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SANCTIFICATION

By Gilbert Beebe, 1859

(Editor's introduction: Almost all of our articles of faith declare that "We believe that God's elect shall be called, regenerated and *sanctified* by the Holy Ghost," or words to that effect. Yet, while this doctrine is as necessary as divine election, redemption, calling, and regeneration, it is the one most neglected by the modern ministry. It is most vitally connected with the eternal union of Christ to His church, and hence we hope to call more attention to it. Particularly is this necessary, for the theory of sanctification advocated today is a false doctrine widely broadcast by those who believe in a *progressive* sanctification of the Adamic nature of the creature.

Dear Brother Beebe: — Will you be so kind as to give your views through the SIGNS OF THE TIMES on I Thess. 5:23? The doctrine of Sanctification, or holiness, is being a subject of much discussion here, and often by opponents I am thrown into perplexity for want of a more full understanding of the subject, and I ask for your aid. Likewise, please tell me what is to be understood by the veil which the keepers of the walls took from the spouse? (Song. 5:7) In Christian love, L. Huestis, Catskill, N.Y.

Reply — It would afford us much pleasure, were we competent to relieve the minds of all the dear children of God from their perplexities in regard to the doctrine of God our Savior, and to expound all mysteries, so far as the clear understanding of the truth as it is in Jesus would promote their happiness, and reflect honor and glory on the name of the Lord. The Scriptures of divine truth, however, can only be correctly opened and explained to the edification of the saints by that Holy Spirit

by which the prophets and apostles were inspired to write them. And God has wisely ordered it so, to teach our dependence on Him for a knowledge of divine things, that “no flesh should glory in His presence.” If the kingdom of Jesus Christ were a *science*, to be taught and learned by men, as the arts and sciences of this world are, then might the wise men glory in their wisdom, &c. But, “Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? It is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.”

The first text proposed for consideration, by sister Huestis, reads: “*And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly and I will pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” — I Thess. 5:23.

The New School Baptists, of Catskill and elsewhere, with nearly all the other religious organizations of the present age, have incorporated the idea of *progression* in their creed. They all point at the old-fashioned order of Baptists as being many centuries behind the age, and tauntingly tell us that that our doctrine and order would do for the intelligence of the people of a thousand years ago; but now they have brought the light of science to shine on the sacred pages, and by the aid of Bible Classes, Sabbath and Theological schools, &c., they have taken the sacred Book, and opened the seals thereof, and as their progression has outstripped the sacred volume, they are now invoking “the talent of the nineteenth century” to revise the Scriptures, and bring them up to a level with their inventions. In their blind zeal for progression, the poor, deluded dupes of priestcraft are now claiming in many instances what was once only pretended by the more fanatical portion of the Wesleyan Methodists, the attainment of perfect holiness in soul, body and spirit, which they call *sanctification*. None but the most deluded fanatics, or the

most consummate hypocrites ever have, or ever will make such pretensions; for the inspired apostle of the Lord has positively declared, “*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*” (I John 1:8) Yet these enthusiasts say they have no sin, and the apostle says they have not the truth in them; that they are deceived. The text on which our views are requested, is often brought forward as evidence that such a state of immaculate purity is attainable by the efforts of men, but to an enlightened, heaven-taught child of grace, this text conveys no such doctrine. It is the prayer of the apostle in behalf of the saints, that God would sanctify them wholly, that is, as we understand the language, that God would wholly consecrate and set them apart for His glory. To *sanctify*, in a’ Scriptural sense, is to set apart for a holy purpose or work, to consecrate, dedicate or devote. Under the law, the priests, the altar, the victims offered, &c., were sanctified or set apart for the purpose to which they were devoted. The whole family of Israel was sanctified in being set apart from the rest of mankind, as the people of God, in a legal or ceremonial sense. And they were commanded to sanctify the Lord God by reverencing Him as their only God, in distinction from all other gods. The temples in Jerusalem were sanctified, or set apart to a religious purpose, so wives and husbands are set apart by the ordinance of marriage, “else were their children unclean,” or illegitimate, but by the legal sanctification, or setting apart in marriage, their offsprings are holy or lawful children.

