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FREE GRACE AND INTERNAL RELIGION

“But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.” - Heb. 10:39

When we contemplate the subject of free grace effectually wrought within the soul by the sovereign operation of the Holy Spirit, we discover it to be internal heart religion. Every saving influence manifested and felt within the soul has free grace as its operational cause - which flows freely from all the covenant provisions in Christ Jesus the Lord. We cannot find a single aspect of God's grace, mercy, love, or blessings conditioned upon creature works; but all conditioned upon the determinate counsel of God on behalf of His blood-bought children because of the merit of Christ.

There is a natural faith taught by the precepts of man; and it is even possessed by devils who *“believe and tremble.”* (James 2:19) The devils have sufficient faith to inquire of our Lord, *“Art thou come hither to torment us **BEFORE THE TIME?**”* (Matt. 8:29) Indeed, the implication is that even devils are dead “Calvinists”, rather than freewillers, believing in a certain appointed or decreed time for their torment. Yea, they even believe in the sovereignty of God, begging Christ permission to enter into a herd of swine! This natural faith can be (and most often is) taught to children by parents, Sunday school teachers, and vacation Bible school counselors, etc. Summarily, it is of the natural mind and is not by free grace. Even those that put great stock in it fully concur with us without hesitation that it is possessed by every offspring of the human race and hence is not of grace.

Since the turn of the century, many Old School groups of Baptists have followed the New School into conditioning certain aspects of salvation upon natural faith. Particularly, it is generally held that deeds done after regeneration by the natural man which benefit some external "good," merit blessings in time. Thus a strange Calvinistic system has evolved unique among Baptists. That is, that eternal salvation is separate and apart from internal religion; and time, or experiential, salvation (Arminianism) is true experimental religion! One can, as it is taught, have eternal religion without internal religion; one can have external or nominal religion and possess eternal salvation, and "never the twain shall meet". Of course, they hold, that one can have both if they join the right religious order. In all the above conditions, the individual's soul is held to be safe and heaven bound! Hence, this Calvinist-Arminian hybrid is in fact the old heresy of "Hell Redemptionism," or crudely speaking, "No-hell Universalism." We would not take note of it if it were not generally held by many who are termed "Primitive Baptists."

That faith which is a *gift of God* is much different from that inculcated in our youth. The early form is today called a part of "time salvation;" the latter is termed "eternal salvation." But the faith which is given to a quickened child of God is "*the faith of the Son of God*," (Gal. 2:20) and thus it is eternal. It is the same faith by which the body of Christ rose from the dead without having seen corruption. The faith which *worketh by love* is the fruit of the eternal Spirit, and is effectual in producing all needed confidence in God during our sojourn on earth.

While it is true that the *acts* of repentance are within the regenerate creature, yet it too is eternal and internal religion in the heart.

Repentance is worked by "*godly sorrow*" — a sorrow which is of God. This godly sorrow is the very private, intimate, and blessed production of the eternal Spirit as He "*convince the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment*" Again, it is the fruit of the mighty effect of eternal life begotten within a poor corrupt, hell-deserving sinner.

How often have saints mourned over their wicked frame and condition, while those professing unshakable faith mock them? The nominal believer cannot possibly comprehend what a saint means by being "*saved by hope*," not being able at times to see vital evidence that he is a child of the King. The reason is quite clear: *that* faith is as natural as the corruptions of the flesh, having confidence in the fleshly acts performed. The wickedness the saint feels so keenly is considered (by the nominal believer) not even worth a second thought. By never seeing or feeling "*...sin ... exceeding sinful*," (Romans 7:13), the nominal believer's natural faith is never shaken.

The faith which is of God interstitially works in that repentance which is of God. Without this faith, one cannot believe himself to be as sinful and as corrupt as he *actually is*; and thus repentance can only be as that of Judas who "*repented himself*" and perished, (Matt. 27:3), or profane Esau "*who was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.*" (Heb. 12:17)

Those that speak of salvation being conditional usually classify faith, repentance, prayers, good works, etc., as the common elements of this meritorious power. But when one experiences these things within the heart, they are much higher than their natural or animal counter-parts. Even prayers must be indicted in the heart "*...for we know not what*

to pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." (Romans 8:26). And what can this intercession, which burns so blessedly within the silent recesses of the soul be, except the eternal communion of the Spirit and our Mediator's work in behalf of poor sinners? Is that blessed intercession conditional salvation, or is it an eternal and heavenly communion shed abroad in our hearts by the Father of light and revelation? True prayer cannot flow from the corruptions of the flesh in this time world. It is spiritual: that which is seen is temporal and that which is not seen is eternal. (II Cor. 4:18) The indicted prayer within the heart is unseen and eternal. It is a part and portion of internal religion and is by free grace alone.

Internal religion is always accompanied by good works. Here too, natural religion abundantly demonstrates lip-service to good works as altogether acceptable to God. Yet, "...*Whatsoever is not of faith is sin,*" (Rom. 14:23) and even the "*plowing of the wicked is sin.*" Thus, in God's holy sight, no good works are performed apart from that living faith which is of the operation of God.

The very source of every good work is God "...*which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.*" (Philippians 2:13) and "...*wrought all our works in us.*" (Isa. 26:12) Good works are those works which God has ordained in righteousness to perform in the creature. It is God who "*worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.*" (Eph. 1:11) God constantly maintains creation by the word of His power and it is by Him that "*all things consist.*" *As it is written: "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, (seat of potentates) or dominions (rulers and*

*governments), or principalities (beginning of rule), or powers (delegated influence): all things were created **BY HIM and FOR HIM:** and He is before all things, and by Him **ALL THINGS CONSIST.**" (Col. 1:16-17) Even the falling of a sparrow or the number of hairs on one's head is of God, so too every good work, or every rise or fall of every kingdom is according to His determinate counsel. Good works do not merely serve the creature, but fulfill God's own eternal purpose. It is never recorded that God ever gave faith to any who were not *ordained to good works*; nor has He ever failed to give faith to those "*ordained to eternal life.*" (Acts 13:48)*

How foolish it appears to us for any to imagine that a soul can be the habitation of the Spirit of the Great Creator God, and never be exercised by Him; never utilized by Him to attest to His power and glory; never to feel His presence in the tabernacle of his flesh; or to find his fleshly nature to be an unfit habitation for such August Holiness! The force and power of the Creator of all things and the Light of the world surely cannot abide in a house and never have any effect upon it.

