

5. Our education, habits, and prejudices all give him a decided advantage over us. He has been weaving his web of villanies and lies for thousands of years, and with all his profound experience, great mental capacity, and legions of compeers, he is able to weave his devilish plots into everything. You cannot have a benevolent society, but he must have a hand in it--even if you are getting up a Bible Society, his counsel and agency must have a place. He has a corner at every Missionary meeting and carefully watches its workings. Any one who will look narrowly into those which are professedly the most benevolent projects of the day can scarcely fail to see that the devil has a hand in them, and is exercising his infernal craft to pervert them to evil.

If I had time to take up the habits, opinions, &c., of society generally, I could show snares and pitfalls, and ambushes arranged with wonderful subtlety and adaptation, and awfully effective for the ruin of mankind. These are not less manifest in family and even individual relations, and at all peculiar crises of life, taking advantage of habits and education and susceptibilities to work out the endless overthrow of men.

Again, I ask how can we escape him? Who can deliver us? We need a wiser and a mightier than he to defeat him and to effect our escape.

6. We need a propitiation for our sins who will render it consistent for God to pardon us. What is the reason that the governor of this state felt a difficulty in pardoning Colt? Because it feared the influence it would have to loosen the bands of society. It was not an unwillingness to gratify him, nor a desire to gratify any malevolent feelings, but lest it should thereby strengthen the bands of wickedness. So in the government of God. Pardon must not be extended to sinners unless on such grounds as will not impair, but uphold the influence of the government. Something must be done to propitiate as the gospel calls it--there must be an atonement, or sin could not be forgiven without the greatest danger to the public interests, and God could not be just in exercising pardon. There must then be a Savior who could make an atonement and thus meet this necessity.

7. We need an influence that can break our hearts and bring us to repentance--not only to atone for, but to reclaim us. That is a very slim gospel, which merely pardons men, and then leaves them to achieve their own victories over the world, the flesh, and the devil. It would never save any man. We need a gospel which will come to us where we are, break up the deep foundations of our selfishness, and transform us to love.

8. Not only do we need thus to be initiated into the spirit of the gospel, but kept all along the way to glory. We need a Savior who will watch over us till He gets us within the sacred enclosure. Should He forsake us, even at Heaven's golden gate, we should turn away and go back to hell. We must be placed safely within to be secure.

9. But, in order thus to keep us, He must possess such surpassing loveliness, and radiate such charms, as to draw away the soul from all other fascinations and lovers. He must be able, as it were, to make us sick of love, so that we would follow Him through any trials, and all seductive influences, unattracted by any of them, from our stedfast devotion to his love. We need somebody to draw us. If God should flash his livid lightnings, and hurl his blazing thunderbolts upon us; if He should roll up into our faces the lurid fires of perdition, it might amaze and horrify us, but it would do no good--it would not draw us to Him--it would not call out our love. When Elijah passed by Elisha, he cast his mantle upon him, and forth with, Elisha left the oxen and all, and went after Elijah. I have often thought it seemed to charm him. So Christ, as He passes by a soul, seems, shall I say, so to bewitch it, that it would seem as if He could lead it even through hell. I do not know but He could. If circumstances demand the sacrifice, it would kiss his cross, and say, drive your nails and crucify me. I willingly endure it for Christ's sake, 'who loved me and gave Himself for me.' Oh, we do not want a legal Savior, but one 'in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,' in whom we are complete, whose beauties can ravish and enchain our hearts. What is a Unitarian Savior good for? Pooh! Not such do we need, but one who can so captivate us, that if a thousand racks and gibbets stood in the way, they would not deter us from following Him whithersoever He

goeth.

10. In short, we need a Savior able and willing to save us, and not only in eternity, but here in this world. We need Him daily, and unless we have such a one, we must constantly wallow in the gutters of iniquity, and its consequent misery. We need our every want met, and our souls made complete in all the will of God--to be filled with his fulness.

IV. The conditions on which this completeness may be received and realized by us, in our own experience.

1. One condition is a realization of our necessities. The Lord Jesus Christ said to one of the churches of Asia--'Because thou sayest--I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked; I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.' Now observe, one grand defect in the way of people, is that they are so full in themselves, and so increased in goods in their own estimation, as to fail wholly to discover that they are in need of Christ in all things--that their necessities are as vast as the wants of their whole being. This they must realize.

2. Another condition is, that we must realize, that in Him we have all we need. Now people often admit this in words, but not in fact. They often think there is something so peculiar in their case, in their habits, education, relations, or trials, that Christ cannot save them. They seem to think Christ can save everybody else but them. But they must understand that they are complete in Him whatever are their relations, trials, habits and circumstances. This they must realize.

3. Another condition, is the renunciation of self-dependence in all respects. A man must not depend on his learning, his own philosophical insight, or anything else, or He will never depend on Christ. He must become a fool that he may be wise. Just as far as he thinks he can get along without Christ, he will get along without Him, but it will be away from God. When an individual has so much of self-dependence, he really has no faith in the existence of God, nor in his attributes. Self-dependence is allied to infidelity. 'Every good, and every perfect gift, cometh down from the Father of light.' Should God withhold from us that which we are dependent on Him for, nothing but certain destruction would ensue. This dependence runs through all moral as well as natural life, and it must be felt and acknowledged.

4. You must despair of finding help anywhere else. While a man runs to any and every-body, and puts more confidence in men than in God, he may go to the best man on earth, to an apostle, or an angel, and it will avail him nothing. He might as well go to a child, as far as any efficient help is concerned. I have told sinners sometimes, I won't pray for you, nor have anything to do with you, if you are going to depend on me, and put me in the place of the Savior. Away with you to Christ if you want help. Some of the last years that I labored as an evangelist, the church depended on me so much, that it cost me more effort to get them to look to God, than to perform the requisite labor to convert sinners, and it is so now. I was afraid to come here on this account, and feel now, brethren, that you have depended on me, more than you have any right to. It is a species of trusting in an arm of flesh which God abhors. Many will flee to books, to anything, and sometimes even to the Bible, and put it in the place of God, and cleave to such vain help, until God compels them to look to Himself alone.

5. You must cease to rest in means of any kind. I do not mean that we must cease to use means as means, but they are not to be put in the place of God, or substituted for a Savior. I wish I could impress it on you, how much professors of religion and all men, trust to means more than God, and put them in the place of Christ. You must cease from this entirely, if you wish for completeness in Him.

6. You must give up your cowardly unbelief, and dare to trust Christ wholly. Do you know that unbelief is a form of cowardice? I try sometimes to make people see that they dare not trust Him, and to show them that they must have more courage, or they never can be complete in Christ. Venture on Him, if you would be filled with his love.

7. You must give up your love of reputation with men. When you really come to Christ indeed, you will see what Christ meant, when He said--'If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household.' 'They will cast out your names as evil.' You must bear all this--be content to hear them misrepresent you--impute evil motives--look contemptuously--slight your company--stare at you, to see if the dilation of the pupil of your eye does not indicate insanity--just as certainly as you give yourselves up to be led by Him in all things. Care not for

them. They need your pity more than your frown. They, poor souls, know not what they do.

8. You must forsake all that you have. You must spare no lust, have no sinister end, but give up all, be crucified unto the world. I know this is a great step to take, but you must do it or die. You must thus reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, in order to reckon yourself alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

9. You must confide in Him for all you want--believe that you are complete in Him, not partly so. No matter what new want you discover, or what new circumstances you come into, believe that in Christ, there is grace sufficient for every emergency, however great, otherwise He is not a full savior to you.

REMARKS.

1. See why Christians are so imperfect. It is because they don[']t realize their wants, and do not take Him as a complete Savior.

2. They are always like to be, while they know so little of Jesus. I was conversing with one of the principal men in the state, on sanctification. He agreed with me in theory as to its attainability, and then said, that as a matter of fact, no body would realize it in this world. I replied, if you knew what you ought to know about Jesus Christ, you would as soon cut off your right hand as say that. It is a want of a knowledge of Jesus, which leaves men in sin, and makes them weak against it. I have often thought of the sons of Sceva the Jew, who attempted to cast out devils [']in the name of Jesus, whom Paul preached,' and when they had bidden an evil spirit come out, he replied, 'Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was, leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.' They did not know Christ, and consequently experienced only defeat. Suppose they had told their experience afterwards, to prove that no body ever did or could cast out devils! Ah! It is one thing to hear and read about Christ, and quite another to trust Him, know Him, and become complete in Him.

3. While they place so much reliance on human, and so little on divine teaching, they are like to remain imperfect. Let them stand in that relation in which God has placed them, and both profit the soul; but when men hear the minister or one another and depend on what he says more than on what God says by his word and Spirit, it is fatal to a growth in divine things. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

4. While men rest in the letter and overlook the spirit of the gospel, they will of course remain imperfect.

5. The same will be true as long as they put their works in the place of Christ, or their watchings, their resolutions, and legal efforts.

6. Also, while their guides and leaders are blind, and while the shepherds frighten away the sheep from their pastures.

7. Many professors don't know Christ, because, as it were, they have only been converted and baptized unto Moses. Others have received John's baptism unto repentance; and others still know Christ as an atoning Savior. They began in the Spirit, and are now trying to become perfect by the flesh.

