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SUBSCRIBERS: Please send all subscriptions, contributions, and change of address notices to:

The Predestinarian Business Office
% Grady E. Dearman
206 Opal Drive
Laurel, MS 39440

EDITORIAL STAFF:

Grady E. Dearman
206 Opal Drive
Laurel, MS 39440

Woodrow W. Hudson
208 Fredrick Street
Bastrop, LA 71220

Stanley C. Phillips (601) 776 - 6056
Route 4, Box 157
Quitman, MS 39355

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THE REDEEMED OF THE LORD

By Jesse Delves, 1942

(Note: We are indebted to Mr. Bruncker, pastor of the Ebenezer Strict Baptists Church in London for the following selection. Mr. Jesse Delves was born in 1891, and passed away in 1980, having served Ebenezer from 1935 to 1977. Our readers have been introduced to both his and Mr. Bruncker's writings before. In addition, Irene Fuller and some friends have graciously sent us good wholesome materials for some times now. This faithful flock has brought together a book on the *Life, Letters, and Sermons of Jesse Delves*, their very gifted minister, to share with lovers of free grace in our generation. The book and information can be had by writing Mr. S.A.J. Coffins, 3 Parkthorne Rd., Clapham Park, London, SW 12 0JN.

The sermons, I am impressed, give a goodly and sound view of our Strict Baptists brethren. They are doctrinally sound and present the truth of free grace in a very clear experimental manner in the love and power of the truth. One can feel a kindred spirit breathed throughout in the trials, afflictions, and triumphs of reigning grace.

We extent our warm greetings to all these faithful saints who have so graciously given themselves up to the Lord and His truth to so sacrifice in this labor of love.)

"Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy." — Psa. 107:2

I had not anticipated taking this subject this afternoon; in fact, since the close of this morning's service I have in my inner feelings been, as we speak, at the ends of the earth. I felt much disappointment on account, in my feelings, of a failure in speaking this morning and have been driven here and there,

wondering and questioning what I should do for this afternoon. But it may be, and the Lord knows, that there is a purpose for good even in one's feeling of humiliation. We have to learn thereby our *utter dependence upon Him*; and a sense of shame, at times, is not the worst thing for us if it has the effect of humbling us before God and bringing us in a certain sense into the place described of the Lord's people in this Psalm when "they fell down, and there was none to help." Dependence is mortifying to our proud nature, but dependence upon God to a believer is at times sweet, because he realizes there is no ground for despair on account of his own poverty, but he may apply himself continually and freely to that Fountain of all grace Who can respond to and answer every need. Therefore in some of these inner things (and I pass through many things not known to you, my hearers and my people too) if in these inner exercises that I pass through (and that you pass through for you pass through things I do not know) we have grace really to observe these things I feel persuaded that we shall understand and perceive much of the loving kindness of our God in them.

So I have been thinking again of this Psalm and have been trying to reap another fragment from it; and in reviewing it again there were three particular features in it which have impressed my mind. Firstly with regard to these redeemed ones we can say they had a good beginning. Why so? Because the Lord gathered them. They were not a people who made up their minds to be religious for certain purposes that might be advantageous to themselves, but they were dealt with by the merciful hand of God when they were lost and ruined in the fall of Adam, and would have been everlastingly lost but for His quickening grace. I like that word because it is expressive; He "gathered them out of the lands, from the East, and from the West, from the North, and from the South." So the Lord

began with them, and if your religion is of God He began it with you! All real religion begins in God's coming to poor people in their helpless, ruined state. Whatever outward circumstances He may use, the new birth is divine, that is to say, it is from God. And furthermore, providentially we see how the Lord gathers His people from all parts of the world; doubtless He has them in the most unthought-of places. He gathers them "out of the lands, from the East and from the West, from the North and from the South," and we believe He has gathered some who are here at this present time. It is a wonderful mercy to have a real religion. It is an amazing thing that, though the matters of eternity are of paramount importance, they are of the least concern to the majority of people, who pay but little heed to them, having much care and thought for material things for their bodies, but little care for their souls. Let us give good heed to the Word of Christ, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" What would the world be to us if we were lost eternally? It is safe to say that on a dying bed nothing but that precious provision of the Gospel can give abiding and tasting comfort.

Secondly, these people who are thus gathered were brought forth in a right, though a trying and difficult, way. The Lord never designed that it should be otherwise with His people; they have to be pilgrims, often struggling against wind and tide, facing much opposition within, and sometimes without too, contending with crosshanded providences that weigh them down and press their minds and spirits, whereby the great adversary of souls will assail them and try to make them infidels if he could. But still, notwithstanding the vicissitudes of life and the changes through which these people pass, the Lord leads them forth by the right way. They are taken out of the wrong way and *put into the right way* and if the Lord had a hand in the

beginning He will keep it up; He will never take up the case of a sinner and then drop it.

‘Whom once He loves He never leaves
But loves him to the end.’

(Gadsby’s 351)

“He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” (Phil. 1:5)

But O what changes they had, what trials they suffered, what sins they committed, and what extremities they were driven to, sometimes reeling to and fro and staggering like a drunken man, sometimes at their wits’ end. You may have been, and in all probability all the Lord’s people are at times, at the end of their tether, as we say, and know not what to do; but it is then that the Lord appears. Several times it is reiterated in this Psalm that when they cried unto the Lord in their trouble He heard and saved them out of their distresses. Let us observe these things. It would seem, therefore, that the Lord’s purpose in laying these trials upon His people is to bring them to this point and place, because evidently they did not cry before, but when “He brought down their heart with labour”; when “they fell down and there was none to help”, when they went “down to the sea in ships” doing “business in great waters” then they saw His wonders. Then they cried unto the Lord in their troubles, and He was just the same every time. That is a mercy, is it not? It does not say, in the first instance they cried unto Him and He delivered them out of their distresses, and the second time decided to do it once more, and the third time would have no more patience with them. Where would you and I be if such were the case with us? Continued lovingkindness and exhaustless patience are needed with such creatures as we, for we are continually turning aside from Him. O what fools we are! “Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.” They went away from Him, yet He would not leave them, but

would bring them back again. He dealt with them in chastening, brought them down, and they cried unto Him and He forgave them again, pardoned them again, delivered them again. Frequent deliverances! “Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.” “O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!”

There is another point here, and that is thirdly, He brought them ultimately to their desired haven. They did not perish in the storm, did not go to the bottom of the sea in the tempest; though often doubtless you may fear you will ultimately, you never can if Jesus is the Pilot, for He goes before; all the storms are at His command. “He bringeth them to their desired haven.” He brings these poor people there. Then it can be said that all their sorrows and cries will be turned into praises and their song, yea, their everlasting Alleluia, will be unto Him Who loved them and washed them from their sins in His own blood and hath made them kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory (and to no one else) world without end. “So He bringeth them unto their desired haven.” So He began with them; He gathered them, He brought them on by a right way, and kept them in it, and ultimately brought them to the desired haven. O what a mercy to be in the hand of God thus. Let us then by His grace seek that wisdom whereby we may observe these things and understand the lovingkindness of the Lord. Doubtless there is much lovingkindness in the bitter things, that is, in the things that are bitter to us. But O, some of you would have turned things about if you could; you would have altered things; you would have straightened this or that crooked circumstance. How differently you would have had things if you could; but still the Lord is good, and *He makes* crooked things straight and rough places plain. Let us

give thanks unto Him. Who are the people that could unite in this song? The redeemed of the Lord. Let them say so, let them sing the song. "The righteous shall see it and rejoice: and all iniquity shall stop her mouth." That seems to reveal to us the twofold fact that ultimately the righteous shall open their mouths in praise, and shall joy and rejoice in God's mercy in salvation; but all iniquity shall stop her mouth, shall be dumb with silence before this great God and His ways.