Yet every aspect of this salvation is displayed in the manifestation of eternal life within the soul; and is by free unmerited and undeserved favor. The presence of this life must needs condemn the flesh in all its arrogance and pride, and produce a mortifying warfare within. But, invariably, this divine Presence within the heart will also comfort, bless, teach, intercede, and work His ordained will as He pleases; and in doing so, eternal life and salvation in all its powerful ramifications will be vitally and inwardly experienced by the soul that possesses this most excellent glory. **S.C.P.**

TOTAL DEPRAVITY

By Gilbert Beebe, April 24, 1833

Note: During the Great Awakening between 1720-1760, large numbers of the Puritan churches were persuaded that baptism of adult believers was the Scriptural mode of this ordinance. Consequently, over 300 Puritan churches were reconstituted as "Baptists." With the establishment of our Federal Republic, state supported churches and forced tithing were abandoned. Large numbers of Puritans merged with Presbyterians in 1813. This coincided with a national burst of evangelical fervor, and the spread of Puritan organizations and mission methods among other denominations. Baptists, too, received large numbers of these zealots, which in turn gave rise to the adoption of Puritan methods among them.

Such names as Judson, Rice, and Leland are well known among Baptists. These men were Puritans turned Baptists during this period. Judson was baptized by immersion just after he landed in India where he had been sent by the Board of Foreign and Domestic Missions by the Puritan. Rice, too, was converted to immersion, and first went to England to get financial support from English Baptists. There he was rejected. He sailed to Philadelphia, and was met by William Staughton, a minister of the Philadelphia Association, who had invited the press to be on hand to greet this new Baptist. Elder John Leland was present when these men formed the first missionary society in America in 1813 by Baptists. By 1832, the plague of locust had copied the Puritans so perfectly, that even the old organization of the Puritan consociation was adopted, upon the "heavenly light" of Luther Rice. The whole mission movement was Arminian from the first day it

appeared, and with the establishment of the Sign of the Times, elder Beebe set out to expose the movement to the public.

Two of the basic cardinal departures of the new movement centered around (1) total depravity, and (2) particular redemption. From that day to this, no group which has departed into missionism has been able to consistently hold these two doctrines. Invariably, they will discard them, or abridge them, in order to perpetuate their unscriptural practice.

The following article is the first on this subject Elder Beebe published. He followed it up with Particular Redemption. We plan to do the same.

WE have proposed to give our readers a more enlarged view of our sentiments which were briefly presented in our *Prospectus* (1832). The next item in order is "The Total Depravity and just condemnation of fallen man."

According to our engagement, we call the attention of our readers to the testimony which first from the word of God, and then from such collateral testimony as we can find existing among the human family, we intend on this occasion to present. The work before us is to prove that man in his fallen state, is totally depraved; and secondly, that he is justly condemned by the law of God.

On this important subject mankind appears to be very generally in the dark; and from an ignorance of this subject many errors and extravagances have gained in the world as we shall notice in the conclusion of this article. We cannot expect that the proud heart of man will fall in low with the doctrine about to be presented, as it strikes a death blow at all personal righteousness or human excellence as a ground for acceptance before the sovereign Judge of quick (living) and

dead. Painful as the awful truth may be, it should not be concealed that *“Man in his best estate is altogether vanity.”* But as you are at this time called to contemplate man in his lost, depraved and condemned estate, you would have just cause to accuse us of *“handling the word of God deceitfully,”* and of *“giving flattering titles to men,”* should we fail to present him as he is presented in the record which the God of all truth has given us.

Of the numerous passages of divine truth, which prove that mankind are depraved, we give the following: *“God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.”* - Eccl. 7:29. *“Wherefore as by one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”* — Rom. 5:12. *“Their throat is an open sepulchre, with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips, whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood, destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace have they not known; there is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped and the whole world may become guilty before God. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”* — Rom. 3:13-20 and 23. *“The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faith, from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores,”* &c.,- Isa. 1:5,6. *“What is man, that he should be clean? And he which is born of woman, that he should be righteous?”* - Job 15:14. *“Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.”*- Job 14:4. *“Behold I was shapened in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.”* - Psa. 51:5. *“Corrupt*

are they, and have done abominable iniquity; there is none that doeth good. God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God. Every one of them is gone back; they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” - Psa. 53:1-3. What then? Are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin. As it is written *“There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.”*

“The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. Their poison is like the poison of a serpent, they are like the deaf adder, that stoppeth her ear; which will not hearken to the voice of charmers charming never so wisely.” (Psa. 58:3-5) The above are a few of the many passages of holy writ, which prove the total depravity of all mankind in their fallen condition. Here is this volume, according to which God will judge the world, the whole mass of mankind are presented on one general level; *all have sinned*; death has passed upon all; hence there is no class of our race exempt from this state of wretchedness and depravity, *conceived in sin*, estranged from the womb, going astray, and speaking lies, as soon as they are born.

But as we conceive the doctrine of *total depravity involves as a consequence, total inability*, i.e. not as natural creatures, to perform natural things, but as depraved beings to perform anything which is good and acceptable in the sight of God. Of man in his alienation from God, it is written, *“The thoughts of his heart are evil, and that continually.”* *“He cannot see the kingdom of God.”* (John 3:3) *“He cannot discern the things of the Spirit.”* (I Cor. 2:14) *“He cannot*

receive the spirit of truth.” (John 14:17) *“He cannot do good.”* (Jer.8:23) *“He cannot cease from sin.”* (2 Pet.2:14) *“he cannot repent.”* (Acts 5:3 1) *“Cannot believe (savingly) in Christ.”* (John 6:29; Acts 13:41)

Man is not only a depraved and helpless creature, as a fallen sinner, but he is also a condemned criminal, having sinned and come short of the glory of God, as we have shown. And the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness. He is not, as many suppose, (a probationer) in a state of trial, to see whether he will, or will not deserve eventually to be condemned; for the law has already uttered its thundering sentence: *“The soul that sinneth it shall die.”* Nor again, as others have contended, that the sinner as a free moral agent, is endowed with natural ability to repent, believe the Gospel, and be saved; and, in the words of A. Fuller, *“Commanded to believe, on pain of damnation.” “For they are condemned already.”* (Matt. 3:18) Hence, *“It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom He will He hardenth.”* (Rom. 9:16, 18) That the condemnation of fallen sinners is grounded on strict justice, but few will have the hardihood, in so many words, to deny. If it be admitted that the law of God is *“Holy, just and good,”* and that a just and holy law has said, *“The soul that sinneth it shall die;”* and that the sovereign Judge has declared that there is none that doeth good all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; the point is established forever.

It does not belong to the discussion of this subject to present a remedy, a way of salvation, or to pursue the popular course even of those of our day who contend for the Scriptural doctrine of Total Depravity as

strenuously as we do, and after establishing the point by the word and testimony of God, still conclude their subject by exhorting those whom they have proven to be dead in trespasses and in sin, to be up and working for life. No, this does not belong to our statement at all; we have not so been taught. We find the fallen sinner condemned already, and under the wrath of God. The sentence is passed, irrevocably passed; God who cannot lie has said, that all have sinned, and that lie will turn the wicked into hell with all the nations that forget him.

Thus the polluted sinner goes,
Laden with guilt and heavy woes,
Down to the regions of the dead,
With endless curses on his head.