8. Wherever there is an imperfection in Christian character, there must be ignorance or unbelief, for the text is a promise that covers the whole field of our necessities. It is remarkable how the Bible abounds with promises both general and specific. Some cover our whole necessity--others point to specific wants. The specific promises seem to be given in accommodation to our ignorance and infirmities, lest our general confidence should not suffice in hours of trial; and yet to some minds, a general declaration implying a promise like that in the text affords greater strength than any specific promise.

9. How few realize that if they are not complete in Him it is because of unbelief. The truth is, it is because they have never known the exercise and power of faith.

10. Doubts respecting the doctrine of entire sanctification, are unbelief, for it is impossible that any one should doubt this

who has implicit faith in what Christ says. If grace sufficient is promised, the doubts are unbelief.

11. Many deceive themselves by saying--"I believe the promise but I don't believe I shall fulfill the condition." The truth is, believing the promise is fulfilling the condition. How many nullify the promises in this way. They say they believe that the promise would be fulfilled if they complied with the condition, but this they know they do not do, and have no confidence that they shall. And instead of blaming themselves for it, they really turn it into a virtue, by calling it self-distrust. Its real name is unbelief.

12. If Christ is the depositary of all we need, we see why we are commanded to 'come boldly to a throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.' But true faith is almost universally regarded as presumption, and such boldness as Jacob, Moses, and others exercised exclaimed against as profane. How shocking this is, when, as a matter fact, it is presumption not to come boldly. It is disobedience to a divine requisition.

13. There is no real difficulty in the fact that the promises are conditioned on faith. For faith in promise depends upon confidence in the general character of the promisor, and not to give full credit to the promise is to impeach the character of him who made it. Suppose a man of great wealth and veracity should make a promise with this condition, as indeed every promise necessarily implies it. Would there be any difficulty in the condition? Not the least. So long as we had confidence in his character, we should regard it as absurd to make a difficulty of the condition of faith. But if the man was known, or supposed to be unable or unwilling, or that his general character was bad, then truly the condition would be a stumbling block. Nay, to believe implicitly would be absurd and impossible.

14. It is impossible that unbelief should fail to make the soul wretched, or that faith should not bring it deep repose.

15. What a foundation have we for universal repose in Christ. He is a Savior who exactly and perfectly meets our case and necessities as they are. In Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Oh, how important that we should know Him--that our acquaintance with Him should be full. We need a more thorough acquaintance with Christ than with any body else. There is such a thing as knowing more of Jesus, as having a more intimate acquaintance with Him than that which exists between a husband and his wife, or the dearest friends. Whoever is ignorant of that, is ignorant of the very marrow and fatness of the gospel. A personal acquaintance with Christ strengthens our confidence more and more in Him. Yes, and such an acquaintance removes our filth and makes us clean. James Brainard Taylor exclaimed--"I am clean." Brethren are you clean? Are you complete in Christ? Let us go to Him and receive of his fulness, until we are 'filled with all the fulness of God.'

Holiness of Christians in the Present Life

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Chapter 11

JUSTIFICATION.

Lectures by Professor Finney.

Reported for the Evangelist, by Rev. S.D. Cochran.

> 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.' Rom. 8:1.

In this discourse, I shall notice,

I. WHAT IT IS TO BE IN CHRIST JESUS.

II. WHAT IS INTENDED BY NO CONDEMNATION.

III. WHY THERE IS NO CONDEMNATION TO THEM WHO ARE IN CHRIST JESUS.

IV. WHAT IS INTENDED BY NOT WALKING AFTER THE FLESH, BUT AFTER THE SPIRIT.

V. NONE, EXCEPT THOSE WHO WALK AFTER THE SPIRIT, ARE IN A JUSTIFIED STATE.

I. What it is to be in Christ Jesus.

Four answers have been given to this question, which I will briefly consider, and then give what I suppose to be the true one.

1. The first I notice, is the doctrine of eternal justification by imputed righteousness. The doctrine is, that a certain number were unconditionally chosen from all eternity, to whom, Christ sustained the relation of Covenant Head, in such a sense that they are eternally justified. This gross and absurd notion is now exploded and generally rejected. As I have given my views of imputation in a former lecture, I will not dwell on it here.

2. The second answer I notice, is that of perpetual justification by one act of faith. The doctrine is, that the first act of faith, brings the soul into such a relation to God, as never afterwards to be condemned or exposed to the penalty of the law, whatever sins it may commit. The simple idea is, that as it respects Christians, the penalty of the law is wholly set aside.

(1.) Now respecting this, the first remark I make is, that justification is of two kinds, legal and gospel. Legal justification, consists in pronouncing a moral agent innocent of all violation of the claims of the law, so that it has no charge against him. Gospel justification, consists in pardoning a sinner for whatever transgressions he may have committed, that is, in arresting or setting aside the execution of the penalty which he has incurred.

(2.) Legal justification is out of the question, as all the world has become guilty before God. And to maintain that a soul is perpetually justified by once believing, is antinomianism, and one of the worst forms of error. It is to maintain, that as it respects Christians, the law of God is abrogated. The law is made up of precept and penalty, and if either is detached, it

ceases to be law. It matters not whether it be maintained that the precept be set aside, or the penalty, it is to maintain an abrogation of the law, and is a ruinous error. It is the nature of a pardon, to set aside the execution of the penalty due to past violations of the law, and to restore the person to governmental favor, during good behavior. More than this, it cannot do, without giving an indulgence to sin. If no future sins can incur the penalty, it follows that the Christian could not be in danger of hell, however many or gross sins he might commit, or even should he die in a state of the foulest apostasy. What an abomination is such a doctrine!

(3.) This doctrine cannot be true, for no being can prevent condemnation where there is sin. I said in a former lecture, that the law is not founded in the arbitrary will of God, but in the nature and relations of moral beings. Whatever penalty is due to any act of sin, is due therefore, from the nature of the case, so that every act of sin subjects the sinner to the penalty. Pardon cannot then be prospective--sin cannot be forgiven in advance, and to maintain that it is, is to make Christ the minister of sin.

(4.) Again, if Christians are not condemned when they sin, they cannot be forgiven, for forgiveness is nothing else than setting aside the penalty. And therefore, if they are not condemned, they cannot properly pray for forgiveness. In fact, it is unbelief in them to do so. What else can it be, when the sin, whatever it may be in enormity, has not exposed its perpetrator at all to the penalty of God's law?

(5.) This notion cannot be true, because the Bible uniformly makes perseverance in holiness, that is, in obedience, just as much a condition of final acceptance with God, as repentance, or one act of faith. For my part, I must say, I don[']t know where the Bible makes salvation depend on one act of faith. Those who hold this dogma, ought to tell us where it is taught.

(6.) The Bible, on the contrary, expressly declares that 'when a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquities, and dieth in them, for his iniquity that he hath done, shall he die.' What can be more distinct or explicit than this declaration? I know not how it has been overlooked, or can be evaded.

(7.) If this doctrine be true, it follows that if Christians are not condemned for one sin, they would not be for ten thousand, and that the greatest apostates could be saved without repentance. But what kind of a gospel is that? It would overthrow the entire government of God. A pretty gospel! Strange kind of good news!

(8.) Moreover, as I have before said, if the penalty is abolished as it respects believers, the law must be. To them, its precept ceases to be anything else than simple advice, which they may do as they please about adopting.

(9.) Finally, every Christian's experience condemns this doctrine. Who of them does not feel condemned when he sins? Now, he either is condemned when his conscience affirms that he is, or it is at opposition to the government of God--affirming what is not true. And when, under its rebukes, persons go and ask pardon, in yielding to it, they are guilty of unbelief, and thus add one sin to another. The truth is, every Christian's conscience condemns the doctrine, and it obviously is evil, and only evil, and that continually, in its whole tendency.

3. The third answer I notice, is, that there will be no final condemnation. Without saying any thing of the truth or falsity of that doctrine, here, I remark that the text says no such thing. It says, 'there is now no condemnation.' With this agrees Romans 5:1, 'Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.' Indeed, this is the general representation of the Bible.

4. The fourth answer which has been given, is this. To be in Christ, is to have a personal, living faith in Him--it is to abide in Him by a living faith. John 15:4-7. 'Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me, ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch that is withered; and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.' 1 John 3:5-6. 'And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins: and in Him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in Him, sinneth not: whosoever sinneth, hath not seen Him, neither known Him.' 2 Cor. 5:17. 'Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.' I might quote many other passages, all setting forth that there is no

condemnation to those whose faith secures in them, an actual conformity to the divine will. To all others, there is.

5. To be in Christ, is to be so under his influence, as not to walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit; that is, to receive constant divine influence from Him, as the branches derive nourishment from the vine. This intimate connection with Christ, and spiritual subjection to his control, are fully taught in many passages in the Bible. Gal. 2:20. 'I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.' And 5:16-25. 'This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary, the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of the which, I tell you before as I have also told you in times past, that they which do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit, is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.'