In a Gospel sense sanctification is used to signify,

Firstly. The grace of God in the predestination and election of His people, separating them from all others of his creatures IN Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world. In this sense it is used in Jude 1: “*Sanctified by God the*

Father, and preserved in Christ Jesus, and called.” “This people, saith the Lord, have I formed FOR MYSELF, they SHALL show forth My praise.” This separation being IN Christ, it is said of Him, “*Who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.*” In Him they are set apart according as “He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.”

Secondly, It is used in reference to the mediatorial work of Christ. “*For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified, are all OF ONE: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren; saying, I will declare Thy name unto My brethren; in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee.*” (Heb. 2:11-12) The mediatorial sanctification, embracing their being redeemed unto God out of every kindred, tongue and people, under heaven, and set apart by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, presents them PERFECT and COMPLETE IN HIM, before the throne in glory, and set apart as the bride, the Lamb’s wife in marriage nuptials, and ONE WITH CHRIST, as Christ is ONE with the Father.

Thirdly, Sanctification, as the work of the Spirit, is also taught in the Gospel as an important and indispensable work, in bringing the chosen people of God experimentally from the power of darkness into the light and liberty of the sons of God, separating them from the world, and setting them apart as a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people. “*Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.*” (I Peter 1:2) Indeed all the work of the Spirit has the effect to sanctify, or set apart, as a consecrated people, devoted to God. All the instructions given, all the exercises and emotions produced in the people of God by

the Holy Spirit, distinguishes them from the children of this world, and makes them manifest as members of a spiritual family.

Thus we see the children of God are sanctified by God the Father, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Holy Spirit, but we have no account of their being sanctified BY THEMSELVES. But if we mistake not, there is another family, or fraternity described in the Word as being their OWN sanctifiers, and the epistle of Jude is devoted principally to a description of them. He says they have crept into the church unawares, “who were of old ordained to this condemnation; ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.” “These,” says Jude, “*be they who SEPARATE THEMSELVES, sensual, having NOT the Spirit.*” These speak evil of those things which they know not; but what they know naturally as brute beasts, having no experimental knowledge of divine things by revelation of the Spirit; for they have not the Spirit, and all they know, or can ever learn *naturally* by searching, studying, or by any operation short of divine revelation, they only know as natural brute beasts. “*Ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.*” “Woe unto them, for they have gone in the way of Cain ;“ in setting up a system of religion unauthorized by the Lord, and like Cain, they are at war with the religion which God has revealed. “And ran greedily after the error of Balaam,” in his missionary zeal to curse Israel for a pecuniary reward, and in teaching Balak to cast stumbling-blocks to cause the children of Israel to commit wickedness, and who have perished in the gain-sayings of Core, who with his troop, in usurping the priesthood unbidden of the Lord, was swallowed up of the earth.

“*These are they.*” Can we doubt it? Do they not make themselves all that they profess to be? Do they not, like Cain, produce their offerings from the earth by their own

industry? Arid like him would they not stain their guilty hands in the blood of God's children, who oppose their abominations? Are they not walking after their own lust? Do not their mouths speak great swelling words of vanity, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage? "These are spots in your feast of charity, when they feast with the children of God, feeding themselves without fear." But by whom are these spots, these raging waves of the sea, these wandering stars, these wells without water, these clouds without rain, by whom are they set apart? Not by the Spirit, for Jude says, "These have not the Spirit;" but they separate, or dedicate, or consecrate themselves. The church of God is faithfully warned in the word to beware of these filthy dreamers, to give place to them by subjection not for an hour. Protesting, in the name of the Lord, against this whole system of *self-sanctification, self-righteousness, and ALL humanly invented appendages to the Gospel of God our Savior*, the apostle prays the very God of peace, (not the imaginary god of will-worshippers, who is at the best but a god of war and confusion, while the christian's God is the God of peace, of order, of salvation; and to Him Paul's ardent prayer in the Spirit ascended,) that He would wholly consecrate or sanctify the saints; for He alone can do it effectually, wholly and perfectly. The language of the apostle's prayer implies his conviction that they were already set apart by the foreknowledge and predestination of God the Father, by their redemption in our Lord Jesus Christ. by their calling and regeneration by the Holy Ghost, but in regard to their body, spirit and soul, there was a lack of devotedness to His cause, arid a lack which none but God can supply, and he prayed in faith, too, believing that God was riot only able, but willing and determined to accomplish it, for he adds, "Faithful is He that calleth you, who ALSO WILL DO IT." Do what? Sanctify the saints wholly, in body,