"Let the redeemed of the Lord say so."

This word *redemption* means, as we understand it, to buy again by paying a ransom price, or to deliver from some state and condition of slavery and bondage and servitude. The word is put before us in the Scripture in a typical way by the redemption of Israel from the land of Egypt. Truly that redemption was by the *power of God alone* by the hand of Moses His servant, who as the leader of His people in bringing them forth from their Egyptian captivity may be a type of Christ; also in respect of the slaying of the paschal lamb whereby the price of redemption is foreshadowed. It was God's ordinance and command that the lamb should be slain and should be eaten, and the blood sprinkled upon the lintel and two side posts of the houses. Thus the Lord redeemed His people from their bondage, brought them out with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm. But that is only a type, a figure, and though an evidence of one of the many wonderful works of God to His people, falls into insignificance in comparison with the redemption by Christ of all His spiritual seed from eternal death, from the curse of a broken law and everlasting punishment, all of which they deserved on account of their manifold transgressions and breaches of God's righteous law. Yet he redeemed them. He redeemed His ancient people and delivered them; He brought them out, He led them through, and ultimately brought them into the promised land.

Although this Psalm does not seem to apply to the children of Israel in respect to their deliverance from Egypt and wilderness wanderings as God's national people, so much as to His spiritual people, who are gathered in, not from a literal Egypt but from all parts North and South, East and West; yet He redeemed Israel and thereby foreshadowed that great and glorious redemption whereby the chosen seed, chosen from before the foundation of the world, were redeemed by the blood of Christ.

Let me look for a few brief moments at this redemption. First, in respect of the cause and reason of it. Where can we find this? In ourselves? The cause of it was never in us; the end of it is in us, because of our transgressions and sins. No hope could there ever be for us of deliverance, life, pardon, justification and heaven, apart from God Himself; but the end is in us. I feel persuaded of this great point that every object of this redemption will, in the Lord's dealing with him feel that end; will be pained by his own sin and guilt and yet will receive that forgiveness that flows from the wounds and merits of our blessed Emmanuel. O yes, but the cause of this is in God. It is in Himself, and it was there from everlasting, it flows from His free, eternal, everlasting love. It knows no other source, it can come no other way. The design and plan was in the decree and council of Jehovah before the world was. This is that "river, the streams whereof shall make glad the City of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High." It is amazing, is it not, to us sometimes that the Majesty of heaven should have looked with complacency in eternity upon poor sinful, guilty, ruined men, upon such insignificant mortals as we, and given us a place in the blessed Person of Christ in the decree of electing love. O friends, if that were so really, and if we are the objects of that love that was in the heart of God from everlasting toward

His people, we shall surely need an eternity to praise Him for it, for it will indite in our hearts a song that we shall never tire of in eternity. But here we see the cause of this great and grand design and the plan of it in the council of the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Each of the divine Persons in the Trinity has His part; and yet the work in respect of the design and fulfilment and the blessed effects of it are all in one blessed God, one God in three Persons, Father, Son and Spirit. As we have it revealed to us in the Scripture, we may believe that the part of the Father in this blessed transaction, was to elect and appoint His own Son to be the suffering Surety of His people. "Behold My Servant whom I uphold, Mine Elect in whom My soul deighteth." The Lord Jesus Christ was appointed in the decrees of the Father to be His Servant. He was ever a Son; but in the council of peace, in the covenant engagement essential to the salvation of the Church, He became a Servant. He did undertake to honourably and faithfully fulfil the will of God; He espoused the cause of His people. All this was committed into His hand by the eternal Father, and the part of the blessed Son of God, in love to man's lost race, was to condescend, in the fullness of time, to come down to this earth, as we speak in our language, though He was still in heaven in respect of His divine Person — to appear on this earth in human nature, to suffer and die, and pay the ransom price of man's (His elect-Ed.) redemption. This was the part of the Son. Moreover, it did not end there with His groans and death upon Calvary's cross, but He rose again and ascended into heaven as the Representative of all the redeemed of the Lord. O, I bless God for such a truth as that. I need a living Priest and I feel sure I have one in heaven; at least I know I am lost without one; that much I can avouch. But I have felt the strength of that word which Christ said to His disciples, "Because I live, ye shall live

also." O blessed Christ, His life is our life. Then again we have the revelation to us by the Holy Ghost of the cause of this great and grand work of redemption. That appears to be His part in that profound and glorious mystery. He takes of the things of Jesus and shows them unto poor people. O what a sight it is! How it softens the heart; what worship it produces, how it makes you love Him, admire and adore Him. One hymn writer got a little of that view when he said,

I'd creep beside Him as a worn
And see Him bleed for me." (Gadsby's 950)

Now the Holy Spirit takes of these glorious mysteries and reveals them to faith. You say, I cannot understand them. No, that is perfectly true; I cannot understand them, but if the Holy Ghost reveals them to your faith you will receive them and love them and rejoice in them. O it is wonderful for a poor sinner to have an experience of the Gospel in his heart. Yes!

"None but Jesus, none but Jesus,
Can do helpless sinners good."

Here then, we see the grand design and plan set in the eternal purposes and all fulfilled according to the will of God. But think of the ransom price that had to be paid for our redemption. What was that price? It was the heart's blood of the Saviour; nothing less would do. It was the price that had to be paid to that cruel, inveterate foe who held them in his power in their unregeneracy, who held us and would have held us now, had not the Lord mercifully delivered us from his hand — if He has done so — and we believe He has. But the ransom price the Saviour paid to Justice, not to the devil; nothing had to be paid to Satan. The Lord's people are delivered from Satan's power but no compensation is there paid. The payment of the mighty debt was made into the hand of Justice who held us

as prisoners under a broken law and an impending curse; and O, what a price, what a price it was! I feel that the Apostle Paul brings this point to light where writing to the Corinthians he says, "He hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we ought be made the righteousness of God in Him." Why, my friends, that is the Gospel in two sentences — Christ made sin, and sinners made righteous by His obedience and bloodshedding, standing in their guilty place, suffering the curse they deserved, yea, enduring their hell that they might have His heaven. O what a price it was! Peter brings the same point to light. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold ... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot." This is it! my friends, my spiritual hearers, this is it which nourishes faith, relieves in distress, gives birth to hope, inspires confidence, produces holy comfort, repentance, godly sorrow, faith and love. *You* get a sight of a bleeding Jesus and weep at His cross for a few moments; then it may be said you have a religion, a religion that will carry you to heaven ultimately. O yes! He paid the price great though it was. Here we have something that is beyond our conception. Yes, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." O to see that wonderful exchange; the imputation of our sins to Christ and the imputation of His righteousness unto us. This is the Gospel! "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so." Have you any hope in your heart that this mercy has come? "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so." Have you ground by past experience, by present feeling, in any measure to hope, to believe, that the price was paid to ransom your soul from the curse? Then say so! "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy."

The Psalmist here would say "If the Lord has done anything for you surely it is worth mentioning; why keep silence?" "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so." Speak of it. "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His Name." O how condescending was this!

