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WORTHY OF ALL ACCEPTATION

“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of ALL acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”
—I Timothy 1:15

“For bodily exercise profiteth little: but GODLINESS is profitable unto all things having a promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance.” —
I Timothy 4:8

Ah, how I yearn to be enabled to write or speak things to the hearts of living stones; rather than to the heads of intellectual creatures! For, what profit is there, my brethren and sisters, if we have only a head full of religion; a form of godliness, denying the power thereof; or a mere notion of heavenly things in a speculative manner? For this corporal body shall perish as the grass of the field and there goes all the religion of the mind into oblivion and destruction! But that religion, received in the heart by the Spirit of God, which makes one meet to be heir to that eternal and everlasting inheritance—that, I say, is a prize of infinite worth to the soul, both in this life and the life to come.

I can think of many ways to classify the children of men. But just now, it is sufficient to take note of the following:

(1) There is a class of people identified by God’s Word, as “the wicked that know not God.” They are “given over to a reprobate mind” and are “vessels of wrath fitted to destruction,” who know not the way of salvation, nor ever shall attain to an eternal

standing in God's favor under His righteous judgment.

(2) There are other, classified as "vain deceivers", both being deceived and deceiving others, having a "form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." They are nominal religious folk, buried in the grave-clothes of duty-faith; holding to, and exercising a creature-works form of "Christianity," whose hearts are full of evil, but whose external deportment is as polished as the outside of a tomb. Our blessed Lord says they are as "whited sepulchres, full of dead men's bones."

(3) And there are those who are the "remnant according to the election of grace," classified as "sinners," and the "chiefest of sinners," for whom Christ died; whom the Holy Spirit calls in the furnace of affliction to serve the living God. They are the ones "sanctified by the Spirit and belief of the truth," and testify that they have no abiding city, but seek one to come; whose hope is staid upon the Lord, and whose faith fails not, for it is the "gift of God" and the "fruit of the Spirit."

A head-knowledge of things eternal profits nothing for the everlasting good of the soul; the carnal nature shall pass with the dissolution of the body. But to you who love the Lord and His blessed truth of free and sovereign grace, this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world, for the express purpose to "save sinners." That "godliness" which He works in you, "is profitable unto all things." Why so? For it has promise of the spiritual life of Christ now, and also in the world that shall come.

There are large numbers of people in the first category of the wicked that know not God. They are all around us daily, and have

no fear of God, nor interest in divine things. And there are multitudes, in the second who have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof. And indeed, we can see so little difference between the first two categories in outward daily lives – the only difference is, that one has no pretension of religion, and the other is full of creature works of self-righteousness. They both are freewillers, and freelivers; "doing their own thing," and "taking care of number one," as they term it. But God terms it otherwise, saying that they each are "doing that which is right in their OWN eyes."

It is a comfort that the Holy Spirit inspired that great apostle to the Gentiles to acknowledge in the text that he was the "chiefest of sinners." I find comfort in seeing the failings of those giants of the patriarchs of old, not because they failed, but because we fail so often ourselves. Can you recall Abraham's fear of Abimelech and his people, and his denying that Sarah was his wife? Have you not been confounded at times with that same plague of the heart? Ah, yes, I dare not point out his failings, without also pointing out the afflictions he went through when he saw his darling wife taken from his bosom into the house of Abimelech; nor of the sweet and loving providence of God in preserving her undefiled, and returning her to his bosom, thus demonstrating a Fatherly care of them. Yea, I can imagine the shame which was his under the chiding denunciation of the king! Surely, his testimony at that time would have been as Paul's:

"I'm the chief of sinners!"

Also, have you not read of Isaac following the same pattern of behavior with his wife, Rebecca, and the same king, Abimelech! Well might Abraham have learned what a "bad example set by a good

man” can be... like father, like son! And, dear reader, have you not found many things of which you are ashamed reappearing before your eyes also? How often the child of grace is plagued by sin. Yet these haunting sins testify over and over again, that we are the “chiefest of sinners!” – and it was for such, that Christ suffered, bled, and died and no one else.

Do you recall the experience of poor Judah, when he had promised his youngest son to Tamar, and then did not keep his word? Remember how she played the harlot, and Judah went in unto her, and she bore a son by her father-in-law? Do you recall his words when it became known to him that she was with child? “And Judah said, bring her forth, and let her be burnt.” She then presented to Judah his signet, bracelets, and staff, which she had taken as a token from him, and he replied: “She hath been more righteous than I; because I gave her not to Shelah my son.” (Gen. 38) Yes, Judah, from whom the Lord sprang, transgressed. Yea, our Lord was in the lineage of Tamar! Ah, the guilt, the shame, the awful judgment of God! But, can you not also find all manner of evil residing within yourself? Do not these sins often plague you, and make you confess that you are the “chiefest of sinners?”

This is a faithful saying, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners! Ah, wondrous news! Tidings that gladden the heart – “Christ died for sinners!” When one says (as they often do in disputing the basis of hope) to me: “I used to be a sinner – now I’m saved.” I wonder “From what, then, are you saved?” From hell? The Church, the elect, were NEVER destined for hell, for they were “chosen IN Christ before the foundation of the world,” (Eph.1:4-5) “God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation,” and

“Christ died for ‘His people’.” I once feared hell. Once the “pains of hell gat hold of me.” But, my sins became greater than hell to me! Hell is not indwelling, but sin is that which “dwelleth in me.” My body, my flesh, is the habitation, or dwelling place, of my sins! I’ve yet to be delivered from this body of death, of sin, and of corruption. That final deliverance is my last great hope! When THAT indwelling sin is finally destroyed, I then shall be able to say: “I’m saved!”

Yes, I feel an assurance often-times that I’m saved from sin’s vast dominion, being dead to sin, that it no longer has its full sway over me. But even that degree of hope is by the indwelling of Christ – “I am what I am by the grace of God.” The testimony of every living child of God is, yea, must be, “I’m the chiefest of sinners.

Christ Jesus came to save only one class of people: sinners, the chiefest of sinners. They are the objects of divine mercy. In reality, there is no “good news”, or Gospel, to anyone else. That Gospel is: Christ Jesus died for sinners. “I came not to call the righteous (or religious), but sinners to repentance.” Christ taught that they which are whole need not a physician. It is the sick; the sin-sick soul, that needs the healing power of Christ.