spirit and soul. Not only by separating them from these filthy dreamers, cleansing them from all the filthiness of the flesh and spirit, purifying their souls in believing the truth, giving them grace sufficient for their day, to keep their body under, and enabling them to present their bodies and spirits a living sacrifice, which is their reasonable service, but eventually He will change their vile body, and fashion it like the glorified body of their glorious Redeemer; for He has predestinated them to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He may be the first-born among many brethren.

The work of sanctification in all its vital bearings, is OF THE LORD; He has written His law in the hearts of His children, and lie has commanded them to come on t and be separate from anti-Christ; and "I will receive you, saith the Lord, and I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters saith the Lord Almighty."

The text from the Song 5:8, presents a beautiful figurative illustration of the deliverance of the church from the veil of Moses, which Paul says remains to this day untaken away from the hearts of them that read Moses, when redeemed and delivered from the law dispensation and brought into the light of the Gospel, where she with open face, "beholding as in a glass," or mirror, "the glory of the Lord is changed to the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." The watchmen or ministers of the law, smote the spouse with a heavy hand, when requiring everything at her hand, and furnishing her with nothing wherewith to meet its stern demands. The eye of Moses was not dim, as a watchman over those who read him; he detected their short comings, nor was his natural force abated to the day of his death, to smite with killing effect. But Paul says, when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.

Thus under the new covenant

dispensation, the apostles whom Christ stationed to keep the walls, all see eye to eye, and their charge is *to take away her veil from her*. Their principle work was to show the law by Christ fulfilled, and the veil of the Old Testament temple rent in twain, from the top to the bottom, exposing the glories of the Gospel kingdom, as typified by the inner court, or the most holy place, the ark, the mercy-seat, the cherubim of glory, and showing the way opened into the immediate presence of God, by a consecrated way, through the veil, that is his flesh. As when Jesus called Lazarus from the tomb, he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot, and a napkin was about his face. Jesus said, "Loose him and let him go." Thus having redeemed His people from the curse and dominion of the law, He has commissioned the keepers of the walls to loose them, and to "make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery," &c.

The individual experience of every child of God is in perfect harmony with this figure; they cease not to be smitten by the demands of the law, from the time they are quickened until the unveiled glory of the Lord in its transforming power is revealed to them in the face of Jesus Christ.

And christians, when aroused from a sleeping state, often go forth to seek their Lord by night, and fare roughly from the hands of the watchman.

For example, how long did our highly esteemed sister Huestis sleep at Catskill, with the New School, having made every preparation for a refreshing slumber, and when the voice of her beloved Redeemer knocked, and she recognized His voice, saying unto her, "Rise up, My love, My dove, My fair one, and come away!" Was there not a murmuring, I have arranged matters to rest here, to enjoy pleasant dreams, "I have put off my coat," ceased to be as tight-laced as I once was, "how shall I put it on?" I have washed

my feet, how shall I defile them? Was there not a lingering delay between sleep and awake? But at length when constrained to rise up, and being fully awake, did you not go forth in search of the Beloved asking for the old paths, and while thus inquiring of those who were regarded as watchmen, did they not smite you sorely, until the veil was completely removed, and after having at length passed the watchmen, you found Him whom your soul loveth?

We have mistaken your case, dear sister in Christ, there is not a striking analogy in this beautiful figure, and the reality of your own case.

(Editorials, Volume IV, pages 190-197)

HOPE AND ASSURANCE

By W.W. Hudson

There are two opposite extremes concerning assurance and hope. "Many shall say, Lord have not we done many wonderful works in Thy name?" The answer is in effect: "Depart from Me ye workers of iniquity, for I never knew you." These had a false hope of eternal life. Their assurance was presumptuous. Their faith is dead. In return, their works are dead. Meaning, creature works are dead works. Their hearts are not right. They may be clean outwardly, but inwardly they are ravaging wolves. They may have a show of religion, but a foolish motive prompts it.