Dead in sin, enmity against God, in love with sin, drinking down iniquity, as the ox drinketh water, raging and blaspheming, condemned and under the curse of a righteous, just and inflexible law, we find the human race. Dreadful as their situation is here *we must leave* them.

In a subsequent number (June issue) we shall treat upon the only possible way of salvation for any of the miserable sons of men, which is brought to light through the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is, as we shall prove by the Scriptures, special and particular. *Editorials*, Volume 1.

The independent Predestinarian Baptist churches of Mississippi will assemble, the Lord willing, in the district meeting of the Little Zion Association the SECOND WEEK-END in JUNE at Pilgrim Church, Ellisville, Mississippi.

CAST DOWN AND TROUBLED WITH DOUBTS AND FEARS

By W. W. Hudson

"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 evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath He in anger shut up His tender mercies? Selah."-
Psalm 77: 6-9

As the Lord blesses us, let us first consider the feelings of the writer in this text with Psalm 71:20: *'Thou, which hast she wed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth.'* We understand the writer to be cast down in the valley in both Scriptures. In Psalm 71:20 the writer is blessed with the assurance that the Lord would deliver or raise him up again in due season. But in Psalm 77:6-9, we see the writer to be troubled with so many doubts and fears that he was made to question whether God had forgotten him or not.

Why was this text written? Do you believe the Lord had a purpose for it to be written? Do you believe this shows the feelings of the children of God at times? Have you traveled that pathway before? Do his questions seem strange to you, or do you know what He is talking about because you have experienced it?

The Scriptures affirm that *"the mercy of God endureth for ever."* (see Psalm 106:1, and 107:1) In this text, the writer does not have the assurance that the mercy of God reaches his case. He has so many doubts and fears that he wonders if his hope is clean gone forever. He wonders if the grace of God has touched his heart. He wonders if he has any

true vital religion. He wonders if all he has is a head knowledge of God, and wonders if his religion is in the heart. Dear reader, have you traveled this pathway?

When John the Baptist was in prison, there was something that caused him to ask these questions: *"Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto Him, Art thou He that should come, or do we look for another?"* (Matt. 11:2-3) Do you believe he had doubts and fears and was in the prison of darkness? What caused John to ask those questions?

Notice the answer of Jesus: *"Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John AGAIN those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them."* (verses 4-5) The meaning of this is that John had to be shown these things again. Is it not true that we have to be shown again and again the wonderful works of the Lord? This wonderful doctrine is both old and new and it is food for our poor souls.

We cannot describe the love of God. We know something of this great love in our experience when we are sinking down into despair and when the Lord delivers us from this low state. Then we are lifted up and made to sit together in heavenly places and have this glorious feeling that causes us to sing praises unto the Lord. (See Eph. 2:6)

The text shows that we cannot always feel this love of God, and there are times when we are made to question if the Lord has forgotten us.

When we are cast down in darkness do we look back and think of the bright seasons when we felt the wonderful love of God?

Have we wondered if we were deceived in the whole matter? Are we blessed with the love of God in our hearts, or is it just with our lips?

Our soul is in prison and we know that we cannot praise the Lord in this condition, and we know and feel the truth of this Scripture: *“Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise Thy name”* (Psalm 142:7)

Why did the Lord inspire Phil. 1:6 to be written? *“Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”* Is not this Scripture a great comfort to one who is troubled with doubts and fears? One may look back and think of his wonderful experience, but he may feel that the Lord has forsaken him. This Scripture is written for assurance to those who are cast down.

May the Lord bless us to remember that Almighty God has inspired the Scriptures to be written as *“holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”* (II Peter 1:21) *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”* (II Tim. 3:16-17)

May the reader find comfort in the gracious dealings of the Lord in times of troubles, doubts, and fears.

THE LORD’S PEOPLE NEITHER FORGOTTEN NOR FORSAKEN

From the Gospel Standard, 1842

“For the Lord will not forsake His people for His great name’s sake; because it hath pleased the Lord to make you His people.”- I Samuel 12:22.

When dead in trespasses and sins, I could stoutly defend the doctrines of eternal election, particular redemption, &c., and in many controversial contests have I been engaged with Arminians. I have since discovered, through divine teaching, that there is an infinite difference between a *notional* and an *experimental* assent to these great truths. I have, therefore, little inclination to enter into such disputes, for the sake of abstract argument; but would rather follow the example of the blessed Lord Jesus, as given in John 3:2, where, when Nicodemus came unto him with this plausible profession: *“Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him,”* instead of pronouncing a high eulogium on the good sense and deep penetration of Nicodemus, (as is common with man, especially in these degenerate days,) the dear Redeemer immediately introduced the subject of the new birth, insisting upon its necessity and vitality, saying, *“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,”* (John 3:3) which at once exposed the nature, state, and spiritual ignorance of this Pharisee and master in Israel. Yes, conscience-felt condemnation and conscience-felt justification are the tests by which to try all talkers about sacred truths, and to ascertain whether their faith and knowledge are real and saving, or false and speculative.

There is a blessed soul-realization of the doctrines of the everlasting Gospel, of which every one taught of God the Spirit is enabled at times to speak, and to set to his seal that they are not the “doctrines of men,” (Col. 2:22) but “of God our Saviour,” (Titus 2:10) “according to godliness.” (I Tim. 6:3) I speak with confidence here, for I know that this assertion is true, having been graciously

favoured with a fresh evidence of it. And in what way? O, in just the same as all former gracious favours have been bestowed — sovereign, unmerited, undeserved, yea, often unlooked for and unsought for, as was the case in the present instance. Carnal reason and unbelief were making much havoc in my soul, and were seemingly prevailing, for there was no groaning under their pressure, no sighs at their attack, nor heart-felt cries to be relieved from their grasp. Notwithstanding, the Lord appeared for me; in an instant, my thoughts and affections were raised upwards; they even entered within the veil, “*whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a high priest for ever, after the order of Melkisedek*” (Heb. 6:20) Then carnal reasoning was gone, unbelief vanished, sin removed, Satan fled, the world out of sight — all were gone; faith was given me to believe, and strength to lay hold of this blessed promise, which came into my mind, though I never before took particular notice of the words, for I did not know where to find them in the Bible: “*The Lord will not forsake His people.*” I felt the reality of the truth which these words import in my heart, namely, the saints final perseverance. Surely this was a precious testimony of its truth; and this is the method which it has pleased the Lord to adopt to establish my mind in the doctrines of his written word.

But what an indescribable mercy to be visited in this sovereign way! I feel a pleasure in thus recording the Lord’s matchless kindness, and while I am constrained to do so, I must likewise confess my own unworthiness. If he were to deal with me after my sins, and reward me according to my iniquities, (Psa. 103:10) banishment would be my portion, and no sweet reception; despair, and no hope; frowns, and no smiles. I am

positive at this moment that the “Lord will not forsake His people,” though they are encompassed with infirmities, and that His love, purpose, and grace cannot be affected by anything that can rise from within or without His called children.