II. What is intended by no condemnation.

1. To be condemned, is to be under sentence of law. Those who are condemned, are not only not pardoned for the past, but also their present state of mind is blameworthy and condemned. They are not justified on the ground of either law or gospel, but the whole penalty due to all their iniquity is out against them.

2. When it is said there is no condemnation, it is not intended that they never were condemned, but that their past sin is all pardoned. They are wholly delivered from exposure to the penalty, due to their sins. In addition to this, it is intended, that in their present state of mind, they obey the law, so that the law does not condemn their present state. It does not mean that they will not be again condemned if they sin, but that while they are in Christ Jesus, they are free from all present condemnation.

III. Why there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.

1. Not because they are of the elect and eternally justified.

2. Not because Christ's righteousness is so imputed, that we can sin without incurring exposure to the penalty of the law.

3. Not because we are perpetually justified by one act of faith. This, as we have attempted to show, is an antinomian and pernicious error.

4. Not because God accepts an imperfect obedience. There is a general opinion abroad, that somehow or other, God accepts an imperfect obedience as genuine. Now it seems to me, that this is a very erroneous view of the subject. The truth is, God has no option about this matter, any more than any other being, for the law exists and makes its demands, wholly independent of his will, and whatever it demands, that is, whatever the nature and relations of moral beings demand, that, as moral Governor, He is bound to enforce, and nothing else. Now what is there in reason or the Bible, to sanction the idea, that God will, or can accept an imperfect obedience? The Bible insists on our serving Him with the whole heart--on our being perfectly benevolent, and proposes no lower standard. Nor could we believe it, if it did. What kind of obedience is half, or imperfect obedience? No one can tell, and consequently, no one can intentionally render it. The very idea of it, is absurd.

5. But to him that is in Christ Jesus, there is now no condemnation, because he is in Christ Jesus in the sense above explained. Not that Christ shields him from the penalty while he continues to violate the precept, but that He saves him from sin, and thus, from desert of the penalty. Says the text, 'to those who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.' Now mark the result; let us read right along. In the seventh chapter, he spoke of a law in his members, which brought him into captivity to sin and death; that is, under condemnation. Now he says, (8:2-4) 'For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the

righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.' Here he asserts that the reason why God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, and condemned sin in the flesh, was, 'that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.' Now, public justice having been satisfied by the Atonement, when the heart is thus brought into conformity to the law, that is a good reason why they should be pardoned. The same thing is meant, by 'writing the law in the heart.'

6. Again, there is no condemnation to him who is in Christ Jesus, because he 'walks not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.' This same thought is contained in Gal. 5:16-24-- 'This I say then, walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led by the Spirit ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, evnyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of the which, I tell you before, as I have also told you in times past, that they which do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit, is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.' Here the fruit of the Spirit is just what the law requires, and therefore there can be no condemnation.

7. This assertion must either mean that when we are in Christ we do not sin, or that in Him we can sin without condemnation. Now, what does it mean? It cannot mean the last, for that would make Christ the minister of sin. No individual can sin without breaking the law, for sin is the transgression of the law. The first, then, must be the meaning, and this agrees with what the Scriptures teach-- 'Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.' The reason then why there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus is,

(1.) That in Christ their former sins are pardoned on the ground of his Atonement; and,

(2.) That while in Him they do not sin. He saves them from their sins, and therefore from condemnation.

IV. What is intended by not walking after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

1. By the flesh is meant the appetites, desires, and propensities of the Sensibility. To walk after the flesh is to indulge these--to give up the will to self-gratification. It is to be in bondage to the propensities so that they are our masters and govern us. It is to be selfish.

2. But to walk after the Spirit, is to obey the Spirit of Christ--it is to obey the law of God.

V. None except those who walk after the Spirit are in a justified state.

1. By this I do not intend to say that they never were justified. For it is true that individuals who once obeyed, and were of course justified, have fallen. This is the case with the angels who kept not their first estate, and Adam and Eve. These were justified in the legal sense before they sinned. But many have also fallen into grievous iniquity, who have once been justified in the gospel sense.

2. I do not mean that they are in no sense Christians. In the common acceptation of the term, it is not limited to those who are in a state of actual conformity to the will of God, but applies to all who give credible evidence of having been converted. Moreover, it is true of Christians, that they sustain a peculiar relation to God, and the term does not indicate that they never sin or fall into condemnation, but that they sustain a certain relation to God which others do not.

3. But I do mean that no one can commit sin without condemnation. When a Christian sins, he is as really condemned as any one else, and he is no longer justified than he is obedient.

4. I mean that no one is justified or pardoned, until he obeys the law or repents, which is the same thing. By the by, it is important that all should understand that repentance is not sorrow for sin, but a real turning away from all sin to God. Now when any individual sins, he must be condemned till he repents, or forsake his sin. A great many people talk about

always repenting--that the best acts we ever perform need to be repented of, &c. Now, this is all nonsense, and nothing but nonsense. I say again religion is no such thing as this, and to represent it so is to talk loosely. 'The soul that sinneth it shall die.' Repentance is a hearty and entire forsaking of sin, and entrance upon obedience to God.

5. I mean that when one has truly repented, he is justified, and remains so just as long as he remains obedient, and no longer; and that when he falls into sin, he is as much condemned as any other sinner, because he is a sinner.

6. I also mean that justification follows and does not precede sanctification as some have vainly imagined. I here use the term sanctification, not in the high sense of permanent sanctification, but of entire consecration to God. It is not true that persons are justified, before they forsake sin. They certainly could not be thus legally justified, and the gospel proffers no pardon until after repentance, or hearty submission of the will to God. I add, that Christians are justified no longer than they are sanctified, or obedient, and that complete permanent justification depends upon complete and permanent sanctification.

REMARKS.

1. I have often thought, and could not help drawing the conclusion that the great mass of professors of religion are mere antinomians, living in the habitual commission of known sin, and yet expecting to be saved. And when they are pressed up to holiness of heart, they say, "I am not expected to be perfect in this life. I expect Christ to make up for my deficiencies." Now such religion is no better than universalism or infidelity. See that professor of religion. What is he doing? Why indulging his appetites and propensities in various ways which he knows to be contrary to the divine will. Ask him about it and he will confess it--he will confess that this is his daily practice; and yet he thinks he is justified. But if the Bible be true, he is not. 'Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?' But he can tell an experience. Perhaps he wrote it all down lest he should forget it, and tells it over to the hundredth time, how he felt when God pardoned his sins, while he is now living in sin every day. Perhaps he never tells an experience at all, but yet rests back upon something which he felt when he imagined he was converted. Now this is nothing but antinomianism, and how astonishing it is that so many should cry out so vehemently about antinomianism who are nothing but antinomians themselves. What a terrible delusion is this!

2. Men are justified by faith in Christ, because they are sanctified by faith in Him. They do not have righteousness imputed to them, and thus stand justified by an arbitrary fiction, while they are personally unholy, but they are made righteous by faith, and that is the reason why they are justified.

3. To talk about depending on Christ to be justified by Him, while indulging in any form of known sin, is to insult Him. It is to charge him with being the minister of sin. A lady, not long since, was talking with her minister about certain females who were given up to dress in the utmost style of extravagant fashion. He said he thought the most dressy people in his church were the best Christians. They were the most humble, and dependent on Christ. That's his idea about religion. What did he mean? Why that such persons did not pretend to be holy, and professed to depend wholly on Christ. They acknowledged themselves sinners. And well they might! But what kind of religion is that? And how did he get such a notion? How else but by supposing that persons are not expected to be holy in this life, and that they can be justified while living in sin! Now I would as soon expect a pirate, whose hands are red with blood to be saved, as professors of religion who indulge in any form of sin, lust, pride, worldliness, or any other iniquity. 'Do we make void the law through faith? God forbid: Yea, we establish the law.' But what a state of things must it be, when a minister can utter such a sentiment as that?

4. Such an idea of justification is open to the infidel objection that the gospel is a system of impunity in sin. The Unitarians have stereotyped this objection against faith. Ask them why they say so. They answer, because the doctrine of justification by faith is injurious to good morals. A circuit Judge, some years since said, "I cannot admit the Bible to be true. It teaches that men are saved by faith, and I therefore regard the gospel as injurious to good morals, and as involving a principle that would ruin any government on earth." Now, did he get this idea from the Bible? No, but from the false representations made of the teachings of the Bible. It teaches no such thing, but plainly asserts that a faith that does not sanctify is a dead faith.

5. There are many hoping that they are Christians, who yet live so that their conscience condemns them. 'For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.' Now to teach that persons may be justified while their conscience condemns them, contradicts this passage. If our own conscience condemns us, God does. Shall He be less just than our own nature?

6. A great multitude of professors are merely careless sinners. Now do let me ask, if from the way many persons live in the Church, compared with the way many careless sinners live, is it not perfectly manifest that they are in no wise different. And is it censorious to say that they are mere hardened sinners? What will become of them?