But who are the objects of this redemption of Christ's? Why, poor sinners, poor sensible, needy sinners, the elect of God from all eternity; and none beside these elect ones are brought into the evidence of that election by the Spirit dealing with them in their personal cases, in their experience, in bringing them down, lifting them up, bringing them into troubles, bringing them out of it, into bondage, setting them free, bringing them to the Throne of Grace and opening their hearts in prayer, giving them to see deliverances, and enabling them to praise God for His goodness. "O give thanks unto the Lord for He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever." "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so;" let them speak of the goodness of God, for they can. "Those whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy." But O, some of you may say, "Yes, that is very well for those who feel certain, who have had some deliverance, who can look back upon certain things with some measure of composure and can believe that the Lord has done this, or that, and has blessed them there." Yes, it is; but you know even those people do not always feel able to speak; in fact for the most part it is very difficult. The Lord's people, it is true, vary much with respect to speaking of His dealings with them, but when the heart and lip is open and there is a little enlargement felt, and the goodness of the Gospel flows out, then how acceptable it is! There seems to be no restriction here, does there?

“Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy.” But you say, “I am not like that. I feel to be in such darkness, bondage, fear, doubt and uncertainty; everything is clouded over with me, I see not my signs.” Well, poor sinner, if that is your case, what can you do? Ask God to clear the clouds away, and if you have never had an evidence of His goodness in your felt sinful state, then wait on Him for it. Remember this word, “They shall not be ashamed that wait for me.” He is a good God to bad sinners. And it is sweet when there is a little light thrown down upon the path, a little blessing felt in the heart, and a little sense of the goodness of God overcoming our reserve and constraining us to break out in praise to His Name for His mercy. O I wish many could! O how good it would be if the Lord were to bless His people up and down the land with a reviving, and to give them fresh things, give them such things as that they might delight to talk together of His goodness! We are living in dark days, but the truth remains, the Gospel remains, let us be thankful for that. And if we feel dark, and distant, and cold, and weary, as these are here described, wandering in the wilderness in a solitary way, hungry and thirsty, our souls fainting within us; if we feel like that, then let us cry unto the Lord in our distress, for we have this word, “This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.” He will deliver you. He is a faithful God, for He has delivered, He doth deliver, and you can trust Him, that He will yet deliver.

“Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us.”

“Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy.” Amen. (*Life, Letters, and Sermons* of J. Delves)

THE DIVINE IMPERATIVE: YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN

By S. C. Phillips

Satan has more gimmicks to delude individuals into a false security of salvation than anyone can analyze in a brief article. Many are the man-made “plans of salvation” and throughout the world there are ten thousands of “Lo here, and lo there” quick and easy ways to enlist souls into organizations. But ah, how serious a matter that is so lightly taken by the multitudes! The eternal destiny of a soul is weighed against commercial “quick fixes” designed for modern-paced living!

These gimmicks range from the ancient sprinkling of infants before they are conscious of their soul’s need, to deliberate tricks designed to lure children into religious societies’ membership, membership in popular religious “in-groups”, and promised camping trips for joiners. Once committed, the poor child is reared to believe his soul is safe from danger — not on the basis of anything Christ or the Holy Spirit have done —but solely upon his “Christian commitment (to which he may not have ever been committed in the first instance). Thus deluded, millions busy themselves in “helping the Lord” achieve what He has already accomplished by the sacrificial life and death He suffered in behalf of poor sensible sinners. Far too many expect to earn the blessings of the eternal God by performing acts which are totally unwarranted, or which were already effectually performed by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Such deluded souls have no experiential basis to suspect a difference exists between the mere nominal confession and the powerful circumcision of the heart by the operation of the Holy Spirit. Having nothing by which to compare the “precious from the vile,” nor anything to create and remove a sin-ridden

conscience, they run after vain imaginations, follow charismatic speakers, and famous personalities, and esteemed religious organizations. Being dogmatic in their nominal “know-so salvation,” (as they delight to call it) nothing in the Gospel exhortations and warnings spark any alarm to their benighted souls. Thus they pass through their “Christian experience” without an experience, unto everlasting damnation with ease and complacency.

Indeed, the ministers of Satan have built bulwarks against any effectual warnings by their twisted Arminian and Pelagian concepts. The great imperative “Ye must be born again” or “born from above” as an experiential work within the soul is glossed over as enamel on a rusty tin can. To be born again, they are led to believe it consist of one of several external acts, such as: “making a decision for Christ,” “taking the sacraments,” “joining the church,” following three or four “simple acts of faith”, baptism, “walking down an aisle”, doing “charity works,” or “reforming society.” All these are unwarranted external acts by which souls are deluded into a sense of security while they continue unchanged in an unregenerate state. Yet they truly believe they are thus “born again Christians.” Nothing short of the power of God can pull that false foundation out from under them, and this power must be a sovereign unaided work of the Holy Spirit of God.

Still more sad is the fact that many called “Calvinists” make regeneration a magical incantation of pet Scriptures, as John 3:16, conjoined with Gospel preaching, or “Gospel regeneration”. Thus they deny the very doctrine they espouse — effectual calling by the Spirit - or at least make it a cooperative effort between the preacher “with proper church authority” and the Holy Spirit. In so doing, they appear unaware that while preaching the sovereignty of God the Father and of the Son, they deny the sovereignty of

the Holy Spirit and thus destroy (for themselves) the concept of the eternal Godhead. They feel for some reason that they must in some wise still give at least a little initiative to man — if only the preacherman — to effectuate salvation. Many can preach great convincing sermons on the *total* depravity of man, and then inconsistently conclude that man is not quite so *totally* depraved but what he can at least spiritually hear the Gospel *before* the Spirit can, or will, regenerate. In so doing, they destroy the strongest basis for the alarming of sinners to their soul’s eternal condition. To establish the doctrine of Total Depravity, they cite, “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (I Cor. 2:14) And, “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” (Romans 8:7, 8) Both texts indeed establish the point. But then by appealing to natural man and by advocating Gospel regeneration, they insist that the natural man *can receive* the Gospel spiritually; *can discern* spiritual things; and *can please* God in the flesh prior to being regenerated or given spiritual life.

The divine imperative “Ye must be born again” is set in opposition to the dreadful condition of natural man by the Saviour and the apostles. The Gospel of free grace will never reach a man that is not *totally lost*, and so long as he believes that he has some innate quality or ability, his lost estate is never fully realized. Jesus said he came “to seek and to save that which was lost.” He did not come merely seeking — but to save the lost. He testified, “I came not to call the righteous, but sinner to repentance.”

Thanks be unto God He is able, and for His elect, He always makes them see their total, absolute lost estate in spite of the false

preachers and worldly religious organizers. The absolute sovereignty of the Holy Spirit to “quicken whom He will” is the most wholesome and God-honoring doctrine of this One of the eternal Godhead. He sovereignly quickens thousands, even in Mystery Babylon under its evil influence — not by using their perverted gospel — but in spite of it. Thus He calls them out. How can one explain an Arminian, or freewill deceiver, coming to the beauty of the excellency of free grace; proclaiming in the very midst of adversity the freeness of grace; and converting some, or even whole congregations, to the truth except that the Holy Spirit did the work in spite of his former blindness? Prior to preaching the doctrines of Christ and receiving it in the love and power of it, such a person did not hear the Gospel first, yet came to believe and love it. How? By the same way Cornelius, Lydia, Paul, and every other child of grace — by Holy Spirit regeneration. For if it takes “hearing” the Gospel for the Holy Spirit to regenerate, then this person would have been doomed, for what the freewill religious world is preaching is anything else but the Gospel to poor sinners. As a free grace preacher once told me, “If it takes preaching the Gospel for one to be regenerated, then there will not be enough in heaven to form a choir!”