The Holy Ghost has brought me to this conclusion again and again; it is soul-supporting and encouraging. May lie still bring me to this spot, for it reveals unto me that eternal and indestructible union which exists between Christ and His members, the church. It opens to my view the glory and stability of the covenant of grace; it proclaims in my experience the immutability and faithfulness of God the Father, the completeness of the work of God the Son, and the ceasing operations of God the Spirit; it endears unto me a full redemption and free salvation; and thrice blessed are the people interested herein, for though they pass through afflictions, persecutions, disappointments, cares, vexations, inward and outward conflicts, are overtaken at times by dark providences, and the Lord’s dealings appear mysterious, nevertheless they are not forsaken, though they may and do fear the contrary; and nothing can render their path to the celestial kingdom impassable, for their Redeemer is mighty, “the Lord of Hosts is His name.” He is their leader, and onward they must travel. They have no really retrograde movements, in cloudy seasons they think that they are going back or standing still, and not advancing; but when God breaks in again upon their souls, they see that they have still been pursuing. *They* have lost sight of their Conductor and Keeper, but *lie* has not lost sight of them, nor can lie, for He saith, “*Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.*” (Isa. 49:16)

May the Lord God abundantly' bless his dear scattered ones with His presence, and may a double portion of His Spirit rest upon those who, like the writer, with some brethren, are suffering reproach for the cause of experimental truth, and who, through the separating power of Jehovah's grace, dare to be honest, and boldly defend a revealed and enjoyed religion. The Lord makes His children upright and sincere; He gives them a tender conscience, and they are led to abhor deception and hypocrisy. Down with the general stream of profession they cannot glide, and God be praised for it. O that He would unite the hearts of His tried family, and give them strength amidst all difficulties to "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," (Phil. 3:14) and enable them to say feelingly, "*Behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high;*" (Job 16:19) and again, "*I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day;*" (II Tim. 1:12) and this will recompense for all opposition from the church or the world.

—London, G.T.

* * * * *

IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

By Silas Durand, 1896

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created He him, male and female created He them." - Gen. 1:26, 27

In what does this image or likeness consist? Scott, in his commentaries, after discussing this question at length, says, "We determine, then, that the image of God in

which Adam was created consists in an understanding prepared to imbibe true knowledge, a judgment free from corrupt bias, a will disposed to obedience, and affection regulated according to reason and truth; nor can we conceive that it could consist of anything else." By this last expression, as well as by others, it is evident that this view is adopted, not because of its own intrinsic force, but because there appears to the author no other way in which the subject can be understood. I think there are other interpretations of Scripture which have been accepted for the same reason.

I have never been able to see the propriety of this view concerning the nature of the likeness to God in which Adam was created, and it is in my mind to express my reason for objecting to it, and also to tell briefly what I think the Scriptures do teach concerning it. Whatever the Scriptures declare we are bound to receive, even though we do not understand it; for we know the words are right, and that the only Interpreter will open our understanding to know their meaning as soon as we need that knowledge. But we are not thus bound by the form of uninspired words, nor the views of uninspired men. When they are seen and felt to be in accordance with the inspired Scriptures we cannot but receive them; they come to us with the sweet power of light. But it is not right to adopt the views of any one when they are not thus commended to our consciences, though we may regard them as probably true, if we see nothing in the Scriptures contrary to them. When, however, we think we have positive light through the Scriptures upon the subject, we should do wrong to withhold it for **THE FEAR OF THE REPROACHFUL CHARGE** that we think ourselves wiser than others. I have hesitated to express my mind at

times for this reason, but I have been condemned for it. We should present our views for the consideration of brethren, not with the thought of exercising dominion over the faith of any, but with the hope that we may "be helpers of their joy." It is pitiful that I should keep back some thought that has brought comfort to my soul because of the fear that some one will say I am bringing in new things. New things! Will not that blessed treasure-house, the Scriptures, present new things to the saints of God until the last of the redeemed has been taken home to glory? "Both new and old." New to every longing, hungry soul whose various wants they satisfy, and to whose various circumstances they apply with all needed help and comfort; old because they are the words and works of Jesus, who is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever." The Scriptures have not all been fully unfolded yet, nor have all the books that have been written, nor all the sermons that have been preached by the servants of God, supplied all the expressions that will yet be needed to tell of the wonderful things which shall be unfolded to the wondering and admiring view of the saints to the end of the world. The Lord's hungry poor will still be turning from the words of men to the word of God, and what is shown to them there in their times of hunger, and weakness, and affliction, will constantly tend to draw them together, and hold them in the bond of union and perfection, as no authority or power of men could do. The opening of the word by the Spirit to suit their needs, the love of Christ felt in the heart, the work of the ministry by His gifts, and the wall of salvation, will effectually bring the children of God into manifest union, and hold them there.

To overcome opposition to our view by anything save Scriptural testimony could not

be gratifying to an honest, thoughtful mind. If the force of the testimony I present is not apparent to any one I can have no ground of complaint against him on that account. If I am right, the One who made me see the truth upon that point can show it to others, If I am wrong, he who shows me the error does me good. If I have attached myself personally to any theory as its discoverer or special champion, in the sense that I regard any argument against it as a personal attack upon myself, it is likely I will be of no more use upon that subject to the Lord's people. If the Scriptures presented in opposition to, or in support of, any view do not carry conviction to the mind of my brother, I shall not help my case, nor instruct him in the truth, by speaking harshly to or of him, and calling his view a heresy. The servant of God must remember that he is never to weary in well doing, never to be discouraged by opposition; but in meekness to instruct them that oppose themselves; not instruct by his own authoritative assertions that such and such things are true, but by the proof constantly repeated and presented. He must remember that the positions he defends can only be forced upon the mind by their own intrinsic value. It is sweet and lovely work, full of precious comfort to the servant, to repeat again and again, and show in every possible way the evident meaning of the Scriptures in which he believes is taught the doctrine he sets forth.

And now I will attend to my subject. An image or likeness of any man, or of anything, is a representative figure of that man or thing. In that respect in which it is an image it is exactly like the original; not *almost*, but *exactly*, like it. An image of a man may be of gold or wood, and of any size; but the form and features must have been exactly imitated

so that it cannot be mistaken or it is not an image. Now in what sense can man be said to be like God-f Not in his body, all acknowledge, for God is a Spirit. The view that I have quoted from Thomas Scott seems to have been regarded by many as the only other possible understanding; but how can a man's mind be considered as in the likeness of God's mind? The correctness of the description of the parts of God's mind, as given by Scott, may well be questioned. God's understanding is not prepared to imbibe knowledge, for He has eternally possessed all knowledge, a thousand years being with him as one day. He has not a will disposed to obedience, for there is nothing for him to obey but the counsel of his own will. In his understanding. His will, His judgment, His affections, and in every attribute, He is altogether unlike man; the *nature* of these attributes us different. The Bible so presents them. God is infinite in every perfection. His thoughts and ways are not like those of His creature man. (Isaiah 55:8) The Scriptures do not indicate a likeness to God in this respect, but they do indicate the contrary.