I do not know how anyone who has never tasted anything sweet can know how sugar taste. Or who has never tasted anything bitter, and really knows how sweet anything is. Likewise, I cannot know much about “godliness” except by the dark, dreary, back-drop of sin’s galling bitterness. Surely, no one can ever find a need to come to Christ, their everlasting Rest, unless they first be weary and heavy laden. It is to such that Christ calls, saying, “*Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavily laden, and I will give you rest.*” Until one has labored and found no rest; until

one is heavy laden with heart-felt sins; until that burden is too great to bear – there can be no willingness to seek for refuge and rest in our blessed Lord. And this, too, is not a once-in-a-lifetime experience! It is a daily taking “up thy cross, and following Jesus.” And God has been pleased to make our experiences such that we must seek after Him. *“Where can we go Lord? Thou hast the words of life.”* When He releases Satan onto us as He did to poor Job, we find those swelling seas of dark temptation breaking upon our heads as mighty billows and restless waves. A word by a fellow-saint, meant for good, can be perceived as evil intention and try and vex our souls. The bad examples of those whom we esteem as saints, can be a great snare to us under Satan’s subtle suggestions. Things which might be approved by man, may be our own undoing. And when God’s judgment comes, we are chastened of Him for our good. Little things of which we take no thought, can become raging darts of conviction and trouble to our souls. Yea, premonitions of evil can vex us sorely. Doubts of the genuine exercises of internal grace can distress the true child of God in divers ways. It can be an ardent witness within, when we sing the song:

“Tis a point I long to know,
oft it causes anxious thought;
Do I love the Lord or no,
Am I His, or am I not.”

I sometimes think that God’s people have been lulled to sleep by Satan; that they cannot tell when he is near the entrance of their feeble hearts. Really, when I first heard a man say that God made him commit sin, I was shocked that he could, or would, attribute the work of Satan to God! The devil goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may

devour, and it is so strange that some hear his roar as the chirping of a small harmless bird! But Oh what powers of darkness trouble the child of God! –a living child – when spiritual darkness settles down as a thick cloud upon him, hiding the face of our dear blessed Redeemer. Sins internal, sins external, sins in our religious devotions, past sins, present sins, future temptations, trials, troubles, and anguish of soul – all these make up our spiritual warfare. These trials are evidences of LIFE in a body of death. Christ came into the world to save His people from these fruits of sin.

He came to “die for sinners” –no one else – just poor and needy sinners. They are the objects of His obedience to the just and holy law of God, that He might impute to them HIS righteousness; seeing that they have none of their own. Creature-righteousness, duty-righteousness, self-righteousness, are all “filthy rags” in His holy sight. Sensible sinners are the objects of His sufferings, that He might bear the penalty of the broken law of God, which they broke (for sin is the transgression of the law). They could not bear a single penalty for breaking even one of the parts of the infinite law of God. Therefore He bore it for them! Oh, Blessed Sacrifice for sinners! They are the objects of His death and resurrection. For they could not die and live again under the condemnation of sin. Justice demands a penalty for sin; and the wages of sin is death. So He died for sinners! Oh yes, and for their resurrection also. For how shall the dead rise? We know not how. But He is the Resurrection and the Life, so it was needful for Him to be our “Way” to life everlasting.

The is indeed a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus our Blessed Redeemer died for sinners, for those

who are sensible sinners, yea, the chiefest of sinners! What glorious thoughts are these for us to entertain in our hearts unto life eternal. May they ever fill our hearts with adoration and praise for such a condescension of grace, mercy, and love.- *S.C.P.*

THE FEAR OF THE LORD IS CLEAN

By Silas Durand, 1899

“The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.” - Psalms 19:9

There is no other principle of action in the world which is absolutely clean. The motives that prevail among natural men are selfish and vain, having the hope of reward and fear of punishment as their principle characteristic. And this is the main principle which prevails in the teachings of worldly religion, as well as in the business of the world. In the doctrine of those whose minds seem most pure and exalted we find heaven presented as a reward for goodness, and the hope of which should be an incentive to good works, and hell as a place of punishment, the fear of which should be used to deter men from wickedness.

Although there is an effort, at times, in the teachings of some, to rise to the height of that true principle which teaches the doing of right for its own sake, and the avoidance of evil merely for its hatefulness, yet the natural mind is not capable of relying upon the efficacy of that principle alone to control and guide men in their conduct, but will constantly fall back upon the hope of reward or fear of punishment, as that which alone can be absolutely relied upon to affect the actions of men for good. And even among those who have evidently been taught of the Spirit, and

have been called to the work of the ministry, we sometimes notice a hesitancy and backwardness in regard to this thing, a kind of question and doubt, injected by the unbelieving carnal mind, as to whether it will do to leave the system of rewards and punishments out of our religious teaching, and depend entirely upon the power of the Spirit of Christ which all His people have. Rom. 8:9. (*Durand is more gracious than we, in suggesting such ministers are called of God - S.C.P.*) It is the opposition of the fleshly mind that is manifested when any one begins to fear that if we teach the plain revelation of the Truth as recorded in the Bible, and as experienced by every child of God, we will thereby encourage the Lord's people to indulge in sin; and that it is necessary to appeal to their selfish desires for rewards and their fears of punishment in order to keep them out of mischief, and hold them within proper bounds.

Whenever such worldly principles are sought to be maintained by those who profess to minister to the Lord's people, some false interpretations of Scripture will surely be the result, some holding back of the sweet fullness of the word of truth, and some consequent lack of true edification and comfort on the part of the spiritual readers or hearers. Whenever a child of God consents for even a little time to the thought that sinful things are to be avoided for fear of punishment or suffering that will follow, even though he he kept from acting on that principle, he suffers loss. I would not be understood as denying the usefulness of these motives in worldly things. It is good for those concerned in the results when a right act is done or a wrong deed refrained from, whatever the motive which prompted the right or restrained the evil. But the living soul who

is moved in his conduct by the consideration of the results to himself, instead of the character of the thing to be done or avoided, will realize no spiritual commendation and comfort in his conscience as resulting from the correct course he has pursued, but will either be lifted up with pride and vanity of flesh, or will find himself in a desert place, with terrible leanness in his soul.

The Lord does not work as man works. His ways are as high above ours as the heavens are higher than the earth. Man's wisdom in its highest work on earth is "earthly, sensual, devilish." The Lord's "wisdom is first, *pure*." (James 3:17) The beginning of that wisdom is the fear of the Lord. (Psalm 111:10) The Lord begins the good work in His people upon the principle of that wisdom which is from above, and upon the same principle He performs it until the day of Jesus Christ. (Phil. 1:8) And this is the beginning of wisdom's work: "*I will put my fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from me.*" (Jer. 32:40) Now this fear of the Lord is a pure and holy principle, very different from that slavish fear of punishment which hath torment. This holy principle causes one to hate evil as the Lord hates it, and raises up in the soul a reverential desire to "be holy as God is holy." Thus the very definition of this principle is given to this effect in the word of truth: "*The fear of the Lord is to hate evil.*" (Nov. 8:13) For this reason it is said to be clean: "*The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever.*" (Psalm 19:9) There is no other absolutely clean and pure motive in all the world, and therefore no other principle that can lead one in the paths of righteousness. However good the thing done, unless the fear of the Lord prompted it, the motive was not clean, and the act, therefore, was not pure in the Lord's sight.

Whatever is not caused by this holy fear of the Lord, which is to hate evil, is selfish, unholy, sinful like the nature from which it proceeds.