7. Many who are accounted the most pious, are only convicted sinners. It is a most remarkable thing, and one which I have taken great pains to observe, that many, thought to be converted in the late revivals, are only convicted sinners, that is, mere legalists. The preaching makes them so. The claims of the law are held up, and obligation enforced to comply with it. They are told to trust Christ for pardon, and they attempt it. Many really do, while others stop short with mere resolutions. All this class will go back, or stay in the Church almost constantly distressed by the lashings of conscience. If you hold up the law they are distressed, and if you hold up Christ they are distressed by the consciousness that they do not exercise faith in Him. Hold up either, and they have no rest. They are really convicted sinners, and yet they think this is religion. In time of coldness they always sink back, but in times of revival they are aroused and driven to the performance of a heartless service which continually fails to appease the demands of conscience. They know of no other experience than this. They refer you to the 7th of Romans, to prove that this is Christian experience, and thus bolster up their hope. I recollect some time since when I had preached against this as Christian experience, a minister said to me, "Well, Bro. Finney, I can[']t believe that." Why? "Because that's my experience, and I believe I am a Christian." A strange reason that! I suppose it was his experience! Great multitudes have this, and suppose it genuine. I fear, in some instance, whole Churches are made up of such, and their ministers teach them that this is genuine religion. What would the minister just referred to say? That is Paul's experience, and mine too. And the people often derive much comfort from what the minister says in his experience. Oh, what teaching is this? It is high time there was an overturning in the Church on this subject. Whoever has no experience but that of the 7th of Romans is not justified at all, and were it not that great multitudes are deluded, it could not be that so many could sit down contented under this view of the subject.

8. One who walks after the Spirit, has this inward testimony that he pleases God. An individual may think he does, when he does not, just as persons in a dream may think themselves awake, find it all a dream. So individuals may think they please God when they do not, but it is nevertheless true that those who please God know it. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.

9. This view of the subject does not touch that of the final perseverance of the saints. What I am attempting to show is,

(1.) That true believers are justified or pardoned, and treated as righteous, on account of the Atonement of Christ.

(2.) That those who truly believe, are justified because they are actually righteous. The question is not whether a Christian who has fallen into sin will die in that state, but whether if he does he will be damned. Whether, while in sin, he is justified.

10. Those who sin do not abide in Christ. 'And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him neither known Him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin because he is born of God.' While they abide in Christ, they are not condemned, but if they overlook what abiding in Christ is, they are sure to fall into sin, and then, they are condemned as a matter of course. The secret of holy living, and freedom from contamination, is to abide in Christ. Says Paul, 'I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.' We must have such confidence in Him as to let Him have the entire control in all things.

11. Sinners can see how to be saved. They must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ with all their heart. They must become holy and walk after the Spirit.

12. Convicted professors can also see what to do. Have you felt misgivings and a load on your conscience. Are you never able to say, I am justified--I am accepted in the Beloved. You must come to Christ now, if you now experience condemnation.

13. There is neither peace nor safety except in Christ, but in Him is all fulness, and all we need. In Him you may come to God, as children, with the utmost confidence.

14. If you are in Christ, you have peace of mind. How sweetly the experience of a Christian answers to this. Many of you perhaps can testify to this. You had been borne down with a burden too heavy, crying out, 'O, wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death.' But your faith took hold on Christ, and suddenly all your burden was gone. You could no longer feel condemned. The stains of sin are all wiped out by the hand of grace. You can now look calmly at your sins, and not feel them grind like an iron yoke. Are you in this state? Can you testify from your own experience that there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus? If so, you can reflect upon your past sins without being ground down into the dust under the guilty burden which rolls upon you. The instant you experience a freedom from condemnation, your whole soul yearns with benevolence for others. You know what their state is. Ah, yes, you know what it is to drink the wormwood and the gall--to have the arrows of the Almighty drink up your spirit, and when you find deliverance you must of course, want to teach others what is the great salvation--to strengthen those that are weak. And an individual who can sit down at ease, and not find his benevolence like fire shut up in his bones--who does not even feel agonized, not for himself, but for others, cannot have yet found that there is now no condemnation. He may dream that he has, but if he ever awakes, he will find it but a dream. Oh, how many need to be aroused from this sleep of death!

Holiness of Christians in the Present Life

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Chapter 12

UNBELIEF.

Lectures by Professor Finney.

Reported for the Evangelist, by Rev. S.D. Cochran.

"So we see that they could not enter in, because of unbelief."--Heb. 3:19.

In this discourse I shall notice,

I. WHAT UNBELIEF IS NOT.

II. WHAT IT IS.

III. INSTANCES AND EVIDENCE OF UNBELIEF.

IV. THE TENDENCY OF UNBELIEF.

V. THE GUILT OF UNBELIEF.

I. What unbelief is not.

1. It is not a negative state of mind. It is represented in the Bible as sin; it cannot, therefore, be a mere negation.

2. Nor is it ignorance. Ignorance may be caused by unbelief, turning away the attention from the objects of faith. But ignorance itself is not unbelief. Nor is it absence of conviction. This is often an effect of unbelief.

II. What it is.

1. It is represented in the Bible as sin. It must then, be a voluntary state of mind. It cannot belong either to the intelligence or the sensibility. For the action of both these powers is necessary.

2. It is the opposite of faith. Faith is represented as voluntary. It cannot, therefore, be conviction, since this belongs to the intelligence. It is trust or confidence in God; it is a committing of the soul to Him; as Peter says, 'Commit the keeping of your soul to Him.'

3. Generically, faith as distinguished from everything else, is confidence in God; but specifically, it is confidence in Christ, or in any fact, doctrine, promise, or threatening of the Bible. And I might add, in any truth whatever, historical, philosophical, or mathematical; or even in error. If it respects the promises of God, it is a confident assurance that they will be fulfilled. If it respects facts, it is confidence in the truthfulness of the fact. Unbelief is the opposite of this. It is a withholding of confidence from what God says; it is distrust; it is a refusal to commit or give up the mind to the influence of a truth or promise; it is a rejection of evidence. For example; take any of the facts recorded in the Bible. Unbelief, is a refusal to credit their truthfulness, or to allow them that influence which they deserve. For instance, look at the manner in which the Jews treated the miracles of Christ. Christ claimed to be the Messiah, and in attestation of his claim, performed

many wonderful works. Here was evidence that He really was what He professed to be. If He had not furnished such evidence, it would not have been unbelief to reject his claim. He might have lived and died among them, without their incurring any guilt by rejecting Him. But the works which He performed, were such as ought to have secured the confidence of every beholder, and established his claim in every mind. But instead of yielding to the evidence thus presented, they stedfastly resisted Him, and ascribed his miracles to infernal agency; and it would seem, that their disposition to reject Him was so strong, that no amount of evidence which He could place before them, could overcome it. Now this was unbelief. We may apply the same principle to other things. Take, for example, the doctrine of Phrenology. If an individual really lacks evidence of its truth, it is not unbelief to reject it. On the contrary, to receive it without such evidence, would be mere credulity. But just as far as he has evidence of its truth, it is unbelief to refuse to treat it accordingly. So with the doctrines of the Second Advent. If an individual has not such evidence of their truth, as to answer the demands of his intelligence, it is not unbelief to reject them. But if he has such evidence, then to reject them is unbelief. We might apply the same principle to the doctrine of Sanctification, or any other doctrine whatever, whether true or false.

4. But especially is it unbelief, where individuals confess themselves convinced and do not act accordingly. If an individual confesses himself convinced of the truth of the doctrine of the Second Advent, if he does not commit his mind to the full influence of that doctrine, it is unbelief; or if he admits the truth of the doctrine of Entire Sanctification, and does not commit himself to it, and expect to realize it in his own case, he is guilty of unbelief. And it is unbelief, whether he admits it or not, if he has reasonable evidence of its truth, and yet does not yield his whole being up to its influence.

III. Instances and evidences of unbelief.

1. A heathen who never heard the gospel, is not an unbeliever as respects Christ, in any proper sense of the word; He knows nothing about it, and consequently, withholds no confidence from it; but a man who lives under the gospel, and is not controlled by it, is an unbeliever.

2. A want of assurance of salvation through Christ, is unbelief. This must be so, if the Atonement is general, and if faith consists in believing what is said respecting it. The Apostle says, 'that this is the record which God hath given to us, eternal life, and this life is in his Son.' Now if it be true that God hath given eternal life to all, then not to possess an assurance of your own salvation through Christ, is unbelief.

3. Not being duly influenced by any perceived truth, is unbelief; no matter what that truth is. Faith is a disposition to be influenced by it, or the committing of the mind to its influence, in exact accordance with its perceived importance.

4. The absence of a firm confidence and expectation, that we shall realize the truth of every promise given to us, is unbelief. For example, God has promised to parents, to bless their children; then, not to have the most confident assurance that He will do so, is unbelief. And the same is true respecting every promise, either of justification or sanctification.