An image of a face or form must be exactly like the face or form, but may be of different size, and must be of different material. But an image or likeness of an invisible thing, as of mental or spiritual capacities must be simply the same thing. So Christ is said to be "the image of the invisible God;" and again, "the expressed image of His person." (II Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3) This means that He was "equal with God;" "in the form of God" (Phil. 2:6) one with God. But Adam was not made in the image of God in the same sense in which it is declared that Jesus was the image of God.

Jesus was "made in the likeness of men," in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3),

having all their infirmities and temptations, and bearing the guilt and shame and curse of all their sins; yet He was unlike them in that "He was holy, harmless, undefiled;" "he did no sin." So far as He was a likeness, the likeness was exact. So, while He was the image of God, and was God, He was distinct from the invisible God of which He was the image, in that He was the Son, the Head of the church, prepared to suffer for his people in their flesh, and to raise them with Himself from sin and death to life and glory.

But to my mind the Scriptures do very clearly and distinctly set forth the nature and character of the similitude to God in which man was created. We notice some things which are important in the texts.

First. It is the first time during time record of creation that the Lord speaks in the first person plural (plural, in both hebrew and Greek languages are three; while dual is two — S.C.P.) "*Let US make man in OUR image.*"

Second. Each declaration that the Lord created man in His image and after His likeness, is followed by the expression, "*Male and female created He them,*" as though this explained wherein the image or likeness lies. (Gen. 1:27; 1:2)

Third. The name Adam was given to both the male and female, evidently before the woman was made. Also, while the man was yet alone, the command was given him not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Fourth. When the woman was made and brought unto the man he said "*That is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh;*" and He said of a man and his wife, "*And they shall be one flesh.*" And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living; but she had been named in Adam

with his name before that separate manifestation.

Now, when the man had transgressed that commandment, the Lord said, "*Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil.*" (Gen. 3:22) What can this mean but that the image or likeness is now manifested? The image was complete before, but is now made to appear by the act of Adam in taking the fruit at his wife's hands, and following her in the transgression. "*The man is become as (like) one of us.*" Is not that one the Son of God? And is it not clearly shown by the apostle Paul wherein that likeness or image consists? The apostle says that Adam "*is the figure of Him that was to come;*" and he says it when referring to Adam's transgression. (Rom. 5:14) It would appear from this, and the declaration in Genesis 3:22, alone, if nothing more upon the subject were found in the Scriptures, that the likeness in which Adam was created is the likeness of Christ, the Son of God, in His media-tonal relation to the church as her Head, and that similitude (James 3:9) or image consisted in His being created male and female, and in the one name Adam being given to both while the man was still alone; and that the manner of the transgression manifested this likeness to that One in the Godhead spoken of as "one of us." But the apostle leaves nothing to be inferred or guessed at by us, for he brings the subject clearly to light.

First. He speaks of Christ as the *second* Adam, as embodying in Himself His wife and all His posterity, who are all covered by His name, sets forth, as an image or figure, Christ in His relationship to the church: "*As it is written, the first man, Adam, was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit.*" "*The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord of*

heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." (I Cor. 15:45, 47-49) This shows wherein the likeness of Adam to the Son of God consists, referring exclusively to His relationship to the church, and beautifully setting it forth in this figurative way. Here also we have another illustration of an image, as being an exact likeness, not a partial one; those born of Adam bear his image, and those born of God shall bear the image of Christ, or be like Him.

Second. The manner of the transgression was peculiar, and is of most important significance in the figure. "*For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam **WAS NOT** deceived; but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.*" (I Tim. 2:13, 14) Here is where the man became "as one of us," one of the Godhead. The image or likeness existed before the transgression, but by this act of transgression, the man following his wife, the likeness was fully manifested. The image could extend no farther than this; for the first Adam could not restore his wife, nor could he return himself. But here the infinitely superior power and glory and love of the second Adam appear. And how clearly and beautifully the apostle opens up this figure of male and female, husband and wife. "*Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, even as Christ is Head of the church: and He is the Saviour of the body.*" "*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word that He might present it unto Himself a glorious church.*" "*So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies.*

He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even so the Lord the church: for we are members of His body, and of His flesh and bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” (Eph. 5:22-32) Who can fail to see in this most wonderful language the meaning of the image in which the first man, Adam, was created, a figure or image of the second Man, who is the Lord from heaven. And how richly the figures of Head and body, and Husband and wife, are blended, and yet each seen in its own distinctive character; and all setting forth the glorious mystery of the love of Christ to the church.

The man fell by that transgression from his first state in which God created him. He was made good, upright, pure, as a man. He was not a spiritual man, but natural. He was of the earth, earthy, and so all of his posterity are, and would have been even if he had not transgressed. He had not immortality, for we are distinctly told that Christ only has that (I Tim. 6:16), and all who possess immortality must have obtained it by a spiritual quickening from Christ, not by a natural creation in Adam. But in no sense have we a right to think or speak of Adam as imperfect, or sinful, or evil, or as lacking in anything as a perfect man when he was created, because the Lord made man upright. But he sinned. It was not sin in his heart by creation which caused him to do that sinful act, for that act was the first of sin in the world. Sin came into the world then; “for sin is the transgression of the law.” Ever since then sin in the heart has caused every sinful act and word and thought - but that act of Adam caused sin, or rather

was itself sin. How do I reason that out? I do not reason it out at all. I just simply take the Scriptural record and judgment; and from that I learn that I have no right to go back of that one act of Adam to find the first of sin in the world. It is a mystery, but it is true. “*By one man’s disobedience many were made sinners.*” (Rom. 5:19) From a state of innocence to a state of sin, condemnation and death, I think ought properly to be called a fall.