This fear of the Lord causes those who have it to hunger and thirst after righteousness; it is, therefore, "*a fountain of life to depart from the snares of death.*" (Nov. 14:28) It never ceases to spring up in the new heart in hungerings and longings after purity and holiness, and in sorrow, grief and self-loathings on account of the depravity felt in our nature, and the sins that appear in our life. It is not our flesh, not our carnal mind or heart, which feels this hatred of sin and desire after righteousness, but the new heart, the divine life, where this fear of the Lord is. This holy principle of pure desire will never entirely cease to exist within the soul where once it has been implanted, nor ever entirely cease to spring up, however much the flesh may gain the ascendancy for a time; nor will it ever be satisfied until this mortal shall have put on immortality, and death shall be swallowed up in victory.

This is the principle which is ever at work more or less vividly in the Lord's people. Sin, however attractive to the flesh, is hateful to the quickened soul by reason of this fear of the Lord within. Fear of punishment or promises of reward would not avail against the love of sin in the natural man even in a worldly covenant. That was tried in the case of the children of Israel according to the flesh, to show that it would not avail. (Ed. - It has been tried for over a hundred years now among many Primitives, and over a hundred-fifty years by most Missionaries; and has as miserably failed the one as the other, or as in Israel's case. Only free grace is effectual in God's people regardless of the age!) Neither fear of punishment nor promise of reward kept them from constant transgression, only

when the Lord slew them did they seek Him. (Psalm 78:34)

Let it be remembered that fear of punishment or hope of reward NEVER prevents heart sin nor produces true righteousness in the sight of God. ONLY this fear of the Lord, which is a fountain of life within, can do that.

Those who have been experimentally crucified with Christ, and now live with Him, hate sin, and hate the flesh because of sin. Sin is a grief and a dread to them, and their prayer is that of Jabez, "*O that thou woudest... keep me from evil that it may not grieve me.*" (1 Chron. 4:10) When a child of God refrains from doing what the flesh desires because of fear of punishment, he is glad to have avoided the evil, but his soul finds no sweet rest before God on account of it, for the secret selfishness of the motive is set in the sight of God's countenance. it is the same when he does what he rightly ought to do. How often the poor soul is set to questioning his motives as they appear in the sight of a heart-searching and rein-trying God. How thankful he is, and how humble and meek, when he has some precious evidence that FAITH is in exercise WITHIN him, and that the fear of the Lord has moved him. For only by faith can he ever see any righteousness for himself in Jesus Christ, or any deliverance from sin.

How glad one who is thus exercised is to know that all the way he has been led has been appointed of the Lord, and that his sins and infirmities, which cause him such self-aborrence, are humbling him more and more before a holy God, and showing him the wonderful justice and judgments of the Lord, and are measuring to him His great and amazing mercy and grace. Does this make him love the sins he so hates, or cause him to desire to continue in sin? The question is

abhorrent to the quickened soul.

How strange to such a man it sounds to hear one say that the belief in the predestination of God will have a tendency to make a child of God indulge in sin. How strange to hear one say that when Paul says, "*All things work together for to them that love God,*" he did not mean to include evil, sinful, wicked things, but only trials, afflictions, distresses, and the like; (*Ed.—Durand was writing much earlier. Today, it is said that even these things, which are evils, are not included!*) thus taking away the real comfort of this precious assurance. And most surprising strange to hear the REASON of this conclusion to be that if we believe that the apostle meant to include sin among the "all things which work together for good," it would encourage US TO SIN in order to receive the good!

The Lord, by putting His fear IN the hearts of His people, HAS MADE SIN SO HATEFUL TO THEM, and so obnoxious, that it becomes like a suffocating atmosphere to them. They can hardly breathe where it is. They are DEAD to sin, and CANNOT live any longer therein. To be in it is to be in a kind of death. Yet there is so much of sin in them that they are daily delivered unto death for Jesus' sake. They bear all out in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus might be made manifest in their mortal body. In their flesh dwells no good thing. "This body," indeed, "is dead because of sin," in the experience of ALL THOSE IN WHOM IS CHRIST. (Rom. 8:10) "*But the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*" Here then is the condition of the Lord's people in the world; sinners, yet holy; defiled, yet pure; vile in themselves, but righteous in Christ; being dead, indeed, unto sin with Christ, yet alive with Him unto holiness; having in themselves,

as it were, two men, one corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and the other “after God created in righteousness and true holiness;” two principles, the flesh and the Spirit, contrary the one to the other, so that the child of God can never do the things that he would, and lacks comfort on that account, except as, from time to time, he is shown the good works he longs to do all done by the dear Savior, and he enabled by faith to walk in them, as he was foreordained to do. (Eph. 2:10)

Here is the wise and gracious work of God in Christ, whereby His people in this world are SEPARATED and taken away from the control of worldly principles, and are led by the Spirit of God. The warfare within keeps sin a hateful thing to them, and thus by the experience of that continual conflict turns them away from it in longings and cries unto God for deliverance from its baneful power. They need no offer of a reward for doing well, nor any threat of punishment to keep them from sin. The Lord has provided a higher, holier, surer principle of action than that. As it was with the Savior, so it is with His dear children, who have His Spirit; the reward is *in*, not *for*, keeping the commandments of God, (Psalm 19:11) and the pain and grief are in the presence of sin itself, which is hateful to His Spirit, not in the fear of the punishment that may follow.

Let not our brethren fear any more that the plain teachings of the Bible will encourage the Lord’s people to sin, as though they were thirsting for sin instead of righteousness. Let us not fear to contend for the truth concerning the absolute sovereignty of God, and to rejoice that He works all things after the counsel of His own will. Let no one try to take away one thing from the ALL things which the inspired apostle declares do

“work together for good to them who love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose;” for if it could be shown that one thing was intended to be omitted by the apostle because of its wickedness, then that declaration would have no meaning at all to the child of God, who is waiting and longing to be delivered from the bondage of corruption, as the apostle has just described him, and would be without one particle of comfort for him. Let us not descend in our teachings from the high and holy principles of “the high and lofty One, who inhabiteth eternity,” to the low, and selfish, and unsafe principle of worldly wisdom, nor any more distrust the Lord’s power to keep His people from departing from Him, as He says He will, by putting into their hearts His special treasure, (Isaiah 32:6) the fear of the Lord, which is to HATE EVIL, and which, therefore, is clean, enduring forever.

THE MYTH OF DECEMBER 25TH

By Bruce Morgan

I realize, first of all, that this article may offend some, yet I hope my writing (if I am enabled by the Spirit) will not be weak and just pleasing to the natural flesh of those whom God has decreed for me to contact. God’s message from His Word is personal, and oftentimes, sharp and convicting. I desire that God would be pleased to bring tears of concern and repentance to all of His children who may be involved in the celebration of the pagan holiday called “Christmas;” or the “Mass for Christ.” I have often wondered why many of those who profess a hope of eternal life are wrapped up in this evil holiday (and other holy days as well); and I have come to at least one conclusion: that not many who are

called to preach Jesus Christ are faithful in admonishing the sheep from God's Word concerning the evils of this world. Dear preacher, Hosea 4:6 says: *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou has rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children."* Also Ezekiel 44:33 says: *"And they teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean."*

My subject needs little introduction except to mention the fact that for anyone to speak out against X-mas appears to be like attacking the American tradition of motherhood and apple pie. My objective in this article is, above all else, to be honest with the Scriptures.