It is a matter of great hope to a poor and needy sinner searching vainly for a true Gospel church, to rest in this one fact: “The Spirit quickeneth whom He will.” He needs not be lost eternally because of the faithlessness of preachers, nor for an inability of the Holy Spirit to reach his case. He can rest assured that those for whom Christ died will be effectually called, regenerated, converted and justified. All hell, demons, and preachers notwithstanding, the foundation of God “standeth sure having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His.” The basic argument utilized by the first group of modern Baptists was that thousands and

millions were dying and going to hell, for whom Christ died, because Baptists were too stingy to get sufficient money to the Baptist Board of Foreign and Domestic Missions; and this was the most God-dishonoring and damnable concept predestinarians among Baptists had every heard.

Every single soul created by God is duty-bound to honor and obey Him, ability or inability notwithstanding. It is imperative that every offspring of Adam’s race repent and believe whatever degree of revelation He is pleased to give them. Yet none will nor can truly repent without “godly sorrow which worketh repentance.” True repentance is produced within the quickened sinner by a sorrow which is OF GOD. None will or can believe, except God gives them faith, “For by grace are ye saved through faith, and THAT (faith) not of yourselves, it is a GIFT OF GOD.” Yet it is necessary for these two experimental graces, that one be first “born again.” They are spiritual, and the “Natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit. neither can he know them, for they are SPIRITUALLY discerned.” That new birth is “from above” by the Spirit, and altogether of a different nature to any natural emotions of belief or grief occasioned by the flesh. “The letter killeth, but the Spirit maketh alive.”

Throughout the history of Gospel churches, a pattern of God’s work is clearly demonstrated. The Spirit, independent of the Gospel (whether in its presence or out of it), moves upon a community or upon individuals bringing sinners to a lost, hopeless, and helpless condition. They remain in that condition of misery, often seeking every conceivable means to deliver themselves, until they are made to acknowledge that God is just in their condemnation and ruin. They despair of all hope that they can possibly be saved, and yet they can not turn back. They struggle as a child to be delivered in birth. And, bless His Holy Name, in His appointed

time, He will send the Gospel in His own providential way to this lost and undone sinner. The “gospel” by definition is glad tidings. To such a one, enabled by a spiritual quickened life within, his poor heart will leap for joy, rejoicing in the hope of eternal salvation and will feel his sins pardoned and find rest for his soul. In this hour of his “first love” he will experimentally and powerfully know true godly sorrow, repentance, and faith in his dear Redeemer. He is in this deliverance converted by the Gospel.

Surely no one can read the historical documents of the churches, of Isaac Backus, or A.B. Semple, without being able to see clearly how God saved His people in regeneration by the Spirit and by Gospel conversion. Yea, surely, no one having been brought through “much tribulation to enter the kingdom of God” would ever thereafter believe that any part of salvation was left up to the creature. These are they “which were born, not by blood, nor the will of flesh, nor the will of man, but of God.” (Jn. 1:13)

NEITHER HAVING DONE GOOD OR EVIL

By W. W. Hudson

“For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth; It was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.” — Rom. 9:11-13

We trust that God will enable us to rightly divide the word of truth, and also to write in the spirit of love. We wish the reader to keep this expression in mind: “that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth.” We believe Election is taught in the text. God

loved Jacob and hated Esau before either were born. (Of course, this love and hatred dates back before the foundation of the world, or even before time was in existence.)

If God “decided” to love Jacob and hate Esau after they were born, then this would be according to their looks, or to some of their actions or deeds. That being true, then the purpose of God according to election would not stand. But the Scripture teaches that God chose a people in Him from before the foundation of the world. Therefore, God chose His people before they were in existence. The actions of the creature did not influence God in choosing them to be conformed to the image of His Son. Also, God did not choose His people because He foreknew they would be better than the rest. There is not any guess work in the matter. God called His people out of nature’s darkness and left the rest where they were. Therefore, by nature, God’s people are not any better than the rest.

In the sixth verse of this chapter, we note that Paul said, “For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel.” Meaning, just because one is a natural Israelite does not mean that he is a Spiritual Israelite. Notice the 7th verse, “Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, in Isaac shall Thy seed be called.” Just because one is of the natural offspring of Abraham does not mean that gives him a right to heaven. Natural Israel is a type of Spiritual Israel. “In Isaac shall Thy seed be called.” This does not mean the natural offspring of Isaac — Esau was a son of Isaac. In this instance, we see Isaac as a type of Jesus Christ.

Also, notice there is sharp difference between being of the seed of Abraham and being the children of Abraham. One may be of the children of Abraham and not be of the *seed* of Abraham, which include Gentiles. We wish to call your attention to John 8:12-44. As Jesus was talking to the unbelieving Jews,

they remarked that they were Abraham's seed. Jesus answered, "I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because My word hath no place IN you. I speak that which I have seen with My Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. They answered and said unto Him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, if ye were Abraham's children, we would do the works of Abraham." Jesus plainly told these Jews that even though they were of the seed of Abraham, did not mean they were the *children* of Abraham. They proved what they were by their works. They did not do the works of Abraham. "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." James 2:17

All of natural Israel are of the seed of Abraham, but all are not of the spiritual seed of Jesus Christ. – Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved." (Romans 9:27)

The promise that was given to Abraham had a deep spiritual meaning, "For the promise, that he should be heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: (no eternal life promised under the law — just natural blessings) Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all." (Rom. 4:13-16) The meaning in a nutshell is this: The promise is sure to all the Spiritual seed— both Jews and Gentiles. The Jews are of the law, and the faith of Abraham also reaches to the Gentiles.

"Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." These were the twill sons of Isaac, so both were of the seed of Abraham. The Lord

said unto Isaac's wife: "Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger." (Gen. 25:23) As we think of the two nations, we think of sheep and the goats, or of the elect and the wicked.

The natural man would like to twist the Scriptures around and try to make it mean something other than what is written. We make no apologies for the truth, and it does not need any of our weak support. We know it is our lot to speak the truth in love, and we further believe it is our duty to earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, and not to "whitewash the truth."

"Jacob have I loved." Remember the Scripture: "Two nations are in thy womb." Therefore, Jacob represents the nation of God's people. "For the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance." (Deut. 32:9) This Scripture gives solid proof that Jacob represents the people of God whom He hath chosen for His own inheritance. (See Psalm 33:12) "The Lord's portion." This means a part or fraction, doesn't it? This is in harmony with the Scripture that says, "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." (Rom. 11:5) Also we read, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12:32) Jesus did not say "big flock", but rather little flock. This also shows that God's people are few in number compared to all of mankind.

"Mine heritage is unto Me as a speckled bird, the birds round about are against her..." (Jer. 12:9) This Scripture also shows that God's people are few in number. How? The Scripture says "as a speckled bird" in the singular, and not in the plural. Yet, the birds round about her are mentioned in the plural. This Scripture shows that there is a difference between God's people and the world. God's

people are spoken of as “Children of Light.” The world is in darkness and hates the light. Therefore, God’s people are hated by the world. “If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” (John 15:19)

Let us go back to Jacob. “He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye.” (Deut. 32:10) I believe this Scripture shows where God finds all of His people. This not only applies to Jacob himself, but it also applies to all of God’s people. We ask you dear reader, have you been there? Do you know what it is to be in a barren condition? Have you been in a place where there is not any rest? Have you become so helpless (in a spiritual sense) that you could not lead yourself, and that you could not travel on your own strength and you desired guidance, and prayed as one did: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.” (Psalm 61:2)

God found Jacob in a desert land. We believe this means it was the time when God first made Himself known to Jacob. So, when God first made Himself known to you, you were not in a pleasant condition. God showed what you were by nature, and that you were a lost and ruined sinner. “Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations.” (Ezek. 16:2) It is necessary for one to be taught that he is a sinner before he will have any need of mercy. When one realizes that he is a sinner, he cannot help but cry out for mercy. He cries because he feels the need of mercy. This prayer is not mechanical, but one cries for deliverance because he wants relief.