Sin is a most terrible thing, as every convicted sinner knows. No one can know the offense and loathsomeness of sin but those who have been made alive by the power of the second Adam, who is a quickening Spirit. To such poor sinners the subject that presents to them the love of Christ to the church, and His salvation of sinners, so sweetly and clearly as this does, must be full of holy interest and comfort. As Adam and Eve were one before the transgression, so Christ and His people were one in some wonderful, mystical sense before the world began. As Adam was given the command before Eve was formed, so when Christ came into the world He said, “*Thy law is within my heart.*” (Psa. 40) As Adam said of Eve, “*This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh,*” so of the bride of Christ it is said, “*We are members of his body, of His flesh and of His bones;*” and the language of Adam concerning the wife is repeated by the apostle, and concerning it the apostle says, “*This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*” Therefore, because they are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, as Eve was of Adam, Christ the heavenly Husband, followed His bride in the transgression. These members of His body were seen by the eternal God, and written in His book before the world began, “*when as yet there were none of*

them.” (Psa. 139:16) So, as Adam took the forbidden fruit at his wife’s hands, because they were one, and he loved her, and must be with her, likewise Christ came under the law where His bride, the church, was, and stood with her in her sin and defilement, and died for her, and by His death washed her clean from all sin, and made her pure and spotless in the sight of God. *“But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together.”* (Eph. 2:4-6) This love was an everlasting love. (Jer. 31:3)

“Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” This love is illustrated by the love of a mother for her child, by the love of a brother, by a father’s love, and by that of earthly friends. But the most wonderful, the sweetest, the most mysterious, and the first love felt and manifested in the world, that of the husband for the wife, was especially designed to set forth in its fullness the love of Jesus for the church, and her love for Him, which is caused and called forth by His love for her. And He who had this everlasting love for His bride, the church, was able not only to come under the law that condemned her, and lay down His life for her, but was able to take up that life again, and rise with her forever above the dominion of death, and *“present it unto Himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”*

And now, while the members of His body are yet in the flesh, and feel the bondage of corruption, they are given faith to see Jesus in this eternal relationship at times, and to behold the manner of His love, and to rest from the burden of depravity and of care in

that love. And they are given at times to feel the power and refreshment of His love in their hearts; to realize that Christ dwells in their hearts by faith, and that they being rooted and grounded in love, are able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and that thus they are filled with all the fullness of God. (Eph. 3:17-19) This love passes the knowledge of the wisest man, but is comprehended in its fullness in the loving, lowly heart of the smallest child of God, when Christ is present with him, dwelling in his heart by faith.

So the first Adam went with his wife into death, because of his love for her, but could not return, and therefore all his family are born in death. But from that great family of man, the Lord has chosen vessels of mercy without number, who are loved of the Father even as He loved His Son; and Him He loved before the world began. (John 17:23-24) These were given unto Christ, and this figure of the male and female in creation, of the man and his wife, sets forth the mystery of that wonderful love that the Son eternally had for them. And the second Adam came to them because they were His, because they were bone of His bones, and flesh of His flesh; and He had power to redeem them, and to save them and to make them feel His love, the sweetest, richest experience which the heart is able to feel; and He will cause them to bear His image, to be like Him, and appear with Him in glory.

“O for such love let rocks and hills
Their lasting silence break;
And all harmonious, human tongues,
Their Saviour’s praises speak.”

EXPECTATION OF THE CREATURE

By William Huntington, 1798

“For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope; because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” Romans 8:19-21

The apostle, in the beginning of this chapter, asserts that there is no condemnation to them who are interested in the salvation of Christ (*sic*), who are led, not by the carnal lust of the flesh, but by the love, comfort, and life-giving power of the Holy Spirit of God: verse 1.

The reason assigned for this is, because the law of faith, which is written on the mind by the Spirit, and the law of love put into the heart, makes us free from the destroying power of the law of sin, which is in our members; and from the damning power of the law of death, which was engraven on tables of stone: verse 2.

For, as the law could neither remove guilt, destroy sin, justify the sinner, nor give life, God sent His own Son in our nature, that, by His sacrifice for sin, our sins, being imputed to Him, might be condemned in His flesh, when He bore our sins in His own body on the tree, and by His blood put away our sins: verse 3.

From the first verse down to my text he is describing a **CHILD OF GOD** in distinction from them who are in the flesh, and who are carnally minded, in enmity, living after the flesh, and destitute of the Spirit of Christ: but the great question is, Who this creature is

which is in such earnest expectation of the manifestation of the sons of God? Some have conceived that the brute creation is at least included, if not chiefly intended; and they tell us that this passage “ is a large field for a philosophic mind.” So Mr. Toplady conceived; and bishop Jewell, I have been informed, hath sometimes pleased himself with the thoughts of seeing an old favorite mare of his in some large field, in the millennium, when this wonderful manifestation shall be made; and which they found upon these words - “for we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.” But this cannot be the sense of the apostle, because God’s voice in the Gospel is to the sons of men, not beasts; nor are irrational creatures capable of hope, consequently utterly incapable of an earnest expectation of this manifestation of the sons of God; for a creature can never expect what it knows nothing about.

Nor can fallen angels be either in-tended or included; for there is no mediator in their nature, nor promise of mercy made to them, and of course there is for them no place of repentance: and, as no promise of life and salvation is held forth to them, there can be no ground of hope for it, and therefore no expectation of this manifestation of the sons of God is, or can be, found in them.

Nor are **ALL THE RACE OF MAN** intended by this creature, for there are thousands of them upon the earth who are without God, without Christ, and having no hope in the world. And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hope in Him whom they have not known? There can be no real hope or expectation of such a manifestation, where the Almighty hath made no revelation of it.

No, nor are all men that **HEAR THE**

GOSPEL intended; for the Gospel is to some “*a savour of death unto death,*” and is preached for a witness **AGAINST** them. And, if such have a hope, it is only “*the hope of the hypocrite,*” which God says *shall perish.* (Job 8:13) So that, if such sinners are in expectation of this manifestation of the sons of God, it is all in vain, for such will have no part in it, for “*the expectation of the wicked shall perish.*” (Nov. 10:28) Nor do the wicked expect it, for “*the expectation of the wicked is wrath.*” (Nov. 11:23) Whereas the expectation of this creature shall not be cut off, for it shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption.

Nor can it be said of **ALL WHO ARE IN A PROFESSION**, no, nor of very few of them, that they are in earnest expectation of this manifestation of the sons of God; too, too many “*put far away the evil day;*” such expect not a deliverance, but an evil day, instead of a deliverance from the bondage of corruption. The foolish virgins who slept, and the hypocrites in Zion who were afraid and seized with fearfulness, were in no earnest expectation of this glorious manifestation.

Some are inclined to think that the Gentiles excluding the Jews is this creature who is in this earnest expectation; but that cannot be, because the great apostle includes himself in the context, who was a Jew. “*But we have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father; the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and, if children, the heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ: if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. 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. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the*

manifest-ions of the sons of God.” (verses 15-19) Hence it is plain that Paul does not mean the Gentiles only by this creature, because himself was a Jew; nor doth he mean the Jews only, because he is writing to the Gentiles.

Once more. Whoever or whatever this creature may be, sure I am that three things must be found in it. First, it must have a promise of deliverance from the bondage of corruption, as a ground for its hope, and a warrant for his expectation; for hope stands upon a promise, “*Remember thy word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope;*” but none but believers are heirs of promise.

Second. This creature must have a good hope through grace, for the hope of unjust men perisheth: whereas this “*creature shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God;*” hence Christ must be in this creature the hope of glory, because this creature hath hope in His death, and “*shall be delivered,*” saith my text, therefore he shall not be disappointed of his hope.