In this article I want to bring out four reasons which individuals give to ease their consciences in celebrating the evil and satanic time of year called "Christmas."

First, Many say, "I feel responsible to celebrate the birth of Christ." Yes, there are many that feel this way and have been taught this way, but of course this raises some questions that need to be answered:

1. I ask "what is your responsibility founded upon?" What commandment is given by the Lord to place anyone under any responsibility to celebrate His birth? There is no command given by Christ in the Scriptures either in writing or by example to do so – NONE whatsoever. What our Lord has designed for His people to do – He laid down very plainly in His written Word or gives us a principle by example. Three ways in which we can see this are: Baptism, and the Lord's Supper and feet-washing.

But, one must search in vain for any

commandment or responsibility or authority in regard to celebrating His birthday. In fact, the exact date of Christ's birthday is unknown. It most certainly is NOT December 25th nor in December at all. This can be verified by the Scriptures and by secular historical records. We do know that the Lord was born six months after John the Baptist (Luke 1:26,36). The Scriptures verifies this as well as do Jewish historical records. John the Baptist was conceived (not born, but conceived) at the end of Zacharias', the priest, course which was in June. (Luke 1:5,24) Nine months later puts John the Baptist's birth in mid-March. Six months later is mid-September (not December!) which is the most probable date for Christ being born of Mary. Also we read in Luke 2:8 that the shepherds were watching their sheep by night in the fields. December is an extremely cold rainy month in the hill country of Judea; it was only during the warm months of summer and fall that shepherds took their sheep into the open fields at night. In Luke 2:1, we have one of the reasons for Mary and Joseph going to Bethlehem and that was to be taxed. When were the people taxed? At the end of the harvest season. Another reason, was the Feast of Tabernacles which was celebrated in the seventh (Jewish) month, or our September. In spite of what I have stated some may still feel responsible and say: "Christ never told us to celebrate X-mas but He never told us not to either."

2. I ask: "If you feel responsible to celebrate His birth, in what manner do you intend to remember His birth?" The best example for all to follow has been given for us. Christ Himself, nor the apostles, give us an example nor word as to how we should celebrate Christ's birth. But what if Christ had given His people an example to follow? Would He

have celebrated His birth in the manner in which people now do? No, a thousand times, no! Everything around the celebration has an evil spirit about it, not the Holy Spirit. We can read from the Scriptures, the Encyclopedia Britannica, and other available source materials that the early saints did not accept nor participate in any part of the pagan holiday called "Christmas." It took a long time to creep into the so-called church through unregenerate people who professed to be saints. Twice in the Gospels we find the birth of Christ mentioned and we are not told to celebrate it. There are only two birthday celebrations mentioned in the Bible. One is in Genesis 40:20-22, in regard to Pharaoh's, and in Mark 6:21-28, of Herod's, and there was an evil about both of them. In both cases someone had his head cut off! When one celebrates the birthday of Christ he adds to religion something not in the Scriptures. When one adds to religion what the Scriptures do not teach he is as the Pharisee and is adding the traditions of men. Most people want something to make them happy; they like the idea of the manger and happiness; a new baby promised; yes, the majority of people can grasp the *idea* of a new baby in the manger instead of the *fact* of a torturous death on the tree of Calvary, and the subsequent resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. (*Ed. note: Here may be the cause of the Scriptural silence on the subject: why should we celebrate such a great humiliation as the Son of God's glory taking on the likeness of sinful flesh?*) Anything to please the flesh; no concern whether it is right or wrong. But they say: "I want to show my love in celebrating "Christmas" and giving gifts, etc." But if you really want to show your love and concern for people, tell them of this pagan holiday. Preadventure the Lord, if He is pleased, might

give them repentance from their evil ways.

3. Also I ask: "If Christ had given us an example to follow in remembering His birthday, would not He have given us the manner in which His birthday is to be celebrated?" Christ is the Holy, Eternal, Son of God and John tells us that light is come into the world and the darkness comprehendeth it not. To consider that Christ would have in any way identified His birth with the pagan gods of His day is blasphemous! All that celebrate this day and identify the birth of Christ with these pagan things blaspheme the most Holy God. The Scripture teaches the saints in Philippians 1, that we are to have the mind of Christ. Now I ask, has the mind of Christ changed in almost 2000 years? No, the mind of Christ the Lord never changes. One can go to the Old Testament and study the examples given in the progression of evil and it hasn't changed either.

Second, But, perhaps, you would give as your reason for celebration, "My Christian liberty gives me the right to remember Christ's birthday and you, you are a legalist."

Those who hold this view go to Romans 14:4-6, which says "Who are thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks." Their argument, of course, is quite obvious - they use these verses to justify December 25 as the birthday of

Christ even though it is not (and some will admit this), but they say they regard the day as unto the Lord. But, one must study the Scripture in context and with other Scripture. The days to which Paul refers were holy feast days that were not pagan, but were legitimate, given by God under the Mosaic economy. They were proper in the Old Testament days; but, and as some Jews were added to the New Testament Church, they still clung to the old things and Paul says that the other saints were to wait patiently until it pleased God to give more light to those who were still clinging to the old feast days. Paul gives us an explanation of those days in Colossians 2:16-17: feast days were a shadow of things to come in Christ. No, Romans 14 does not give anyone the right to recognize heathen, or pagan festivals as days “unto the Lord.” There are people today who are described in Galatians 4:9-11, *“But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?” Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain.*’ It is beyond my comprehension to understand people who say they are children of grace, after they hear the truth of the evil of “Christmas” and then still seem to have a desire to please the flesh, to please the world, and to follow after the traditions of men and not after the commandments of God. Luke 16:15 says, *“And He said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of Cod.”* Dear reader, if you would study a little you would find out what is said of the early saints in contrast to others. You would find that the Roman religion was

purely external and consequently very impressive to the flesh. The Romans could not conceive of a religious service without temple images, altars, and sacrificial activities. Henceforth, the Christians were considered as atheists to Roman religionists and Rome wanted nothing to do with them. They said, “Away with the atheists.” The Romans advocated happiness, satisfaction and pleasure for the flesh. The Christians preached self denial and emphasized the joy of the future life with Christ. The Christians would not decorate their houses for pagan festivals. They would not advocate marriages into heathen families. They would not accept government offices which included the performances of heathen religious rites. They abstained from the “respectable” enjoyments. Think of it, the Christians were looked upon as a sect – a sect that was averse to the philosophy of the great and noble “humanities.” Yes, they were accused of being hostile to humanity. They were called “haters of mankind,” evil doers. The early Christians stood out as a people, a peculiar people not ashamed that they had been crucified with Christ. They were bound together by love one to another, founded upon righteousness, truth, and a striving to conform to the image of Jesus Christ and having the mind of Christ. Call them what the Romans might: rabble rousers, controversialists, madmen, etc., and they said as Joshua of old: “As for me and my house we shall serve the Lord.” I ask you, dear readers, “How are your thoughts concerning the Lord and His commandments?” Truth as it is in Christ is the foundation for all the children of grace. Where are the people with courage? Where are the preachers that are called of God who will stand up to proclaim the “whole counsel of God” rather than saying “Let’s not rock the

boat. I don't feel that I ought to cause waves?" Hosea 4:6 says *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.."* John 17:17 says that His people are sanctified through "Thy truth."