The love of God is everlasting. We believe that God has loved His people from all eternity. As God has chosen His people in Him from before the foundation of the world, we believe that God has loved this same

people from before the foundation of the world. “I am the Lord, I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.” (Malachi 3:6) We believe the comfort of this Scripture shows that God is not changeable, and that He will continue to love His people, and that He will never forsake them even though in their feelings they may feel that God has forgotten them, or forsaken them.

“But Esau have I hated.” The love of God is perfect, and the hatred of God is perfect. Love and hate are two opposites, just as light and darkness. We think of the love of God as the positive side, and the hatred of God as the negative. We believe the hatred of Esau is in a negative sense, meaning that God surely determined from all eternity not to have mercy upon all of Adam’s race. On the positive side, as God determined to save a few, He also determined in a negative sense to not save the rest of mankind, but rather to leave them where they are and let them perish in their sins. (He gave no redemption to fallen angels-Ed.) We believe this is what is meant in the sense that God hated Esau. Meaning, that God has hated the wicked from all eternity, or that God has determined beforehand to not have mercy upon the wicked, or not save the wicked from their sins, or just let them perish in their sins, in which they love and delight.

We quote from Zanchius: “When hatred is ascribed to God, it implies (1) a negation of benevolence, or a resolution not to have mercy on such and such men, nor to endue them with any of those graces which stand connected with eternal life. So, ‘Esau have I hated’ (Rom. 9). i.e., ‘I did, from all eternity, determine within Myself not to have mercy on him.’” (*Absolute Predestination*, page 58, by Jerome Zanchius.)

The wicked do not know anything about the wisdom of God. This wisdom is hidden. (See I Cor. 2:7) Also, consider these Scriptures: “But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid

to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, Who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” (II Cor. 4:34) “And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (II Thess. 2:10-12)

“And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” (Matt. 7:23) Someone might say, “Wait just a minute. I thought you said God knows everything. Well, you just quoted a Scripture that God never knew the workers of iniquity. So, here is something that God Himself acknowledged that He did not know.” In answer to that, we believe this means that God never knew the workers of iniquity or the wicked as His people. (His knowledge of approbation — Ed.) As God never knew the workers of iniquity as His people, He certainly knew that they were workers of iniquity, and were not His people, didn’t He? And, since God knew they were not His people, He certainly knew they were workers of iniquity, didn’t He? If not, then how did He know they were?

This is a hard doctrine. The world cannot stand it, and they hate it. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned.” (I Cor. 2:14) Paul knew there would be opposition brought forth. The world says, “How cruel it would be not to give everybody a chance to be saved.” If it were left up to us to save ourselves, or to perform certain conditions in order to merit our salvation, we would all be lost and doomed to everlasting destruction from the presence of

the Lord, because we know that our righteousness is as filthy rags in the sight of God. Oh, how we do need the grace of God!

“What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” (Rom. 9:14-15) Who are we to question God? He was not obligated to save any. Who are we to question as to why He does not save more, or why does He not save all? If our souls were cast into hell, would we have any reason to blame God or charge Him with injustice? But, rather, would not we say as the poet,

“If my soul were cast in hell,
Thy righteous law approves it well.”

“I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.” This is God’s business, and He did not ask our advice. Who is man to try to attend to God’s business? When God created the world and everything therein He did not consult man about the matter. This was all done and accomplished before God formed man of the dust of the earth.

“Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, why hast Thou made me thus?” (Rom. 9:20) It would do well that we take heed to that Scripture, and be reconciled to the will of God. God is the potter and we are the clay.

Let us remember that the wicked are not in trouble as other men, and they do not know anything about the soul afflictions of God’s people. (Psa. 73:5) “The wicked shall do wickedly and none of the wicked shall understand.” (Dan. 12:10) The wicked will not come unto Jesus, and they will not cry for mercy, because they will never feel the need for mercy. The wicked love sin, and live in it, and have pleasure in unrighteousness. Some

of the wicked may appear to be righteous or religious in the sight of men, but it is for some selfish motive to promote their own business, interest, or seeking the praise of men.

A sinner who comes to Jesus seeking mercy will not be turned back. Yet, one cannot come to Jesus unless he is drawn by the Father. “No man can come unto Me, except My Father which sent Me draw him.” (John 6:44) We believe that God draws His people by His love. “I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.” (Jer. 31:3)

“All that the Father giveth me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.” (John 6:37) This is a positive expression, and it means that God’s people will not fail to come to Jesus. Again, none of the wicked will be included in that number that will come to Jesus. Only those that were given to Jesus for His bride will come to Him; and all of them SHALL come. Now, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Therefore, all of God’s people are sinners, and they will come to Jesus seeking mercy and none of them shall be cast out. Therefore, dear one, if you feel the need for mercy, and find that you do not have the ability to do anything to merit your salvation, this is some sweet evidence that you are included in that blessed number. If you have ceased from your own works, and you do not have any tools with which to work, it is some sweet evidence that you are a fit subject to enter into that rest. “For he that is entered into His rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His.” (Heb. 4:10) — W.W. Hudson

CLEANSING OF LEPROUS SINNERS

By Daniel Smart, 1847

“And there came a leper to Him, beseeching Him, and kneeling down to Him and saying unto Him, If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me

clean. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth His hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.” — Mark 1:40-41.

What an encouraging part of the word of God is this, shewing how welcome poor guilty sinners are to come to a throne of grace; and how suitable and compassionate the eternal Son of God is towards those who feel their need of Him. I believe the Lord’s people will be kept sensible of their sinnership down to the end of their pilgrimage, and will continually have to come as leprous sinners, again and again, to confess their sins, to supplicate for mercy, and to cry to God to be kept in the strait and narrow way. “Keep me, and I shall be kept; hold me up, and I shall be safe.” Sin to a child of God will ever be attended with guilt, trouble, sorrow, and remorse. “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.” “If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons.”

“His chastening, therefore, prize,
The privilege of a saint;
Their hearts are hard who that despise,
And theirs too weak who faint.”

I have known what it is to preach against sin in others, with my conscience flogging me all the time. But my desire is before the living God, never to attempt to JUSTIFY SIN, or what is wrong in myself or others. May I ever bring it to His footstool, supplicate for mercy, and adore that God who “Though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies.”

Last evening, during the time of singing, how my soul was led out in godly sorrow! How I entreated the Lord to pardon and forgive my multiplied iniquities. How I besought Him to keep me from evil that it might not grieve me! What a mercy to be kept

alive in our souls, and to have that “godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of!” May your cry and mine be unto the Lord, may our desires be warm and fervent at His throne, that He would keep us as the apple of His eye, and give us to feel that He has blotted out our sins as a cloud, and our iniquities as a thick cloud.

Is there a poor sensible sinner here tonight who in his own apprehension is ready to perish? Jesus is the sinner’s only true Friend! Is there a poor burdened, distressed soul, whose conscience is loaded with sin and guilt, whose mind is oppressed with sorrow and remorse? Our text speaks of such going to Jesus —

“Few, if any, come to Jesus,
Till reduced to self-despair.”

It speaks of the supplication of a poor leprous sinner, and the compassion of a God.

How my soul has felt the foolishness and vanity of carnal men. How anxious they are about the things of time and sense; how careful to possess the things of this life, and to add to their store, but they have no heart to seek after God; no desire for the tokens of His love; no panting for the true riches; never concerned to say with Jeremiah, “The Lord is the portion of my soul; therefore will I trust in Him.” They are ever following after vanity, grasping after shadows, and delighted with baubles: nevertheless death and eternity will soon overtake them, and bring them to feel their awful position before that God against whom they have sinned. “When the wicked spring as the grass, and when the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they may be destroyed for ever.”