Third. Moreover, the expectation of this creature is a grace of the Spirit, which is never found in a wicked man, but the contrary, for “*the expectation of the wicked is wrath,*” (Nov. 10:28; 11:7) But the expectation of this creature is of God, and he is one that fears God — “*Let not thine heart envy sinners, but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long; for surely there is an end (reward), and thine expectation shall not be cut off,*” (Nov. 23:17,18) Hence it is plain that the reward of this creature is glory, and his expectation shall not be cut off; for he “*shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*”

But still the great question is, who this creature is? And I conclude that it is every

real believer in Christ Jesus; for “if any man be in Christ he is a new creature,” (II Cor. 5:17) Whatever hopes or expectations may be found in others, or whatever birth-privileges they may trust in, or whatever legal works may be performed by them, it will all at last come to nothing — *“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, but a new creature.”* (Gal. 5:6) Every new creature in Christ Jesus is in expectation of this manifestation of the sons of God, and shall undoubtedly be delivered from the bondage of corruption.

Again, this creature is the whole body of God’ elect, Jews and Gentiles; it is collectively the Lord’s whole mystical body, called a man. *“Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace.”* (Eph. 2:15) This new man is the general assembly and church of the first-born, consisting of all the elect of God, which are one fold under one Shepherd; or, in Christ Jesus, one new man: as it is written, “and He gave some apostles, &c. for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the fulness of the stature of Christ.” (Eph. 4:12-14) Here the whole church is called the body of Christ, many new creatures or members, but only one new man or body, a perfect man in Christ, or Christ’s mystical body. Now ye are the body of Christ collectively, and members in particular.

“The earnest expectation of this creature waiteth, &c.” That which exciteth and encourageth this earnest expectation, is the truth and faithfulness of God which hath promised this deliverance, and He will perform it; the death of Christ, also, which

hath secured it, and made it sure to all the seed; the Spirit of God is an earnest of it, He has revealed it to us, raised us to hope for it, and to expect it. And the body of sin and death which burdens us, the world which hates us, the ci~ Al who buffets us, the infirmities that compass us about, bodily afflictions which weigh us down, short-lived joys and long desertions, makes us long to be unclothed, to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. *“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house, which is from heaven.”* (II Cor. 5:1, 2) These groaners are parts of this creature in my text, which earnestly expect the manifestation of the sons of God.

But what is this manifestation of sonship? Are not believers the sons of God [manifestly so], by faith in Christ Jesus? Yes, for he that believes hath the witness in himself, and that witness is true, and is no lie; and he doth, as the Spirit of adoption, cry, Abba, Father, in all believers; and where this witness and this cry is, sonship is manifested there already, and he is enabled to claim it, though the poor weakling in faith and babe in grace may not; but this is not the manifestation meant in my text, for this manifestation of sonship is more or less in all believers now.

The manifestation of this sonship is something future, something in hope and expectation, which is always something to come; *“for what a man seeth [himself in possession of] why doth he yet hope for?”* and what a man hath already got, why doeth he yet expect? *“Now are we the sons of God,”* this is already manifested; *“but it doth not yet appear what we shall be,”* this is yet to come;

“but we know that when lie appeareth we shall be like Him, for we shall see him as He is;” this is the manifestation that this creature so earnestly expects.

When Christ was in the world He was viewed and embraced as the only begotten Son of God by His own elect; but the world viewed Him as a deceiver, a madman, and as Beelzebub: but all this dishonor must be wiped away, to the confusion of His foes and the glory of His majesty; and, when this is done, our adoption will appear before our enemies as His divine Sonship shall appear before His, and this shall be done when we are all made perfect in one God, Father, Son, and Spirit; and then the world shall see, and believe too, as devils believe and tremble: yea, the Arian, Sabelian, Socinian, Atheist, Deist, Jew, and Infidel, for so it is written, *“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”* (John 17:21) When this end arrives there will be no more controversy about the mystery of godliness; Christ will appear the just God and the Saviour in all His glorious majesty, and the saints in all their glory; devils in all their villany, and Christ’s enemies in all their confusion, shame, and everlasting contempt. Christ told the Jews, *“When ye have lifted up the son of man, then ye shall know I am;”* but He gave them not an honest heart to confess it, but left them to sin with open eyes, that they might drown themselves in the great transgression.

Furthermore, As Christ was, so are we in this world. We are deemed fools, impostors, madmen, false prophets, deceivers, the filth and offscouring of the earth, and are treated accordingly; but our sonship shall be as fully manifested to the wicked, in the day of judgment, as it is to us now. *“All that see*

them shall acknowledge them that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed;” for there shall be a conspicuous manifestation both of the sons of God and of the children of the devil; for the one shall appear in the image of Christ, and God shall despise the image of the other; goats and sheep shall be separated, the goats shall acknowledge the sheep, and the sheep shall see the goats.

“For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope.” (Rom. 8:20) Whatever this vanity is that this creature is made subject to, it is something disagreeable to it, for it is made subject to it not willingly. Sin and the pleasures of it are vanity, which man is not unwilling to the pursuit of, nor can any thing but a divine power displayed incline his will to choose the better part. But it may be objected, that a new creature in Christ is delivered from all this. To which I answer, there is in him the flesh that loves the law of sin, and a lusting at times after evil things; yea, and at times a willingness to them, though the fear of God awes him, and the Spirit assists him in mortification and self-denial; yet, if the deeds of the body are mortified through the Spirit, it is plain that mortification is a crossing and disappointing the will of the flesh, and self-denial is nothing else but a refusing to gratify self. Neither of these things appear to me to be the vanity to which this creature is unwillingly subject.

Again, Vanity is written upon man himself, and upon every thing beneath the sun, for, *“all is vanity,”* all is light, transient, dissatisfactory, unsubstantial, disappointing, and grievous; it is vanity and vexation of soul; but to this vanity the creature is not by nature unwillingly subject, no not the creature in my text. The enjoyment of a wife and family,

riches, honour, pleasure, apparel, and many other things in this life, he can find, at times, that members of the old man, called inordinate affections, going out after these, which cost him many a stripe, and many a groan.

In short, the vanity to which the creature is unwillingly subject, is death. "The wise man's eyes are in his head, but the fool walketh in darkness: and I myself perceive also that one event happeneth to them all. Then said I in my heart, As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me; and why was I then more wise? Then I said in my heart, that this also is vanity. *And how dieth the wise man? as the fool.*" (Eccl. 2:14,15) To this vanity the creature is subjected, but not willingly.

And when was this creature made subject to this vanity? Answer, it was done in paradise, where Jehovah said, "*Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.*" There is in nature an unwillingness to this, for death, abstractedly considered, hath nothing pleasing in it; for, though the heaven-born soul may long for it in order to obtain the full enjoyment of Christ, the soul being armed against the second death, yet the flesh is weak, the body hath no armour, the weakest part must go to the wall. Besides, grievous pains, languid spirits, increasing infirmities, dying agonies, weeping friends, and leaving poor fatherless children behind in a miserable sinful world, are things in themselves hot pleasing to nature. He is subjected to this vanity unwillingly, and no wonder, when the human nature of Christ, at the approach of death, "began to be exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, and sore amazed."