Third, "My conscience does not convict me of the day being wrong; what's the difference; I don't look at it that way.

This excuse breaks down in the light of God's revealed truth. A conscience can be *"seared with a hot iron;"* (I Tim. 4:2) and *"even their mind and conscience is defiled."* (Titus 1:15) It is true that the saints use their minds and their conscience as a part of reasoning but the conscience is never autonomous. The saints cannot do what they please; they are bound by the Spirit of God to the revealed will of God. Yes, there are many who have the idea that they can do anything they please and they say their conscience is autonomous or free. That particular teaching and thinking is as Satan said: "I will be like the most high God." Some seem to think that whatever decision they make is determined by the way they look at it, but the child of God does not determine what is right or wrong by the way he views a situation; but it is determined as right or wrong by the way God says it. God (and His Word) is the absolute standard of faith and practice for the saint; and the saint does not measure God with fleshly standards, but sees in the Scripture, "Be ye holy for I am holy."

One may ask, "How then does this pertain to "Christmas?" It is simply "Can you say in your heart that it will be done to the glory of God; knowing of its origin; knowing of God's holiness; knowing that God changes not; and knowing that whatever is not done for the glory of Christ is an abomination in His sight?"

In John 5:21, Jesus says, *"Little children, keep yourselves from idols."* The word "keep"

means to guard yourself; that no intrusion of evil is found in the child of grace. The saints are led by, and do seek, the Spirit's guidance in studying God's precious Word, that they may know how to follow the commandments of God, and that they might stay away from the things of this world. The Church delights in the law of God and they meditate upon it.

Jeremiah in 10:1-5 says, *"Hear ye the word which the Lord speaketh unto you, O house of Israel: Thus saith the Lord, LEARN NOT THE WAY OF THE HEATHEN, and be NOT dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. For the customs of the people are VAIN: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with NAILS AND WITH HAMMER, that it move not. They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good."* One of the major things in the pagan nations' worship was and is tree worship which is associated with Baal and Nimrod; yes, all the nations had this association, and still do today; -they even had a queen mother and had a little son (a little 'incarnate' son they said) -they had their own pagan imagery, a sungod and groves of evergreen trees. The emphasis in Jere 10 is on the words "Learn not the way of the heathen." But what has happened? Many of the people of God who seem to give evidence of being children of God, have learned the way of the heathen!

Dear reader, God changes not. He hasn't changed since the day of Jeremiah. He hasn't changed since the days He was here in the flesh some 2,000 years ago. He hasn't changed today -not one bit. It is not how the

world sees things, but how God Almighty ordains things. His Scripture teaches the child of grace to abhor evil in whatever form it takes, when sanctified by His Spirit.

Yes, I know someone says “But I don’t worship the tree or the ornaments - I worship Christ.” The answer to this statement is found in the Book of Joshua. In actuality the whole Book of Joshua teaches “Learn not the way of the heathen.” We find recorded in Joshua 23:7, “*That ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you; neither MAKE MENTION of the NAME OF THEIR GODS, nor cause to swear by them, neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them.*” Joshua says don’t even name them or identify with them and don’t have anything to do with them! Exodus 20:24, says: “*I am the thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.*” One thing we can get from Exodus 20 is that the child of God is not to use means, or aids, in his worship toward God. Dear reader, the Word of God leaves you, if you be a child of grace, without any excuse. It says to stay away from all parts of any pagan holiday.

Fourth, The last reason I find that people give for celebrating this day is this: “Everyone else is doing it and has been doing it for years.” The Scriptures warn the child of grace

not to follow a multitude to do evil (Exo.23 : 2). Child of grace, this means your friends, your relatives, father and mother, and the people with whom you work. It doesn’t matter who they might be, the child of God is not to identify with, or associate with, that which is evil and you are not to follow after the traditions of the fathers, nor anyone else.

The world, the wicked, love the things of “Christmas” and the things they associate with it. They love Christ in the cradle (?), they want Him wrapped up in swaddling clothes. They are like the Pharisees who would not have Him as Lord of all things. If you don’t put a two-edge sword in His mouth, if you don’t put royal robes upon Him, and if you keep Him in the manger, the world will love you and “that Christ.”

It may be that many who call themselves the children of grace are as those spoken of in John 21:43, where it says: “*For they love the praise of men more than the praise of God.*” Praise everyone else, please everyone else, love the flesh, but have no love for the glory and honor of the Saviour, Jesus Christ. Many worry about what everyone else says and does, but have no concern for what God has said in His Word.

I hope I believe in the Christ who was born to die so that all His people would live forever with Him, the Christ that is not in a cradle, but is the King of kings and Lord of lords, the Christ that is no longer in His mother’s arms, but is seated at the right hand of His Father. He is the King supreme, working all things according to His will and pleasure, raising up children of grace to praise His Name. Yes, Christ is the One who holds the key to life and death. He is no longer a baby in a manger. He is triumphant over all. He is the Mighty Conquerer, the Prince of Peace whose kingdom has no end.

What can we say? "If God be for us, who can be against us." Let the world have the cradle but the children of grace' thoughts are: "as for me and my house, we shall serve the Lord." I leave you with the words of Paul in I Corinthians 2:5: *"That your faith should NOT stand in the WISDOM OF MEN, but in the POWER OF GOD."*

COMMENTS

We realize that many of our readers may object to the above article. Realizing this, we wish to concur with the objections stated in the above article relative to this particular day and season. Old Baptists have been a people whose "word is their bond." They are known to be an honest people in dealings with their fellow man. This being so, how honest are we, when we teach our children there is a "Santa Claus"? Not very! How honest are we when we teach them that reindeer's can fly? Not much! How honest are we when we tell them that Christ was born on December 25? Very ignorant ourselves!