The plague of leprosy was a very trying disease! But there is no plague to be compared with the plague of sin. We come into the world wholly infected with this malady, the plague of sin. Not only is it attended with sorrow here, but, if grace prevent not, it will destroy both body and soul

in hell for ever. Dear Hart says to vain man —
“Thy flesh, perhaps thy chiefest care,
Shall crawling worms consume;
But ah! destruction stops not here,
Sin kills beyond the tomb.”

Dying sinner, all are infected with this deadly malady. “We all have sinned and come short of the glory of God;” and but for the interposition of Jesus, and His righteousness, this plague would prove our eternal destruction. Are we alive to our danger? Are we fleeing for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us in the Gospel? Are we coming to Jesus as the leper in the text? Are we objects for the compassion of God? Are we supplicants for mercy through His dear Son? Do we know our interest in the peace-speaking, balmy blood of the Lamb? There is much said about the leprosy in the precious word of God. When the plague of leprosy broke out in a house, he that owned the house had to come to the priest and say, “It seemeth to me there is as it were a plague in the house.” How this confession of the man expresses the feelings of a poor sinner beginning to see out of obscurity. The stones in which the plague was, were to be cast into an unclean place; the house had to be scraped within round about, and other stones put in with fresh mortar to plaster the house; and then, if the strakes in the wall should break out, as the revivings of sin do, to the confusion of the sinner, threatening the soul with everlasting confusion, “the house was to be broken down, the stones of it, and the timber thereof, and all the mortar, and it was to be carried forth out of the city into an unclean place.” The leprosy was an incurable disease. And so with you and me, poor child of God, we shall never be rid of the plague of leprosy (sin) till death has taken down our houses of clay.

The spirits of the just,
Confined in bodies, groan;

Till death consigns the corpse to dust,
And then the conflict's done."

In the day of death, the thoughts,
intentions, desires, and the spring of this
rankling plague will for ever cease; for,

"Death that puts an end to life,
Will put an end to sin."

And so the apostle says, "We that are in
this tabernacle do groan, being burdened, not
for that we would be unclothed, but clothed
upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of
life." Not that we are afraid of eternal
damnation, but our righteous souls, like Lot's,
are vexed with the continual conflict within
us, where
"Swarms of ill thoughts their bane diffuse,
Proud, envious, false, unclean;
And every ransacked corner shows
Some unsuspected sin.

Sin is the Christian's burden, his load, his
plague, and his torment while in this lower
world, but when the Lord shall take His
people home to Himself, there will be an end
to it; then, no more sin, no more plague, no
more sorrow; but eternal peace and rest at
God's right hand for evermore.

"And the leper in whom the plague is."
He is not to *talk* merely about the plague of
sin. Talkative could prate well, and speak of it
as a "great outcry against sin;" but Bunyon
observes, (and do lay it to heart, Christian) "it
is not so much a great outcry about sin, as a
secret loathing of thyself on account of it
before God." Dying sinner, how stand matters
in thy conscience? Is sin thy plague? If not thy
plague here, let me tell thee, it will be thy
destruction hereafter; if not bitter to thee in
this world, it will be bitter to thee in hell; if
not thy torment in this time-state, it will be
thy torment and misery in eternity! Nothing
disgusts me so much as to hear people trifling
with sin. Sin should never be spoken of but
with the greatest abhorrence, and to magnify

the exceeding riches of the grace of God.
Some people fancy, the more they talk about
the devilism of their fallen and corrupt nature,
the greater Christians they are. But I want to
know, poor sinner, dost thou feel it to be thy
chiefest plague? Is Christ formed in thee, "the
hope of glory?" Art thou from necessity
coming to Jesus, that thou mayst "obtain
mercy, and find grace to help in time of
need?"

"His clothes shall be rent." His creature
righteousness must COME OFF; he must be
THOROUGHLY STRIPPED, and a
CHANGE of raiment given him, even the
righteousness of Christ. "And his head bare."
He shall feel exposed to the vengeance of
eternal fire, unless chosen and "accepted in
the Beloved." "And he shall put a covering
upon his upper lip" (mourning before the
Lord), "and shall cry, Unclean, unclean." But
all our confessions about sin and uncleanness,
if they do not arise from a deep conviction
wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost, and
drawn forth in simplicity and godly sincerity,
are only mockery and deceit. Look at the four
leprous men that were at the gate of Samaria,
when the army of the Syrians had come up
against it to besiege and destroy it. See how
deep necessity wrought upon their minds to
bring them to the conclusion to which they
arrived! They said one to another, "Why sit
we here until we die? If we say, we will enter
into the city, then the famine is in the city, and
we shall die there; and if we sit still here, we
die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall
into the host of the Syrians; if they save us
alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we
shall but die." How this condemns the do-
nothing and stand-still religion of thousands
of professors of the present day. These
famishing men said, "If we sit here, or if we
enter into the city, we shall die, and therefore
their last resolve is, to fall into the hand of the
enemy; and "if they save us alive, we shall
live; and if they kill us, we shall but die." O,

poor sinner, what an apparent enemy and angry judge God is to us in a broken law. What an enemy justice appears to the poor guilty wretch. How the poor sinner is brought at last to Esther's resolves "I will go in unto the King, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish!" Nor did the poor lepers perish in their desperate venture: it was "a day of good tidings." "The Lord caused the Syrian host to hear a noise of chariots and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host;" and they left their horses, their tents, and their camp, and fled for their lives! So with the poor leprous soul, when he has venturing faith to cast himself on Jesus, sink or swim, all the enemies of his soul flee before a manifested Christ, and pardon and peace flow in: it is a day of good tidings indeed!

We read also in the days of His flesh, that "as Jesus entered into a certain village, there met Him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: and they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy upon us!" What multitudes there are in this day, who still stand afar off, and are perpetually talking about "mercy": who are not really in earnest about it, but who are only making a great noise about "mercy through Jesus Christ." What a solemn thought, out of these ten lepers there was only one that needed mercy to be applied to his soul! "And when Jesus saw them, He said unto them, Go, shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass that as they went they were cleansed." And how many in our days get an *outward* cleansing, satisfied with an *external reform*, and the sanction of the priest; like the outward cleansing which these lepers got from the plague of leprosy, who knew nothing of the powerful cleansing through the blood of Christ (nor their need of it) from the internal leprosy of sin. "And one of them, when he saw that he was healed," — the man wounded in his conscience, and perishing in his own

feelings, when he saw his redemption, completeness, oneness, and holiness in the Son of God, — "turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks; and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger." Dying sinner, bring thy' religion to the test. It is only a talking of mercy, or a feeling sense of thy need of mercy?

Art thou professing Jesus Christ? or art thou panting to possess Jesus Christ? Art thou satisfied in a form of godliness? or art thou a poor, needy, perishing wretch, saved by a free-grace salvation, and from necessity returning to give God the glory (all of it — Ed.) for the great things done for thy soul? May you and I judge of our state by the unerring word of truth. Death is indeed on the road; and we must soon pass through the narrow gate, and appear before the heart-searching God, the trier of the reins of the children of men! But if there is any "good thing" in our heart towards the Lord God of Israel; if we are made par-takers of the divine nature, if we have mourned over the plague of sin; if we have felt the malady, and had the precious remedy, the balmy blood of Jesus applied to our conscience, and are clothed in His righteousness, and accepted in the Beloved, feeling Him precious and suitable to our souls, we shall spend a joyful eternity in blessing, thanking, and praising the God of our salvation.