5. God has promised the salvation of all that believe; now, to doubt whether we shall be saved, is both an evidence and an instance of unbelief. Remember too, that the salvation promised, is salvation from both sin and hell. To this, it is objected, that the promise of salvation is conditional; and, says the objector, I have no right to believe that I shall be saved, until I have believed in Christ; for faith, is the condition of the promise, and to require me to believe that I shall be saved, before I believe in Christ, is to require me to believe a fact before it is true. To this, I answer,

(1.) By inquiring of the objector what I am to believe about Christ? Plainly, I am to believe in Him, as the Savior. That is, that He tasted death for every man, and that He hath given us eternal life. Two things, then, I must believe; first, that He died for all, and of course, for me; and secondly, that He will save me. Suppose an angel should believe that Christ died for all the world, would that be faith in Christ? Certainly not, in the sense in which the Bible requires us to believe in Him; and I do not believe, in any proper sense, unless I believe He died for me. I must believe, not only, that He died for all, but for me; not only that justification is offered to all, but to me; and true faith, is accepting of eternal salvation at his hand. Now observe what the objection is; that the realization of the promise, is conditioned on faith, and that the condition must be fulfilled, before I can believe that the promise will be realized, and I shall be saved. This is a mere trick. It is to suppose a promise given, but on a condition that nullifies it. Suppose a rich father should give his son a

promise in writing, and under oath, that he would supply all his wants, and should send him abroad, but the condition demanded of the son, was that he should exercise full faith in the promise. He must believe, that it will secure for him a supply of money in any of the banks of Europe, according to the tenor of the writing. Now, I want to know, if this is a condition that would nullify the promise. Plainly not, since the condition is not arbitrary, but naturally essential to its fulfillment. If he does not confide in the promise, and expect its fulfillment it is naturally impossible that it should be fulfilled. On the contrary, how plain it is, that faith in the promise naturally secures its fulfillment. God has given the promise of eternal salvation to all that believe. The condition is not arbitrary, but natural, so that the fulfillment of the promise to each individual necessarily depends on his faith in it. Now is it faith to stand away back, and say, Christ died for everybody else, and will save everybody else, if they will believe, and not believe yourself? What a strange objection! The truth is, if this objection be good, it nullifies every promise in the Bible. God has promised to convert the world, but the fulfillment of this promise, is conditioned on the faith of christians. For them to believe it, is to deliver themselves up to it, and preach the gospel to them. Now does this condition hinder faith? Is it a sly and artful means of evasion, put in by the promiser to prevent the necessity of his ever fulfilling the promise? Nay, but the condition is natural, and involves the expectation of the thing promised. So God has promised to bless the children of believers, if they will believe; that is, if they will give themselves up to this truth. Now to believe, is to fulfill the condition, and for persons to take the ground of the objector, is to stumble themselves. The objection, then, cannot be good.

(2.) In every case, faith expects the fulfillment of the promise, and this expectation is not founded upon the promise itself, but on the general character of the promiser. When God gives any promise, if an individual does not believe in it, because he believes in the general character of God, he cannot believe in it at all. Without confidence in the benevolence and veracity of God, it is impossible to rely upon his promises; but confidence in these, naturally secures such reliance.

(3.) God has promised to justify and sanctify every believer, or every one who will believe and expect this of Him. The condition is natural, and it is nonsense to say, that we cannot expect to be justified and sanctified until after we have believed; for to believe, is to expect. Not to expect, is unbelief; for to expect in this case, is implied in faith. Much has been said about appropriating faith, and I have been struck with the fact, that believers in a limited Atonement, have much to say about appropriating faith. But a limited Atonement and appropriating faith can't go together. If the former is true, the latter is impossible without a new revelation. For if Christ died for only a part of mankind, and has not revealed who they are, I would ask, how any one can appropriate Him to himself, without a direct revelation that he is one of the elect. But right over against this class, those who believe in a general Atonement, are consistent enough in holding the doctrine of appropriating faith; for to appropriate, is simply to accept of Christ, as presented in the gospel. If Christ died for all, then each may appropriate Him, and this is faith. Whoever does not appropriate Him, just as He is presented, rejects; he is an unbeliever.

(4.) Finally, if this objection is true, salvation is impossible; for if I can never expect to be saved by Christ until after I have believed, I can never expect it at all; for I have said, true faith, and the expectation of salvation by Him, are identical.

IV. The tendency of unbelief.

1. It defeats all God's efforts to save those who exercise it. As I have said already, faith is the natural condition of salvation, and is a voluntary exercise. It cannot, therefore, be forced; and therefore, if an individual will not believe, he must be damned.

2. It defeats all his efforts to sanctify us. Sanctification is nothing else than delivering up the mind to the truth and promises of God. To think, then, that we can be saved while we reject the promises, is to overlook the very nature of sanctification.

3. It renders heart obedience impossible, for 'without faith, it is impossible to please God.'

4. It prevents the possibility of true peace. The unbeliever does not know what true peace is. His condition, is in some respects, like that of a person in sleep, who has terrible dreams, who supposes himself surrounded with dangers from flood, or fire, or dreadful circumstances; perhaps suffering shipwreck, and just on the point of being swallowed up in the waves. Perhaps he is struggling to escape from devouring flames, or he walks a miserable outcast from society, troubled on every side, and finding nothing on which he can repose, his agony is indescribable, but in a moment he awakes, and

behold, he is in a warm bed in his own secure dwelling. He thanks God it is a dream. How great the contrast between his present state and that in which his dreams placed him. So the convicted unbeliever is tossed with agitation, he looks this way and that, but finds no rest. 'He is like the troubled sea, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.' 'There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.' Now mark; as soon as he believes, what a change comes over him. It is like the sun breaking out in an ocean of storms. He sees promises on every side, like the mountains round about Jerusalem. He sees provisions for all his wants, and why should he be troubled any more. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul,' he cries. What is this? Why here, instead of bondage, misery and death, is endless life and peace; and the broad river of love, as pure as that which flows from under the throne of God, begins to pour its current through my soul.

5. Unbelief renders it impossible for Christ to keep us from sin. The Bible, however full of promises, may rot before him, and he go down to hell notwithstanding. Unbelief nullifies them all, and leaves nothing to help him.

6. It delivers the soul over into the hands of the world, the flesh, and the devil. There is no power in the universe can protect him against their influence, without his own consent, for the very reason that he is a free being. Withholding faith from God, and delivering himself up to their influence, he becomes the sport and play of every temptation that besets him.

V. The guilt of unbelief.

1. It is the wilful rejection of the highest evidence God can give. Suppose you had an enemy who always suspected you of an intention to injure him, and although you had often tried to remove his suspicions, he should still hold this opinion. Suppose he should fall into great difficulties, and you should take much pains to help him out, you should relieve the wants of his family, and provide for his children, but still he should suspect you had some sinister end in all this, which would eventually come out; would you not think him vastly unreasonable and guilty in maintaining such prejudices? But suppose, finally, his house should take fire, and he and his family were in an upper story, while it was raging in every apartment below. No one can afford help; there are no ladders and no means of escape. The floor beneath him begins to give way, and the roof is about falling in; they stand at the windows and shriek for help. Suddenly one rushes through the flames, from one flight of stairs to another, with his hair and clothes on fire, till he reaches the miserable family. He instantly seizes him with one strong arm, and his children with the other, and carries them safely below. While he is doing this, the man swoons with terror. As soon as he opens his eyes, he finds himself in the arms of his deliverer, who, with the utmost solicitude and tenderness, is fanning him, and is using means to restore him; and whose first exclamation is, "your children are all safe." He soon discovers that his benefactor is no other than the object of his former suspicions. Now suppose he should still not be convinced, what an abomination would this be. How every one would execrate such a wilful and unreasonable rejection of the highest evidence you could give of your benevolence towards him. But suppose farther, he were condemned to death, and you should voluntarily step forward and die for him. What an amazing prejudice and obstinacy would be manifest, if he should entertain suspicions of the sincerity of your love. Now let me ask, what further evidence God could give of his love to mankind than He has given? Besides crowning their life with as many blessings as their circumstances render it possible to bestow, He adds the gift of his own Son to die for them; and has thus given the highest possible evidence He could, of his good will towards them. What damning guilt, then, must their unbelief be. Suppose the sovereign of an extensive empire, is seeking to promote the highest possible good of his subjects, through the administration of the most excellent laws. But one province of his empire goes into rebellion. He has power to crush it at once. But suppose, that instead of marching an army, bristling with bayonets, among them, and desolating them with fire and sword, he should lay aside the robes of royalty, and in a most unassuming manner, go among them, and attempt to teach them the nature of his own character and laws, and the importance of conformity to his will, in order to their own highest good. But suppose again, they would not believe him, but suspect him of some sinister motive, how astonishing this would be; and if, to convince them of his love, he should even die for them, who would not expect this to subdue the rebellion? Now see the blessed God administering the law of benevolence impartially, throughout his universe. Our world rebels. He comes in the person of his Son, in the humble guise of humanity; He goes about among mankind, revealing to them the character and will of God, and endeavoring to secure their confidence. And when they reject his instructions and will not believe, rather than fail to accomplish his end, He dies for them on the cross. What higher evidence could God give of his love to man than this? and how outrageous is the unbelief, which wilfully rejects it all? What more could He do? Can you think of anything more? How damning then, must be the guilt of unbelief!