How faithful are we when we shun to bear the cross of offense? Let anyone who will, test the hatred of the world for the truth, forsake these festivities, and then you will know by experience how much your faith is detested! - *S.C.P.*

GOD TRIES AND REFINES HIS PEOPLE

By W. W. Hudson

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding

joy." - I Peter 4:12-13

Please remember that all Scripture is directed or inspired by the Word of the Lord. Dear reader, when you read the Scriptures, do you have a feeling the Lord is talking to you? When we think or say or do things that are not pleasing to the Lord, do we feel the displeasure of the Lord? Do we know anything about the "hiding face" of Almighty God? "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer." (Isaiah 54:7-8) "How long, Lord? wilt thou hide thyself forever? shall thy wrath burn like fire?" (Psalm 89:46)

If we read our experiences in the Scriptures, they give us comfort, do they not? This gives us some evidence that the Lord has touched our heart. Do you desire this evidence? Do you have a yearning desire to seek after the presence of the Lord?

As the Lord blesses us, let us carefully consider the 12th verse of the text: This is directed to those who have been quickened by the Spirit of the Lord. We think of this as instruction to the babes in Christ. "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 18:13) A little baby cannot feed or clothe his body, but is helpless and must be cared for by his parents.

The Lord teaches His people by experience. After we experience deliverance from the bondage of destruction we felt the sweetness of this joy and consolation that the world cannot know.

Do the following Scriptures trace out your experience? "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation,

a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him WHO HATH CALLED YOU OUT OF DARKNESS INTO HIS MARVELLOUS LIGHT.” (I Peter 2:9) Please notice that the Lord called us out of darkness. It is written: ...to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God... (Acts 26:18) “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.” (Col. 1:13) Is it not a great comfort that the Lord called and delivered us from the power of darkness? We do not have any strength of our own, but the Lord delivered us from bondage by His mighty power!

Do the following Scriptures mean anything to us? “And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of power, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.” (Eph. 2:1-3) If we have experienced this deliverance and- have been made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, then we know something about that new song and cannot help but to sing praises unto Almighty God.

“I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praises unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.” (Psalm 40:1-3) The children of God are the only ones who fear the Lord and trust Him, and who know anything about that new song. Dear ones, do you not

love the expression: “And He hath put a new song in my mouth”? The world does not know anything about this new song. “This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth My praise.” (Isa. 43:21) This Scripture shows forth the truth that the children of God shall praise the name of the Lord.

As the Lord blesses us, let us enter more deeply into the wise teachings of the Lord. The Lord knows our needs and has promised to supply them. Our carnal desires may cause us to desire many things, but please notice that the Lord knows better and has promised to supply our *needs*. “Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed? (for after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have *need* of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you.” (Matt. 6:31-33) May the Lord bless us to seek first the kingdom of God, to set our affection on things above and not upon this earth (Col. 3:2), and to do that which is -acceptable and well pleasing in the sight of the Lord.

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:” After we experienced deliverance from the bondage of darkness, we felt a joy which caused us to love everybody - a good feeling which cannot be humanly explained. We may even have thought we would never again be down in the valley. But the Lord taught us there is a growth in grace and it is through much tribulation that we enter into the kingdom of God. “Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the

kingdom of God.” (Acts 14:22) If we have the love of God in our hearts, (and not in an outward show), then the Lord will bless us to endure all the trials, tribulations, and afflictions that are placed upon us.

“But call to remembrance the formdays, in which, AFTER YE WERE illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; partly, whilst ye were made a gazing-stock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.” (Heb. 10:32-33) The expression “after ye were illuminated” has reference to those who have been born again or quickened by the Spirit of God. We did not know anything about affliction before we were brought to the knowledge of the truth, did we?

When severe trials, afflictions, and tribulations came our way we may have thought it strange, and wondered if something were wrong with us. We were cast down into the valley again, and doubts and fears came upon us, and we wondered if the Lord had forsaken us. We remembered the sweet seasons when we felt joy in our hearts, which caused us to sing praises unto the name of the Lord. But during this cold season of darkness, we wondered if we knew anything about the love of God, and there was a cry in our heart for the Lord to bring us out of the prison of darkness: *“Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name...”* (Psalm 142:7)

Dear reader, have you experienced these Scriptures: “I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made DILIGENT SEARCH. Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will He be favourable no more? Is His mercy clean gone for ever? doth His promise fail forevermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath He in anger shut up His tender mercies? Selah.” (Psalm 77:6-9) We think of this as the dark

winter season when we cannot feel the presence of the Lord, and we are made to wonder if grace has touched our hearts and if the Lord has forsaken us.

Do the following Scriptures trace your experience? “They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit’s end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He bringeth them out of their distresses.” (Psalm 107:26-28)

What is the “fiery trial” that the 12th verse of the text speaks of? (The 13th verse gives the answer). “But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s suffering...” All those that the Lord has elected and called to eternal life are partakers of Christ’s sufferings. These trials are hurtful to the flesh, but they are good for the soul. The Lord uses trials and tribulations to burn off our carnal desires, to burn off our pride, and to burn off the dross; as the natural fire burns off the dross from the gold and silver. “Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.” (Psalm 48:10) In the refining process the fire burns away the dross from the silver and gold. ...when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.” (Job 23:10) “And I will turn My hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin.” (Isaiah 1:25) “For thou, O God, hast proved us: Thou hast tried us, as silver is tried.” (Psalm 66:10)

Dear reader, do you not believe this Scripture to be in harmony with the text: “Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, IF NEED BE, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:” (I Peter 1:6) We believe this means the Lord has decreed, purposed, or predestinated that it is needful for us to be cast down for a season through

many and various temptations. “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” (I Pet. 1:7) If the Lord has blessed us with this faith, then it will stand the test of all these trials, afflictions and tribulations.

Let us note the 13th verse of the text again: “*But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.*” Why is the Lord telling us to rejoice? “My brethem, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.” (James 1:2-3) The Lord uses many and various temptations to teach us patience. How about the patience of Job? “Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.” (James 5:11)

“We glory in tribulation also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed: because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” (Romans 5:3-5) We know this is hurtful to the flesh, but the Scriptures and our experiences tell us that the Lord uses tribulations to teach us patience; patience which is all the more precious because it is learned through many sorrows. “Because *strait* is the gate, and narrow the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” (Matt. 7:14) *Strait* means “rigid, distressful, and a situation of perplexity or distress.” This is the connection with the Scripture that it is through much *tribulation* ye enter into the kingdom of God.

“*When His glory shall be revealed.*”

This is in the future because we receive only a foretaste of His glory upon this earth. “If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.” (I Peter 2:3)

The elect are partakers of the sufferings of Christ upon this earth. This is in connection with Romans 8:18: “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the *glory* which shall be revealed in us.” What is this *glory* which shall be revealed in us? Is it not eternal life? “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” (I Cor. 4:17) What is this *light affliction*? It is trials, tribulations, and afflictions that the saints of God experience upon this earth.

“*Ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.*”

Notice the expression, “exceeding joy.” Is not it something to look forward to? Does not it give you courage to press on in this low ground of sin and sorrow?

“Dark and thorny is the desert,

Through which pilgrims make their way,

But beyond this vale of sorrows,

Lie the fields of endless day.”

“And our hope of you is steadfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation.” (II Cor. 1:7) This Scripture shows that those who are partakers of the sufferings of Christ shall be partakers of the consolation or eternal glory.