"And there came a leper to Him." He did not stand at a distance, and merely talk about or wish to get at Him; but he "came to Him." Now, in the days of His flesh, His mother and His brethren came to Jesus where He was preaching, and desired to get at Him, but they could not get near because of the press. Berridge says, and truly, —

“If unto Jesus thou are bound,
A crowd about Him will be found,
Attending day and night;
A worldly crowd to din thy ears,
And crowds of unbelieving fears,
To hide Him from thy sight.”

Poor sinner, art thou in reality desiring to see Jesus? Hear what He says, “All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me, and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.” Have we come to Jesus? Do we confess our sins at His foot-stool? Have we supplicated for mercy? Have we felt the need of His atoning blood to cleanse from the guilt and power of sin? “And there came a leper to Him, *beseeking Him*.” How the Holy Ghost uses this expressive word, “beseeking.” How it seems to imply earnestness, need, and importunity. Look at it, poor sinner; “*beseeking Him*.” How it implies also, utter destitution, poverty, distress, and pinching want. The poor thing came by the leading and teaching of the blessed Spirit. He had nothing in hand, no stock of his own to present. He did not come to barter with Jesus for salvation; but he came with humble boldness, that he might “obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” “Beseeking Him.” And so, poor sinner, if you and I feel deeply our need of Jesus to save us; if we are seeking peace through His blood; if we want justification through His imputed righteousness; the language of our hearts will be that of deep necessity, fervency, and importunity. We shall be like this poor leper, earnestly “beseeking Him” to give us these things. God will not be mocked by His creatures: we might lie and deceive each other, but we cannot deceive our Maker. How many persons assemble themselves at a chapel merely, as they call it, “to do their duty,” and are glad in their hearts when they get to the end of the service. (Ah, a good measure to see if the truth is in love — Ed.)

How many adopt the language of true penitents, who have never known what it was to have one real conviction of sin. How many say, “We are tied and bound with the chain of our sins,” who have never felt the plague in their heart, or known really and truly what sin is. But what mockery it is, poor sinner, to confess before God what you do not feel in your heart. Never tell God that you are ready to perish, unless He has given you a sense of it in your soul. It is awful hypocrisy. Poor sinner, tell the truth, or say nothing. Do not come to the Lord with a lie in your mouth. O how few there are who know the God they are professing to worship. But God abhors the sacrifice of fools; and a painted hypocrite is known by Him through the disguise he wears. Now do, poor sinner, look at the words you use before God. Lay them to heart; and be not self-deceivers. Are you like this poor leper. “Beseeking” for mercy, from a feeling sense of your need, misery, poverty, and woe? May you and I consider what we are about when we attempt to address the Lord of heaven and earth; for nothing is acceptable to Him but that which arises from a heart made honest by His own Spirit. May we never say what we are not, and what we do not feel: but may we confess and feel ourselves to be the chief of sinners. The man that confesses himself to be an ill and hell-deserving sinner, and never felt it, is a liar before his God. The man who declares that he is nothing, can do nothing, and less than nothing and vanity, and never felt it, is a mocker before Jehovah’s throne. Satisfied am I, that those who know what it is to have intercourse, fellowship, and communion with the God of heaven, will be deeply impressed with the solemnity of approaching His gracious presence. I have sometimes wondered to see some persons, how ready they are to call upon God; and as soon as it is ended, are light and trifling in their conversation, full of jesting, and as eager after the things of time and sense, and the

things of the flesh, as a worldling. Such never seem to be mourning and sorrowing for sin; but directly they are called upon to pray, they are always ready; and it is no sooner over, than they are as frivolous as before, and ready to do anything but that which is God-honouring. How delighted such persons seem if they can but hear themselves talk. It is to be feared, there are many who would walk miles to pray at a prayer-meeting. Alas, alas! if they knew something of the solemn awe which I have known in coming before the Lord, they would not thus trifle with the God of heaven.

“And there came a leper to Him, beseeching Him.” The poor creature had not a rag of creature merit to bring. It is as though the poor sinner had said, “If mercy comes to me, it must be mercy indeed, if ever favour be shewn to a wretch like me, it must be free and unmerited indeed; if pardon comes to me, it must be of sovereign grace alone; if righteousness comes to me, it must be imputed freely. All must come entirely of the Saviour’s free grace and compassion.”

“And there came a leper to Him, beseeching Him, and kneeling down to Him.” When the Holy Ghost speaks to a poor sinner’s conscience, He brings him into the dust; He causes him to know sooner or later, that nothing but God’s free mercy through His Son, can ever pluck such brands from the burning! “Beseeching Him.” How a dying thief besought Him. “Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom!” How Peter besought Him when he cried out “Lord, save, or I perish.” How the Publican besought Him when he smote on his breast, saying, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” How the poor Syrophenician woman besought Him when she said, “Lord, help me.” How blind Bartimeus who sat by the wayside begging, besought Him, when he said, “Jesus thou Son of David, have mercy upon me.” Did Jesus ever turn a deaf ear, or cast off any poor

sinner that came to Him beseeching Him? “The bruised reed He will not break, nor quench the smoking flax.” “All the Father giveth Me shall come to Me, and him that cometh to Me” (with the leprosy in his heart, with the plague in his soul, to crave the Bread and Water of Life), “I will in no wise cast out.”

“If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.” Now, this good (sic) man felt what Mr. Hart describes in his experience. He says, “The question with me now was, not whether I would be a Christian, but whether I might; not whether I should repent and believe, but whether God would give me true repentance and a living faith.” When a man comes to this spot, he is brought to know that salvation and damnation hang on the sovereign will of God. He

“If my soul were sent to hell,
God’s righteous law approves it well.”

“If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.” “But O,” says the poor sinner, “is He willing? Did He die for me? Is there reconciliation for me? Will He shew favour to a poor wretch like me? If He deal with me according to my sins, banishment from His presence must be my portion for ever.” O what a trying spot this is to be in! sometimes hoping, sometimes fearing; sometimes rising, sometimes sinking. What anxious state of suspense, with no certainty of salvation! He knows there is efficacy in the blood of Jesus to pardon him; he knows the righteousness of Christ is sufficient to clothe and justify the church. But what he is most anxious to know is, whether he is interested in it? The enquiry with him is, “Has Jesus shed His precious blood for ME? If all in the world were interested in it, and I not, of what use,” he says, “would it be to me? I believe there is more efficacy in the blood of Christ to cleanse and pardon me, than there is demerit in all my sins to destroy me: and could I believe He had

shed His precious blood for ME, how happy should I be. But here is the suspense, here is the doubt; this is it that casts me down; this is what I want cleared up to my soul, "If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." Why, poor sinner, if universal redemption be a truth, I am satisfied that universal salvation must be a truth also. If Jesus died for all, who is there that will say He is not as mighty and able to save all for whom He laid down His life? If He is willing to bleed for all, then He is able to save all. But, "let God be true, and every man a liar;" He says, "I lay down My life for My sheep." Jesus never did anything in vain. My soul is grounded and settled in God's unerring truth, that "Israel SHALL be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation; they shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end."

"If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." But here is the question, "Did He die for MY soul?"

"Lord, I believe Thy grace is free,
O magnify that grace in me.

Let me tell thee, perishing sinner, this is the Holy Ghost's work to lead thee to Jesus, all unworthiness in thyself; let me tell thee, that all living sensible sinners that thus come to God by Jesus Christ, He will in "no wise cast out;" let me tell thee, the leper's experience, the leper's entreaty, the leper's desire, and the leper's success is thine — He died for thee! and in His own time He will reveal His love and mercy with power to thy heart.