But God bath subjected the creature to this vanity in hope; for, at the same time that He said, "To dust thou shalt return," He raised

them a hope by a promise, "*The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head;*" and, as Paul says, "*Christ destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and delivered them who through the fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*" Here is death, and bondage through the fear of it, to which the creature is unwillingly subject.

But the creature is subjected in hope of a resurrection through Christ; for God begot the apostles again to a lively hope by it; and the ultimate end of Paul's hope was to attain to the resurrection of the dead. For, though he wanted to depart and be with Christ, and to be unclothed, or stripped of the mortal body, yet he had something in view beyond that: "*Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon with our house which is from above, that mortality may be swallowed up of life, when this mortal body shall have put on Immortality. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death;*" and then, "*O grave, where is thy victory? I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death.*"

To the full and eternal enjoyment of this glory, God bath subjected this creature in hope. Christ's flesh rested in hope because it was not to see corruption; and ours shall rest in hope also.

"Because the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God." By the entrance of sin into the world all flesh bath corrupted its way; and, although by grace through faith in Christ we have "*escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust,*" yet the new-born soul is sadly annoyed by the corruption of depraved nature; and, as for the body, it is nothing else but corruption, and is subjected, bound over, and doomed to death, putrefaction, and corruption; and shall decay,

rot, and turn to dust. It is sown in corruption, and shall corrupt; it is sown in dishonor, reaping the rewards of its sin; it is sown in weakness, unable to resist the king of terrors, or its doom to dust; it is sown a natural body, and has nothing spiritual in it when it is sown. But this bondage of corruption shall be broken off; for He *“shall change our vile bodies, and fashion them like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself”* (Phil. 3:21) Then shall the body be raised in incorruption, in glory, in power, and a spiritual body, like that of the second Adam, for we shall be like Him, and see Him as He is; for He that is perfect (in this sense) shall be as His Master; that is, he shall awake in His likeness and be satisfied therewith. *“Thou which hast shewed me great and sore troubles shalt quicken me again, and bring me up again from the depths of the earth; thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.”* (Psa. 71:20) When this work is performed, then shall the adoption of sons be manifested, even to the body as well as to the soul; and it shall be manifested to the wicked also, for they shall see it; for of all that is given to Christ, He will lose nothing, but raise it up at the last day, and present them all to the Father, with a *“Behold me, and the children which thou hast given me.”* These are the many sons that shall be brought to glory. Moreover, the manifestation of the sons of God in this life is in faith, in hope, and in evidence and witness; and even that not fully, for we know but in part, it doth not yet appear what we shall be, we only look through a glass dimly, and not face to face. Again, though it is manifested to the believer himself, yet not to others, and especially to the wicked. But we are to return from the grave, and to see clearly the difference between the

righteous and the wicked, and between him that serveth God and he that serveth Him not: and this shall be done when the earth shall be burnt up, when the day shall come that burneth as an oven, the day in which God makes up His jewels. (Mal. 3:17, 18)

That this is what the apostle had in view is plain from what follows, and that he included himself in this hope is more evident. *“We which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption of our body.”* Here the adoption longed for and expected is the redemption of the body, which is promised to hope, and which hope expects; though we do not now see it as yet performed, yet it shall be performed, for Christ is the Saviour of the body, and this salvation (or deliverance) shall be revealed in the last times. (I Peter 1:5) *“For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.”* (Rom. 8:24, 25)

That which makes this text appear so ambiguous, is the apostle's digression from his subject. The apostle had been dropping some hints about the great suffering of the saints; first under a spirit of bondage, which was now removed from them. *“Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, &c.”* Again, *“If so be that we suffer with Christ, we shall be also glorified together.”* Once again, *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.”* Our sufferings are but for a moment, but glory is eternal; God accounts us worthy of the kingdom for which we suffer. But what is all our sorrowful sufferings when compared to the joys and pleasure of that glorious kingdom? Our afflictions are light,

but they work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. And now the apostle for a moment digresses from his subject, which has occasioned many to wander from the sense: and it is as though he would say, "Do not you think that all the sufferings of this world, as the dreadful effects of sin, are fallen upon us." No, no; man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward; destruction and misery, afflictions, trouble, bondage, and death, attend upon all, more or less. All groaning and travailing doth not light upon us so as to exclude the wicked: no, nor even are they excluded who persecute us; *"for we know that the whole creation [every creature I groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."* And now the apostle reassumes his subject again, saying, *"And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption; to wit, the redemption of our bodies."* And by this last passage he explains and confirms what he set out upon: namely, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the certainty of our bodies being quickened as well as His; for His resurrection is a pledge and earnest of ours; and the same Spirit that quickened Christ (for He was put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit) shall quicken us also, for it is from this the apostle argues. *"But if the spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell IN you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you."* This is what the creature hath in hope and expectation, to be clothed with glory and immortality, and that death and mortality may be swallowed up of life. And to this end Christ will still hold His Regal Sceptre, until He *"put down all rule, all authority, and all power, for the lost enemy*

that shall be destroyed is death;" at the destruction of this enemy that saying shall be brought to pass that is written, *"Death is swallowed up in victory,"* then the top-atone shall be brought forth with shouting, crying, Grace, grace unto it.

(Ed. note: The quotation in the first paragraph on page 23 should be corrected to read: *"We which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies."*)

COMMENTS

When we offer our views on various subjects, it is not for the purpose of having dominion over anyone's faith. Rather, we believe it, and thus we speak. To do otherwise is to take the part of a hypocrite. We do not expect all our readers to agree with us in all things, but trust that God Himself is their Teacher. We hope the reader will consider the views set forth, weigh them, and then if they are witnessed within to be edified thereby. If not, we are not offended if they be discarded as rubbish. Nevertheless, we hope we stand foursquare against sin and unrighteousness due to internal witness that such is carnal and contrary to everything holy and precious to the saints of God. It is with the backdrop of sin and misery that free grace shines forth in the gracious work of our blessed Redeemer. He can to save His people **FROM** their sins; not **IN** them.

The district meeting of the Little Zion of Mississippi churches will be held at Pilgrim Church, four miles south of Ellisville, Mississippi the **SECOND** weekend in June,

beginning on Friday night. Visitors are welcome, and can come to Ellisville, take highway 29 South through Ellisville. At the First Baptist meeting house in town, turn right; go approximately seven blocks to fork in road, take right hand road. Proceed about 4 miles, meeting house is on the left. Services will be held Friday night, Saturday, and Sunday A.M.

Date: June 11, 12, 13.