2. It is treating God in the worst possible manner. We never do our friends a worse injury, than when we distrust them

without a cause. Should a husband become jealous and distrustful of his wife, without a cause, what greater injury could he do her? It would pierce like a dagger to her heart. Or, should a wife manifest unreasonable suspicions respecting her husband, what more could she do to render him wretched? He would say, have you any reasons for your suspicions? Let me ask that husband who is conscious of his integrity, and has tender sensibilities--let me ask that wife, who is virtuous, and values the confidence of her husband, as she should--how would you feel? How would you expostulate in the circumstances supposed?--and what would be more directly calculated to bring the blight of death upon the peace of a family, than such unreasonable distrust, on the part of a husband or wife? Now look at God's great family. What family ever had such cause of confidence, as God's has?--and what father, ever had such cause of complaint? What husband was ever so distrusted, by a wife, as the blessed God, by the Church which He has bought with his own blood? See that husband; he is pouring his complaints all abroad, and loading down the air with his sighs. Now, I ask again, if this want of confidence is not the worst possible kind of treatment? Men naturally feel insulted, whenever their veracity and integrity are called in question. And has God no sensibility? Is it no grief to Him to be treated as a liar, the world over?

3. It is dishonoring God in the highest degree before others. Suppose a father should send his son to a University, and should give him a book of checks, assuring him, that they were good to supply all his wants. But suppose the son should show that he had no confidence in it, and should be seen managing around to meet his expenses, and to obtain his books. Would not this be to publish the worst things, in the most effectual way about his father? What then does unbelief publish about God? See that professor of religion, with the Bible in his hands, full of promises, going all about, complaining and mourning over his spiritual poverty, when God has said, that He is 'more willing to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask it, than earthly parents are to give good gifts to their children.' And that ' his grace shall be sufficient for us.' What is he doing? Why he is representing God in the worst possible light, as guilty, not only of lying, but of lying under oath; for 'God willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the only hope set before us.'

REMARKS.

1. We see what to think of those, who say they cannot realize that the promises will be fulfilled. Can't realize! Hark! Suppose your child should say, Pa, you promised to give me a New Year's present, but I can't realize that you will. You would say, my child, do you think I lie? Have I not given you my word, that I would give you a present? What higher evidence can men have than the solemn word and oath of God? What shall make it more sure? Who shall underwrite for Him? If what He has said does not satisfy you, He can give no security. Can't realize! Horrible!

2. We see what to think of those who say they believe, but are not duly influenced by their faith. They profess to believe in the necessity of salvation, and in the eternity of hell torments; but then neither act respecting themselves or others, as the magnitude of these truths demand. The fact is, they don't believe at all.

3. We see, that no doctrine is believed any farther than it influences the conduct. What is faith? It is, as we have shown, the delivering of the mind up to the influence of known truth. It follows, then, that there is no faith where the conduct remains uninfluenced.

4. Heretical conduct proves heretical faith. The truth is, all heresy belongs to the heart; and however holy a man's creed may be, if his conduct is wrong, he is heretical in heart.

5. We see the wickedness of admitting that the gospel proffers entire sanctification in this life, and yet not expecting it. There are those, as you know who admit that the gospel proffers entire sanctification, on condition of faith--they admit that its provisions are ample, and yet do not expect to possess it in this life. What is that, but unbelief?

6. We see also the wickedness of saying, that the expectation of it is unreasonable and erroneous. They say, that to believe we shall actually attain it in this life is a great, and dangerous error. What is that but unbelief in its worst form?

7. Also the guilt of those, who teach men, that it is an error to expect sanctification in this life, and raise the cry of heresy against those who do teach them to expect it. If it is promised, it must be sheer unbelief and dreadful guilt to doubt it.

8. The good men who formerly rejected this doctrine, did not see, and admit, the fulness of the provisions. President Edwards, for example, did not admit this, and it is manifest, from the account which he gives of his wife's experience, as well as from his writings generally, that he had no such idea before his mind.

9. But what shall we say of those who make this admission, and yet do not expect the blessing? They do not seem to understand that this is unbelief. They say, they do not distrust God, but they distrust themselves. This is a great mistake. If faith is implicit confidence in God's promises, and if these promises cover full provisions for sanctification, then there is no room left for self-distrust; and in that case, self-distrust is distrust in God. Take, for example, this promise. 'And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it.' Here is a promise, covering the wants of our whole nature. Now, I want to know what state of mind that is, which does not expect its realization? Whether it is self-distrust, or distrust in God? It is downright unbelief. It is virtually saying, Lord, Thou hast promised to 'sanctify me wholly in soul, body, and spirit,' but I don't believe it. I don't believe thou canst, I have such distrust in myself.

10. There is no consistency in making the admission of full provisions, and then rejecting the expectation of being sanctified by them.

11. How can the expectation of being sanctified in this life, be rejected without unbelief, in view of I Thess. 5:23, 24. Suppose I get up, and read over this promise--'And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it,' and then turn round and say, now brethren, I warn you against believing that He will sanctify you. But the promise comes thundering back--'Faithful is He that calleth you who also will do it.' I rally again, and say, Edwards, and Payson, and Brainerd, were not sanctified, and why should you expect to be? What would that differ from the course adopted by most of the ministers at the present time? But here comes up the old cavil, that although provisions are made, yet they are conditioned on faith, and I have no right to expect sanctification till I believe. I answer, faith and expectation are identical; and if you do not expect sanctification, you do not believe God, and are making Him a liar.

12. To tell men not to expect to be wholly sanctified in this life, and preserved blameless, is to warn them not to believe God.

13. You can see why you do not enter into rest. It is because you have no faith. You have not cast your anchor within the vail. You are like a vessel, drifting along the majestic Niagara, towards the falls, and already approaching destruction; but will not let down its anchor, although it knows the rocks are within reach, upon which it might fasten and be safe. Or, like a man in a dungeon, to whom a golden chain is let down, and who is exhorted to lay hold and be drawn up, but will not.

14. It is wicked to expect to sin all our days. God has said, 'Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law, but under grace.' Therefore, to expect to live, carrying about a load of sin, till you die, is abominable wickedness.

15. The Church is never like[ly] to be holy, while it is exhorted to unbelief, instead of faith. It is a horrible thing, that much of the teaching of the present day, is nothing else than teaching men not to believe God. And lest they should expect sanctification, they are pointed back to those, who profess to come short of it--to antinomian perfectionism--and to every thing which may bring the doctrine into disrepute, and are warned against it, as if it were the pestilence. O, my soul, what is this! Is this the way the Church is to be sanctified? My brethren if you mean to be kept from sin, and antinomianism of every kind, and from every other delusion, take hold of these promises, and believe. Expect them to be fulfilled, and they will be. But if you doubt you shall walk in blindness. For says the Prophet, 'If ye will not believe, ye shall not be established.'

Holiness of Christians in the Present Life

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Chapter 13

GOSPEL LIBERTY.

Lectures by Professor Finney.

Reported for the Evangelist by Rev. S.D. Cochran.

> Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.--Galatians 5:1.

In this lecture I shall show,

I. WHAT IS INTENDED BY THE YOKE OF BONDAGE.

II. WHAT IT IS TO BE ENTANGLED WITH IT.

III. WHAT IS THE LIBERTY HERE SPOKEN OF.

IV. HOW CHRIST MAKES US FREE.

V. THE DANGER OF BECOMING ENTANGLED AGAIN.

VI. WHEN CHRISTIANS ARE IN BONDAGE.

VII. WHAT IS THEIR REMEDY.

I. What is intended by the yoke of bondage.

The Apostle had immediately under his eye, the ceremonial law of the Jews. This is evident from the whole context. Judaizing teachers had come in, and were trying to ingraft the cumbersome observances of the Jewish ritual upon the gospel. This the Apostle was so grieved at, and felt to be such a departure from Christ, that he declared they were fallen from grace in complying with such instruction. But it was not simply because he rejected the ceremonial law, and regarded it as useless, that the Apostle thus resisted the observance of it, but because he had his eye on a principle of the last importance to the Church. Why was the ceremonial law a yoke of bondage? Because it had no tendency to reform the heart, and thus render its own observance a matter of choice. Any precept given us, contrary to the state of mind in which we are, is a yoke of bondage. And this is true, whether it be a precept of the Old or New Testament. The principle is universal. You may see it in the conduct of children. Impose some requirement upon them, contrary to the state of their hearts and you will never fail to see that their obedience is not cheerful, but constrained--a mere servitude. Every requirement, then, the spirit of which we have not, is to us a yoke of bondage.

II. What it is to be entangled with it.

1. To see a rule of duty, and feel our obligation to comply with it, and yet have no heart to enter into the spirit of it, is certainly to be entangled with a yoke of bondage. The obligation presses on the one hand, and the heart rejects it on the other, and the condition is one of restless distraction. The law given at Mount Sinai, was a galling yoke for this reason.

The Apostle says--'it gendereth to bondage.' Previous to a distinct perception of its claims, men may not be aware of its influence. Paul says--'For I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.' Seeing the thing it required, to be duty, and yet having no heart to perform it, it was a snare unto him. You can easily see how it was. Let anybody be practising any injurious indulgence ignorantly, and there is no sin in it; but let light be thrown into his mind on the subject, and the true nature of the indulgence made known to him, and that moment the struggle commences. Before, he could practice it without compunction, but now his conscience is awake; his appetite still demands it, and the more clearly he sees the law, so much the more is he entangled, until his heart goes fully with the requirement.