"And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth His hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will, be thou clean." O how did Jesus treat this case? What was there in it to merit His notice, or to barter with the God of heaven to procure peace and salvation! Here is a poor leprous wretch; an object not fit to be looked at, one that cannot be touched without producing infection! O how this spreading, damning malady, sin, overruns the

whole human race! How corruption spreads and grows, and man gets worse and worse! Is thy soul in earnest for peace and salvation to be applied to thy conscience by the blood of sprinkling? Poor sinner, look at the case! What had the man to plead on his own behalf? He had nothing to say for himself on the ground of merit. He was a sinner, an ill-and-hell-deserving wretch, a leper from head to foot. None could be worse. But how did Jesus treat him? Did He turn His back upon him, and say, "the plague was too great;" or, "it had been too long upon him;" or, "if it had not been quite so corrupt;" or, "if his sins were not so immense"? O, poor sinner, Jesus did not treat this poor leper in this conditional way and manner; it was all unconditional favour to a perishing wretch. It is not said, Jesus was "moved" because the man entreated Him; Jesus was "moved" because the man besought Him; Jesus was "moved" because the man was not quite so bad as others; but it says just what suits thee and me, poor sinner. "And Jesus, moved with *compassion*, put forth His hand and touched him, and said, I will; be thou clean." He was moved toward this poor guilty, perishing sinner, because he was an object of His everlasting mercy. Now, suppose, literally, you and I had a poor creature come to us, beseeching and imploring our aid and help, we could not forbear showing pity and compassion to him, unless we were hard-hearted wretches, when we know him to be in want and destitution. And so with Jesus. He was moved with compassion towards this poor wretch, this penitent sinner, this destitute beggar, who had nothing of self-righteousness to glory in, but everything which proved him to be a needy supplicant. And his God, his Saviour, his tender-hearted High Priest, was moved with compassion towards him, because he was one of those for whom He came to shed His precious atoning blood. Were it not for the compassion of God to poor perishing sinners,

what hope could we have? O, poor sinner, when the blessed Spirit is bringing a soul to feel his need of God's compassion, he appears, in his own feelings, to get worse and worse, poorer and poorer, blacker and blacker, and nigher and nigher to the pit; but God says, "Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom." Nothing but the free mercy and compassion of God can suit a wretch like you and me.

Now, poor sinner, look at the cry of two or three others. There was that madman, the Gadarene; every one was frightened at him; he was so exceedingly fierce that no man could tame him; he break the chains with which they bound him, and fled away to dwell among the tombs, (Mark 5: 2-5) That is the place you and I were before mercy met us — among the tombs, dwelling among the dead. But when Jesus in love and pity, grace and compassion, found the poor wretch, He brought him down; and he that was possessed with the Legion was seen, "clothed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, and in his right mind!" The rest of the Gadarenes besought Christ to depart out of their coasts, but the poor man who was saved with an everlasting salvation, and loved much because much had been done for him, besought the Lord that he might abide with Him; but Jesus said unto him, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them what great things the Lord hath done for thee, and how He hath had *compassion* on thee." O what a notable instance was this of the mercy and compassion of God!

Then again, the Holy Ghost directs us to look at the prodigal son. How he had wasted his substance in riotous living. What a wretch he was. But he found mercy. It is said, that "when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had *compassion*, and ran and fell upon his neck and kissed him." O how it humbled the poor prodigal. "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." Nothing

breaks the heart like the compassion and tenderness of a father's love. He says to the servants, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost and is found."

And look also at that poor backslider, (and it will take in all my and thy backsliding and departures, poor child of God) "who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead." The priest and the Levite passed by, but they could not help him. There was no eye to pity him, nor anything to touch his case. But after a time "a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion on him." I cannot look upon a fallen child of God without having a feeling of pity and compassion in my soul toward him; and my cry to my God and Father is, that He would raise up such a poor soul by giving him penitence and godly sorrow, for, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "And when He saw him, He had compassion on him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow, when he departed, he took out two-pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him, and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee." O poor fellow sinner, "Jesus, moved with compassion, touched him." O what a mercy to have a religion that cannot be satisfied short of a touch from a living Christ. All profession short of this will leave the soul to perish at the last.

"I will, be thou clean." In some instances, we find the poor sinner touched

Jesus. The poor man with the withered hand was bidden to “stretch forth his hand,” and he stretched it forth, and it was restored whole as the other; but in this case, Jesus touched the poor sinner, and said, “I will, be thou clean.” The poor woman with the issue of blood said, “If I may but touch the hem of His garment, I shall be made whole.” We never can have union and communion without receiving from the fulness of Jesus; we cannot be fruitful, without we are branches of the True Vine. If we are destitute of vital union, we shall be sapless and lifeless. It is not talking of *vital union* to Jesus Christ; it is not merely professing His Name; or, if a minister, preaching the gospel; there must be something more than that —there must be the living touch. And the moment the touch takes place, that moment, life, sap, nourishment, joy, and peace are received.

Have you and I ever conversed with the Lord, and felt Him near, either in confession, supplication, praise, or thanksgiving? Do we know anything of that true godliness which consists in conversing with Him and feeling Him near? A living sinner cannot have access to God without knowing something of this feeling. We cannot draw near to the Lord, and feel a spirit of grace and supplication, without knowing something of conversing with our God, and feeling His near. We cannot enjoy fellowship and communion with the Father, through His Son Jesus Christ, by the anointings of the Holy Ghost, without feeling Him near.

But was there ever a case where the crown of glory was more seen to be put upon the Saviour’s head, and less of merit in the creature, than in the case of this poor supplicating leper? “I will, be thou clean.” Now, who in the presence of God this night is really in the destitute condition of this poor supplicating leper, and cannot be satisfied with anything short of a living touch? What did Thomas say, “Except I shall see in His

hand the print of the nails, and thrust my hands into His side, I will not believe.” And there is something of this feeling in all God’s poor tried people. They want a token, a testimony, a manifestation, in their own breast. And when the Lord appears He says to them in effect as He said to Thomas, “Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing.” And then the poor man, that would not believe from the testimony of the other disciples, exclaims from his very heart and soul, “My Lord and my God.” Are you and I wanting a faith’s touch? Have we ever had a touch? O what a mercy of mercies, if we are daily coming to Jesus, receiving from His fountain fulness and ‘grace for grace’, and saying with David, “My soul shall make her boast in the Lord; the humble shall hear thereof and be glad.” O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together. Amen. (Selected from *Zion’s Witness*, January, 1983, 126, Middle Watch, Swavesey, Cambridge, CB4 5RP, England.)

EDITORS’ COMMENTS

Once again we ask of each of you to check your address label for expiration date. It is easy to forget, and it is an added cost to us to send separate reminders. And, we are hesitant to do so for fear one may think we were “dunning” them. So please take notice of this.

We also ask for your support for this magazine. Believe us, it is “non-profit”. We perform all the work in composing, making of masters, printing, collating, stapling, addressing, and pre-sorting for mailing in order to keep the cost down. This is done in spite of the fact that all of us are full time employed in secular professions and serve churches far removed from our localities. We are not complaining — others do that for us

sometimes! We do it because we desire to share this material with the household of faith, and hope it is done out of a pure heart to the service of truth and godliness as it is in Christ Jesus.

You can help us by advancing the magazine in your localities among those you believe love the truth of free grace, or longing for a hope in Jesus. The names and address you send us are a very great help. Some do subscribe and support the paper.

We get discouraged and very low. Then, in the kind providence of God we receive some letters which lift up our hands. We haven't much time to answer them all, but they do help a great deal.

A magazine cannot long endure if it does not serve a felt need. So we need your comments and suggestions. Are the articles God-honoring and edifying? How could our selections be improved? Please let us hear from you.