Meanwhile, as long as we dwell upon this earth, may the Lord bless us to take heed to the Scripture: “*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, farasmuch as ye know that your labour is NOT IN VAIN IN THE LORD.*” (I Cor. 15:58)

THE DOCTRINE OF GRACE NO CHARGE OF LICENTIOUSNESS

By John Gill, Dec. 28, 1737

*“And to the doctrine which is according to
godliness.”* —I Tim. 6:3

The apostle Paul well understood the doctrine of the Gospel, and its natural tendency to influence the lives of men; and was very much concerned for the honor and credit of it; that the conversations of professors might be as became it, and that they would in all things adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour. He was very desirous of instructing men of the meanest capacities, and in the lowest situation of life: *as servants*, to behave agreeable to their masters, that *the name of God, and His doctrine, be not blasphemed*, ver. 1,2. He charges Timothy to *teach these things*, and *exhort* men to their duty; and adds, ver. 3. *“If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, &c* plainly intimating, that the words of Christ, or the salutary doctrines of the Gospel, perfectly accord with practical godliness; and that a dissolute life and conversation is very disagreeable to them. My view in reading these words is to vindicate the doctrine of grace from the charge of licentiousness, and to prove it to be a godly doctrine, and tending to godly edification; or that it is, as expressed in the text, *a doctrine according to godliness*.

I shall explain what is necessary in the proposition, “That the doctrine of grace is according to godliness.” By the *doctrine of grace*, I mean that system of evangelical truths which is commonly called Calvinistical; as, that God has from all

eternity loved some of the human race, and has chosen them unto everlasting salvation, by Jesus Christ; that He has made a covenant of grace with His Son on the behalf of the chosen ones, which is absolute and unconditional; that Christ in the fulness of time assumed human nature, suffered and died, to redeem a special and peculiar people to Himself; that by bearing their sins, and all punishment due unto them, He has made full satisfaction to the justice of God; that a sinner’s justification before God is only by the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, without any consideration of works done by Him; that pardon of sin is only through the blood of Christ, and for His sake, according to the riches of His grace; that God sees no sin in His justified and pardon ones, so as to condemn them for it; that regeneration and conversion are by the powerful and efficacious grace of God; and that those who are effectually called by grace, shall persevere to the end, and be eternally saved. This is the doctrine of the Bible, of the *Scriptures given by inspiration of God, and which are profitable for doctrine*, (II Tim.3:16) for explaining, stating, and defending this doctrine. This is the *doctrine of Christ*, which if a man brings not with him, who pretends to be a preacher of the Gospel, he is not to be received, nor *bid God-speed*. (II John 9:10) This is the doctrine of the apostles (Acts 2:42) we are steadfastly to continue in and abide by; and is summarily comprised in that excellent chain of truths, *Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate, to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified.* (Romans 8:29-30)

By *godliness* I understand not any particular grace, or the exercise of it; which seems to be the sense of the apostle, when he says, *add to patience, and to godliness brotherly kindness*; (II Peter 1:6,7) nor the whole of internal religion only; though that is the main and principal part of godliness, and is what an inspired writer means, when he observes, that *bodily exercise little, but godliness is profitable unto all things*; (I Tim. 4:8) but by it I understand the whole of practical religion, both external and internal, the exercise of every grace, and the discharge of every duty: which is what the apostle designs, when he thus concludes; *Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be, in all holy conversation and godliness?* (II Peter 3:11).

By the doctrine of grace being a godly doctrine, or a doctrine *according to godliness*, I mean, that godliness is the very life and soul of it; that it runs through every part of it, and is breathed by it; that it is the *the truth which is after godliness*; (Titus 1:1) that there is a perfect harmony and agreement between them; the mystery of Christ, of his person, and grace, being *the great mystery of godliness*; and that nothing more powerfully and effectually teaches and engages men to *deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present evil world, than the doctrine of the grace of God, which bringeth the news of free and unconditional salvation by Jesus Christ*.

Though such is the nature and tendency of the doctrine of grace, a charge is brought against it, as encouraging looseness of life, and opening a door to libertinism; and it is urged, that "IF God has chosen some infallibly to salvation, and made a covenant with them in Christ, to give them grace and

glory, in an absolute and unconditional way; IF Christ has redeemed them by His blood, and they are justified alone by His righteousness, and being called by His grace shall never perish; THEN they may live as they list, and take their whole swing of sin, since their state is safe and unalterable."

But this charge is no other than a suggestion of Satan. The reasoning is borrowed from him. The argument is an aping of him. It is shaped according to his plan and perfectly agrees with what he said to our Lord: *If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down; for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone*; (Matt. 4:6) Which is, as if he should say, "If this is the case, thou mayst do what thou wilt with thyself, no damage can arise unto thee, no hurt can be done thee." Moreover, Satan never more transforms himself into an angel of light, than when he sets up for a preacher of holiness, in opposition to the doctrine of grace; nor do his ministers ever more act the same part, than when under the guise of *ministers of righteousness*, or preachers of good works, they endeavor to undermine and sap the foundation of Gospel-doctrine. This charge springs from malice and ignorance; and it is hard to say which is the most predominant in it. The men that bring it, are, *as concerning the Gospel, enemies for our sake*, (Romans 11:28) and do as Diotrephes did, *prate against us with malicious words*; (III John 10) their *carnal minds* being *enmity against God*, they pronounce them foolishness, and *speak evil of the things they understand not*. The charge is FALSE and groundless, and to be treated as mere slander and calumny, and must be rejected with the utmost abhorrence and indignation; and ought

to have no other answer than what the apostle gives: *What shall we say then, we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?* (Romans 6:1,2)

However, this may serve somewhat to relieve and alleviate our minds under this horrid and heavy charge, that it is no other than what was levelled against Christ and His apostles. The spiteful and ignorant Jews charged our Lord with being an Antinomian, both in doctrine and practice. In doctrine, as appears from His vindication of Himself: *Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.* (Matt. 5:17) In practice, as is evident from those words of His: *John neither eating nor drinking, and they say he hath a devil; The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners;* but, adds, *Wisdom is justified of her* . And that the apostles of Christ were treated after this manner, is plain from what the apostle Paul says: *And rather, as we be slanderously report ed, and as some affirm that we say, Let us do evil that good may come, whose damnation is just.* (Rom. 3:8) All which should confirm us in the doctrine of grace we hold and maintain as true; since the same objections are made unto it, as were to the doctrine of Christ and His apostles.