2. To take pains to conform to the letter of a law, while destitute of its spirit, is to be entangled. A great many persons set themselves with great punctiliousness, to keep every point of the law, and yet, after all, never feel themselves any better off. Why is this? Because it is mere letter service; there is no heart in it; and the more of such service is rendered, the more exacting is conscience, and the farther is the mind from peace.

3. To strive to satisfy the demands either of the law, the gospel, or the conscience, without faith and love, is to be entangled. The case supposed in the 7th of Romans, represents an individual as setting himself to obey the moral law without its spirit, and the result was a perfect failure. The same is true of persons setting themselves to obey the gospel, without its spirit. They are like a man in a horrible pit of miry clay. Every effort towards obedience, only seems to render them less disposed to obey, and to create greater enmity to the service. The same is true of all attempts to satisfy the demands of conscience, while the heart reluctates from the service.

4. To undertake and assume responsibilities to which we are not equal, that is, to undertake to do any thing in our own strength, is to be entangled. Let an individual go about any duty, or assume any responsibility without the spirit of it, and in his own strength, that is, by dint of his own resolutions, without faith, and he will find himself the more entangled, the farther he goes, just as long as this is his condition.

5. Covenants, vows, promises, &c., where Christ is not consulted and depended upon, only serve to entangle the soul. Sometimes, persons write down covenants of the most solemn and binding character, with the design to hedge themselves in, so that they will not dare to sin, but it does no good, and only brings the soul under a more dire condemnation.

6. Undertaking to do or to be any thing to which the spirit of Christ does not lead you. No matter whether this is obligatory on you or not, if you undertake it without love, it will only be a snare. Thus the law 'gendereth to bondage.'

III. What is the liberty here spoken of.

1. The word liberty is used in two senses.

(1.) As opposed to necessity. In this sense, it consists in the power to choose or refuse any object of choice.

(2.) As opposed to slavery. Slavery is not, as some have supposed, a state of involuntary servitude, for strictly speaking, there is no such thing. Every act the slave performs, is really as voluntary as the act of any other man. His muscles would not move without will. Slavery is a state, in which a man feels constrained to choose between what he regards as two evils. He selects between two alternatives, both of which he abhors. He knows he must labor or be whipped, and he prefers labor to suffering, as the least of two evils. Slavery then, is where a person feels himself shut up to take a course, which on the whole, he does not love, but which he takes rather than to do worse. For example, a person in the marriage state without love, may discharge the outward duties of that relation during life, rather than to separate and sustain all the evils attendant on such a course. So a person may live under a government which he abhors, and yet, rather than subject himself to its frown, may meet all its requisitions. This is acting on the principle of slavery. A person might be compelled to act on the principle of slavery here in New York, as absolutely as in the South, and may as much abhor the service. The difference between one here and one there, is, that there he fears the lash or some other physical infliction, while here, he fears some other evil, which is equally efficient, as he views it, to drive him to the abhorred tasks. Legal professors are slaves in this sense. Their duties are not something which they love, but which must be attended to, or a greater evil endured. Their service is not performed from a love to the end for which it is required, but as the only way to escape the rebukes of conscience, or the wrath of God.

2. This liberty is that of faith and love. When persons come to love, then they delight in acts of love as a matter of course. So much are they free that in obeying God, they do only, what they on the whole, prefer to do, and what they would do whether there was any command or not, could they only see its relation to the good of the universe.

3. In short, this liberty is benevolence. It consists, not in the annihilation of obligation, but in possessing the S[s]pirit of the requirement. Turn to the 13th chapter of the first Corinthians, and mark the characteristics of love which the Apostle there lays down. 'Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth; but whether there be prophecies they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.' This description of charity or benevolence, shows that the free man naturally acts according to the requirement. It is spontaneous with him. He acts from a principle within himself rather than from a law without. He does not act from restraint, but obedience is with him, what it was with Christ. Christ did not need the sanctions of the law to induce obedience, but what the precept required, was just what, above all other things, he loved to do. So it is with those who are in this liberty. They do not act under the rod.

4. They are not governed by authority, but act spontaneously, from choice. They only need to know what will please God, and they do it willingly and of a ready mind. They do not neglect to do what is required of them, but they do it from love, and that is the perfection of liberty. When a man is able to choose in any direction in all circumstances, and does just what he has a mind to, that is the highest liberty in the universe. That is freedom in its highest sense.

IV. How Christ makes us free.

1. Not by abolishing the moral law.

2. Not by discharging us from any obligation to fulfill any or every duty.

3. Nor by relaxing the claims of any moral precept, in either the Old or New Testament.

4. But as it respects the ceremonial law, He fulfilled and abolished it, so that nobody is under farther obligation to obey it.

5. And as it respects the moral law, He makes us free by writing its principle, and all its spirit in our hearts. And what a sweet way this is! Suppose we should thus govern our children. What delightful families we should have. All our commands the very thing they chose, so that for us to intimate our will, would be to see it sweetly done. When Christ begets the spirit of the law in us, and then shows us the outward precept, the precept is just what we are pre-disposed to do, and of course it will be done by us cheerfully.

6. He makes us free by making the course of conduct prescribed in the whole Bible, as natural and spontaneous as it is with Himself; and therefore, we are free in the same sense that He is free, and that all in heaven are free. God, no doubt, feels bound to be benevolent, but his will is just what his infinite reason requires, and He is, therefore, infinitely free, and so is the Lord Jesus Christ. This is just the freedom He seeks to bestow on us.

7. He accomplishes this by his indwelling Spirit. He comes to reside in us, that He may beget in us the same state of mind there is in Christ, whom it is his office to exhibit to us.

8. He does it by so revealing Christ to us, as to gain the implicit confidence and affection of the soul. It is not accomplished by any physical force. How do we, if we want to get the confidence of persons, exhibit to them such views of our character as to win their confidence and love. So Christ, by revealing Himself in those traits of his character, which He knows are adapted to win the confidence of men, brings them into the same state of mind with Himself. He shows them that He is love, well knowing that this is the readiest way to make them love. There is no other way to make men benevolent. Weep yourself, if you want others to weep. Suppose a father is benevolent, and he wants to make his children so too. How can he do it? By using the rod? Or drilling them in the catechism? No. But by acting it out before them. One

great reason why the children of professedly religious parents are so seldom converted is because the parents so constantly command them, without sufficient manifestations of benevolence. They are commanded to read the Bible, to go to Sabbath School, to get their tasks in such a way, that it becomes irksome to them, instead of attractive and interesting. Let parents only temper all their commands sufficiently with benevolence, and it would not be so. It is thus that Christ wins the hearts of sinners, and makes them free. When He came, the idea of true religion was almost lost in the world, but He acted it out in his whole life. His disciples looked on and wondered, till finally they caught the flame. And what then? Why they shook the world with it. And it is the exhibition of this spirit alone, which can consummate the victory, and liberate our race. It is thus He makes us free from the yoke of bondage--from obligation to keep the ceremonial law--from the penalty of the moral law--from the spirit of bondage, by writing his law in our hearts--from the dominion of sin and from the power of the world, the flesh, and the devil. This is the glorious liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free.

V. The danger of becoming entangled again.

1. The least unbelief brings bondage. Let a wife lose confidence in her husband in any respect, and in that respect, her obedience will be constrained and stiff. So it is in religion. If there is any want of confidence, instead of your service being free and out-gushing, it will be forced and heartless.

2. Grieving the Holy Spirit will beget bondage. Whenever He withdraws his presence from the mind, then it falls right into bondage.

3. Admitting the least selfishness, naturally leads into bondage. Observe, religion is benevolence. The least selfishness, then, is bondage of course.

4. Any abstraction of the mind from Christ, of course begets bondage. No person, as a matter of fact, lives a spiritual life without Christ. We must feed on Him. We need Him as much as we do our natural food. We maintain our liberty only by thinking on Him, and communing with Him continually.

5. Any attempts to coerce the mind by oaths, vows, covenants, and resolutions, beget bondage. If a man has the Spirit of Christ, he does not need these, and if he has not, he can never get it in this way. I have known persons to pray all night, and screw themselves up to the most solemn vows and covenants which they could frame, and yet it availed nothing. There was no religion in it; not an atom. And when persons attempt to coerce themselves in this way, they universally fail of success.

6. Taking upon your conscience, an obligation to conform to any particular forms and ceremonies not prescribed by Christ. It is truly astonishing to see to what an excess the Jews loaded themselves down, in adhering to what they supposed were the requirements of the ceremonial law. They multiplied days, and traditions, and tithes, and purifications, almost without end. So it has been in the Church of Rome. She multiplied her vows, and pilgrimages, and fasts, to such an extent as could result in nothing else but a mere outside show, and work the destruction of souls. Even undertaking to conform with those that are required, in your own strength, is enough to bring any soul into terrible bondage.