It will be allowed, that the doctrine of grace may be, and has been abused by evil and wicked men. The apostle Jude speaks of some men in his days, who were *turning the grace of God into lasciviousness;* where by *the grace of God* is not to be understood the love and favour of God shed abroad in the heart by the Spirit; for that can NEVER be turned to such a purpose, it always working in

a contrary way, as it did in David; *thy loving kindness is before my eyes, and I have walked in thy truth:* (Psalm 26:3) nor the principle of grace wrought in the soul by a divine power; for that being of a spiritual nature lusteth against the flesh, and can never be turned into it: But by it is meant the doctrine of the Gospel, which, though lasciviousness is NOT in the nature of it, nor has it any natural tendency to it, yet wicked men, transfer it from its original nature, design, and use, to a foreign one. Just as *unlearned and unstable* men, who have no spiritual understanding of the word of God, nor any scheme of truth consistent with it, *wrest the scriptures to their own destruction.* But then, as the Scriptures are not to be thought the worse of, because of these men's wresting them; so neither is the doctrine of grace a whit the less to be valued, because it is abused by ill-disposed men. Let the characters of the men that turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, be enquired into; and *first,* they appear to be *ungodly men,* men devoid of the fear and reverence of God, and devotion to Him; who are not worshippers of Him.

Now who are they that neglect the private and public worship of God? Who are they that walk abroad in the field's on Lord's-days? or take their horses and ride, seeking their own pleasure? Who are they that frequent taverns and public houses, when they should be attending the house of God? Are these the men who are commonly called "Calvinists," the asserters of the doctrine of grace? Should the examination be strictly made, the above persons will be found, if not TO A MAN, yet by far the greatest part, ARMINIANS, if capable of giving any account of their religious sentiment. And *secondly,* the other part of their character looks with a dreadful aspect upon, and plainly points out those who

are on the other side of the question; *denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.* (Jude 4) Who are the demers of Christ's person, of His proper deity and equality with the Father, of His plenary satisfaction and expiatory sacrifice, of His imputed righteousness, and the efficacy of His blood? The deniers of these things are the men that turn the grace of God into lasciviousness; either by asserting it to be a licentious doctrine; or by treating the doctrine of special grace in a wanton and ludicrous manner, scoffing at it, and lampooning it; or by making the doctrine of grace universal, extending it equally alike to all mankind, and thereby harden and encourage men in sin.

Again, Be it so, that some who have notionally received and professed the pure doctrine of grace, have abused it to vile purposes; the doctrine itself is NOT TO BE REJECTED on that account, but the abusers of it. The best things in the world may be ill used by wicked men; yea, even the perfections and providences of God. Mercy is a perfection of the divine nature, and what God delights in: God is merciful, and therefore, says a profane sinner, I will take my fill of sin, and doubt not, if I have but opportunity at last to say, "Lord have mercy on me," all will be well. God is patient, long-suffering, bears with sinners, and does not stir up all His wrath immediately. What effect has this upon them? Does it lead them to repentance? It should do so. But they *despise the riches His goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth to repentance.* (Rom. 2:4) Yea, as the apostle Peter says, and we have lived to see it verified, *There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all*

continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. (II Peter 3:3,4) Which is to say we see no likelihood of the coming of the Judge, nor of the awful judgment, or dreadful doom that shall befall ungodly persons, which have been talked of: this is all dream and enthusiasm; and therefore we will take our own pleasure, and walk after our own lust. Thus *because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.* (Eccl. 8:11)

Now must it be said that God is not merciful, patient, long-suffering and forbearing, or that He ought not to be so, because sinners make such ill improvement of these things? How are the common mercies of life, and the most kind instances of divine providence abused, by the worst of men! (Ed.- Yea, today, even denied outright to be of God at all!) Yea, even Jeshurun himself, when he *waxed fat he kicked, then he forsook God which made him, and lightesteemed the rock of His salvation.* (Deut. 32:15) But must we deny the PROVIDENCE OF GOD, and REJECT the instances of His goodness, because of the ill use that is made of them, through the wretched depravity of human nature? Nor should we discard the doctrine of grace on such an account: At this rate, the best of things, the plainest facts and clearest truths, must be denied and rejected.

Once more: It will be owned, that there have always been some bad men in the best of societies. There was a Judas among Christ's disciples; there has always been chaff upon His floor, and will until the winnowing time comes; and tares among the wheat, wolves in sheep's clothing, and foolish virgins among the wise, until the Bridegroom appears. But then the faults and blemishes of some are not to be imputed to the whole body, nor these to

principles held and professed. If this must be admitted the measure and rule of judgment, no church or congregation, no society or set of men whatever, have been, or can be free from the vilest imputations. But are the generality of those who are called “Calvinists,” or “Antinomians,” men of bad characters? Or are there more immoral persons among them, than on the other side of the question? Let them look at home, we are ready to compare notes and numbers with them! We are obliged in defence of ourselves, since our principles are charged, to use some sort of boasting, and say, in like manner as Samuel did: *Here we are, witness against us, before the Lord, and before His anointed: Whose ox or ass have we taken? Whom have we defrauded, or oppressed?* (I Sam 12:3) This is worthy of notice, that the DOCTRINE OF GRACE NEVER HAD A RLN AMONG RAKES AND DEBAUCHEES; whereas it is WELL KNOWN the opposite to it has been, and is embraced by such! Strange! If the doctrines of FREE GRACE are of such a malignant nature and influence, have such a tendency to licentiousness, and give so much encouragement to sin, as is said, that such persons should not greedily catch at them and embrace them, at least make a trial of them; when it is plain they are ready to give into all the absurd and wretched schemes of Infidelity and Atheism, in order to keep their lusts; but instead of this, none shew a GREATER HATREI) to them! And indeed, these are as forward as any to be our accusers; though the charge comes with an ill grace from such who are abandoned to the worst of crimes, and are avowed enemies to holiness of life. One thing more I would observe, and that is, That when any who have embraced and professed the doctrine of grace fall into any open and scandalous sin, there is immediately a great

clamour and uproar about it; whereas when it is the case, as it frequently is, on the opposite side, little or no notice is taken of it. What should be the reason of this? Because the case is COMMON on one side, (the Freewill side) and comparatively RARE, and but seldom heard of on the other: So that *the* noise that is made, and the notice thud is taken, do but indeed make to our credit and reputation in general. Hut supposing the instances of immorality were more than they’ are, and whenever they happen, are matter of lamentation; yet, I AVER, THAT THE DOCTRINE OF GRACE ITSELF IS PURE AND INNOCENT, AND NOT TO BE CHARGED WITH THE FAULTS AND BLEMISHES OF ANY OF THE PROFESSORS OF IT; NOR DOES IT GIVE ANY ENCOURAGEMENT TO SIN, BUT IS ALL THE REVERSE: and this will be made to appear. by considering the several particular doctrines contained in it.

COMMENTS

We do not like to continue an article from one month to another. However, the best and sweetest part of this article is contained it its positive defence of the several specific aspects of our doctrine; such as: God’s everlasting love; personal and unconditional election; absoluteness and unconditionality of the covenant of grace; particular redemption; satisfaction of Christ for our sins; justification by imputed righteousness of Christ; free and full remission of sins; sanctification; efficacious grace in conversion; and final perseverance of the saints. We will, the Lord willing, print the defence next month.

We invite you to send us names and addresses of anyone you feel has a love for free grace doctrine. We can use them.