7. But the multiplying of holy days, and religious observances and ceremonies, cannot result in any thing else. Even among Protestants, how many regard it as a duty, to observe Christmas. I have been afraid our Methodist brethren were becoming entangled. They seem to consider it a duty to watch out the old year, and in the new, and no matter whether sleepy or not, they must be there to satisfy both custom and conscience. Even monthly concerts come to be a yoke. The truth is, we are bound to resist such things, whenever they come to be regarded as binding on the conscience. These holy days in the Romish Church, became so numerous as to take up a great part of the time, and now, in many of the Catholic countries, if you employ a man to work, you get but very little out of him.

8. Binding yourselves by church covenants, especially if there is any thing in them contrary to the law of reason and of love. We hear of no such thing in the Apostles' days. The truth is, I am jealous of them. One embraces one thing, and another, another; and the first thing you know, you are reined up. "Why you are a violator of your covenant." Am I? "Yes." I have known several cases of this kind. Let no one be bound but by the law of love, which is the perfect law of liberty.

VI. When Christians are in bondage.

1. When the duties of religion are a burden. While we are in liberty, they are no burden. As an old writer says--"I sought all nature through, to find something like the burden of Christ, and could find nothing till I came to the pinions of the dove, which instead of weighing down, bear up the soul on high."

2. When the form is observed, without the spirit and power of godliness. Many have, and keep up the form very scrupulously, when the life and spirit have gone. But their piety is like a mere lifeless corpse, or hollow shell.

3. When driven by conscience, instead of being drawn by love. Oh, how many are attempting to live by mere resolutions forced up by conscience, without one particle of love to Christ!

4. When they don't find their heart spontaneously doing what is required. When the waters of life do not flow spontaneously out from them--when it is not nature's promptings to pray, to give to the poor, or perform any other duty. When persons have the spirit of religion, instead of needing a command, they feel an inward going of the soul in the right direction, and the performance of duty gives them sweet enjoyment.

5. When the soul has no peace, and no enjoyment in religion, it is under the yoke of bondage. True liberty, is essential peace and blessedness.

VII. What is their remedy.

1. Persons will never get into liberty by any legal, heartless efforts. That is beginning exactly at the wrong end; it is beginning on the outside to work inward, instead of beginning at the inside to work outward. People often become prodigiously excited, and go to doing, doing, doing, under the pressure of obligation; but where is the relief? This is particularly the case in many protracted meetings and special efforts, but when the meetings stop, where is their religion in a vast number of cases? I am not saying any thing against such meetings, but against the manner in which the truth is too often preached, and the meeting conducted. The process is just such as to set the sensibility all on fire with powerful excitement, and leave the heart unsubdued to love. This is all wrong, and only adapted to foster mere heartless legality.

2. But the only remedy is faith in Christ, and application to his blood. 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent.' Cast the whole soul upon Him, to receive the spirit of obedience. I have often seen persons striving and pushing for months, but all to no purpose. They were not one whit better, and it was not till they saw that it would not make them better if they should continue thus a thousand years, and until they cast themselves wholly on Christ, to receive the spirit of obedience from Him, that they entered into gospel liberty. 'Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

REMARKS.

1. You may see from this subject, the difference between a legal and a gospel religion. A legal religion is works without love, a gospel religion, works by love. A brother said the other day, he did not understand this distinction. Why it is obvious as the distinction between day and night. Both the true Christian and the legalist works, but the one works with, the other without love. They both do the same things outwardly, but the one is free and the other a slave in the performance.

2. See why the moral law is called the perfect law of liberty. It was ordained to life, and when obeyed in its spirit, gives life. But why do persons find it unto death? Because when the spirit is lost, the letter kills. It is when it is legally, that is, heartlessly obeyed, that it works our overthrow instead of our deliverance.

3. See what is intended by such passages as Gal. 5:18, 'But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law;' and Rom. 6:14, 'For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace.' It is not intended that the

law is abolished, but that its spirit has become their law. They are not under it in such a sense as to need its sanctions to press them up to duty.

4. Many feel that their religion is mere slavery--a hard, up-hill business. The language of their heart is, "it is hard to obey, and harder still to love." But they are ignorant of the true nature of religion. It is the easiest thing in the world to him that has it. Legalists complain about this world, that it is such a bad one, so hard to live in, and keep right. But it is not such a hard world as they think. Religion certainly does not make it any harder, but altogether easier. The difficulty with those who find it such a hard world, is, that their hearts are bad, and if they find it a severe task to obey God, it is because they have not the spirit of obedience. If they have any religion it is of the wrong kind, and they are entirely deceived if they think all others have the same kind that they have. Some persons, when they see others joyful, say they are deceived. They don't feel so themselves, and they wonder how any body can. And then they point to the seventh chapter of Romans, or to David Brainerd, who, although a good man, was so hypochondriacal that his experience would be gloomy as a matter of course. Such persons are always suspicious whenever they see any of the spirit of liberty manifested, and I don't wonder, for mankind are naturally suspicious of those beyond themselves. How strange it must appear to them, and how it must stumble them to see persons almost dance for joy when they emerge from bondage, and yet this in not wonderful. Why, see that slave, with his back all blistered in the sun, set free. Is it strange that he should leap and bound about with fulness of joy? It is thus that Christians feel, and the Bible commands them to rejoice; but legalists don't understand it, and think they are possessed of the devil. Why, I have sometimes heard persons say, "That's not solemn--its fanaticism." And then they turn to some gloomy slave with a dead body strapped on his back, and groaning under his burden, and say--"That's the humble one--he's none of your visionaries!"

5. Multitudes have no true idea of gospel liberty. They have made a credible profession of religion, and are toiling out its duties, but what liberty means they know not--and perhaps they are even ministers of the gospel! Of course, such persons don't expect liberty. I recently heard of a revival, in which the minister said to inquirers, "don't expect to be happy in this world; I never was, nor do I expect to be until I get to heaven. I don't know what it is to have enjoyment in religion." Now there is a fundamental error in such instruction. Not happy! Had I been present where such instruction was given, I would have told that minister that he was not a converted man if that was his experience. It is thus that a legal religion is inculcated on converts, by legal ministers and legal professors. But how many persons are just here--afraid to find any other way, for fear it will lead to delusion! O, that it might be seen that a religion which does not produce present peace and blessedness, is not, of course, a religion of love, and is therefore false.

6. Any course of instruction that presses duty without holding up Christ, is like requiring labor without food and brings into bondage. It is like requiring the Israelites to make brick without straw, and those who give such instruction are obliged to whip, and scourge, and abuse the dear Church of God to get the little service they do out of them. Hold up duty without Christ and legality is inevitable. They are starved for want of Christ. But let them see Christ and they will work, of course, as duty is appropriately enforced.

7. It is the other extreme to hold up Christ without calling to duty, and begets antinomianism. To feed the Church with Christ and leave them inactive, is the way to produce a religious dyspepsia. But give us the right food and work enough to do, and then we will thrive. Only let us have the bread that cometh down from heaven, and we shall have spiritual health, and even physical health, if we only have work enough to keep us busy.

8. If we may believe the confessions of the great mass of professors, they are in bondage. This fact has weighed on my mind for a long time. I labored to convert sinners for many years, but saw them fall, under the legal instruction of ministers, into bondage. I labored and prayed for them night and day, and do now, and yet they seem to know little of liberty. They often, by their looks, seem to ask, "Is this Christianity?" "Is this the boasted religion of Christ?" "Wherein does it differ from the Jew's religion?" A man said to me once with great honesty, although in vulgar language, "The gospel is not what it is cracked up to be." His idea was that the gospel promised liberty, but did not confer it. Now how many would say just so, if they would tell their hearts. They would say "the gospel is not what the Apostle said it was." Yes, poor soul, it is, but you have not got it. Taste and see. Come to the gospel feast. You have compassed that mountain long enough. Don't expect Christ to make you free while you turn your back on Him.

9. When the power of religion is gone, the form but hardens the heart, and makes men more pharisaical and hypocritical every day. What, you say, would you have a man do? Cast off his profession, and stop prayer, and go back to the world?

No, but love and serve in the [S]spirit. But if you will not do this, then give up your profession, that is my advice. Do you doubt whether God would rather have you give up your profession, than live in mere form, and heartless obedience? 'I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art luke-warm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.' How loathsome to Him are the mockeries, and slavish obedience to his holy will! The text represents Christ as actually vomiting them up. Now I would not recommend apostacy but condemn hypocrisy, and bring you to Christ.

10. None really understand this liberty but those who have experienced it, and those who have experienced it cannot find language to express it.

11. Many exclaim against antinomianism who are mere legalists, while both these characters are an abomination to God.

12. When the shepherds attempt to drive instead of lead the flock, they lay a snare before them. We cannot make people love by whipping, scolding, and driving them. God has given his law with its sanctions, but He opens his blessed heart to beget love. Dearly beloved, are any of you in bondage? Have you left your first love? Did somebody tell you that you must go down into the valley of humiliation, and did you go? Alas! what a mistake! When you should have gone up to the mountain by faith. What is true humility? Will you return to your first love? And will you 'commit the keeping of your souls to Him in well doing as unto a faithful Creator?' Let us all go to Christ to receive our liberty.