The doctrine that the children of God, after regeneration, have a perfect assurance of their faith for eternal life without a doubt at all, is an erroneous doctrine. The advocating of this doctrine tends to drive God's people to despair. Consider one who is experiencing a season of doubts and fears, or one who is under heavy conviction, and cannot find any light at all, and whose burdens are weighing him down, and feels as David expressed it:

“For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me. My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness. I am troubled: I am bowed down greatly: I go mourning all the day long.” (Psa. 38:4-6) What if he hears the doctrine expressed as this: “You should be certain that heaven is your home. If there is any doubt about it, then something is wrong with your faith!” Preaching as this drives the poor one down deeper. Satan puts thoughts as this in his mind: “You don’t have any faith. Your case is hopeless. You have plenty of doubts and hell is your home. You have sinned willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth. What is the use of you trying to do that which is right? You are going to hell anyway. You know faith is a gift of God, and you cannot get it. God will not hear your cries, so what is the use of you praying?” The poor one is bowed down under the just demands of the law, and under the accusation of Satan, and finds that such preaching mentioned above is like pouring salt over wounds.

The other extreme concerning hope and assurance is this: “You have doubts all the time, without any degree of assurance; you experience the corruption without any redemption from it.” It, too, is a doctrine which tends to drive God’s people to despair. Hope is drilled upon to the extent that the sentiment is that there IS 110 degree of assurance AT ALL to God’s people. The sentiment is that the children of God have doubts and fears all the time, and if any has any assurance, then he just thinks that he has. Consider this situation: One is lifted up from a lead state. He is lifted up from his doubts and fears, and from the sorrows and distress of mind which he has experienced for some time. In other words, he is lifted up from this miserable state of darkness, and is now blessed to sit together in heavenly places as it is in Christ Jesus, and it is Spring-time with his soul. It is the time of rejoicing with him,

and he is singing praises in his heart, (Eph. 5:19) and is given to see Jesus through the eye of faith. The doubts have left him, and he is enjoying sweet meditations. What happens when he hears someone advocate the other extreme concerning assurance? What if it is advocated something like this: “Only the Pharisees have assurance; and their doom is destruction. They think they have this assurance, and it is a false hope. The children of God do not have any assurance here at all.” Satan drops in thoughts as this: “You never were lifted up by the power of God. You did not have sweet meditations with the Lord. You just imagined the whole thing. You just daydreamed the whole matter. The preacher just said that you are supposed to have doubts about your hope all the time. You don’t have any doubts now. In fact, you know it now, and it has become a reality with you. So, you don’t have a hope. The Scriptures says that one is ‘saved by hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?’” (Rom. 8:24) Therefore, you are not saved, and you are bound for hell.”

The poor one is bowed down and is confused, and cannot find any food in this extreme concerning Assurance.

In reading Psalms, we note that David was brought down low quite often. We quote “How long, Lord? Wilt Thou hide Thyself forever? shall Thy wrath burn like fire?” (Psa. 89:46) Also, “Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will He be favourable no more? Is His mercy clean gone forever? doth His promise fail for evermore?” (Psa. 77:7-8) Notice that David was doubting. He was brought down low, and made to lie down in darkness. This is the pattern of the seasons of darkness or the winter and rainy seasons: the season of despondency. In these seasons we are made to cry for deliverance. We desire reassurance, and a reviving. “Wilt Thou not revive us AGAIN: that Thy people may rejoice in Thee?” (Psa. 85:6)

Therefore the above Scriptures show that the children of God do not experience a *continuous* road of “smooth sailing” without any doubts and fears along the way. There is not a continuous season of rejoicing, not a continuous season of basking in the sunshine of God’s mercy without a cloud in sight. But, our experience is that we have seasons in which the storm clouds arise upon us, and they trouble us for they are so fierce and black, and we cannot see the sun shining. Our souls are troubled. “ ... Thou didst hide Thy face, and I was troubled.” (Psa. 30:7; 90:7)

On the other hand, thanks be to the grace of God, there is not a continuous season of being in despair, not a continuous season of doubting, not a continuous season of winter and rain, not a continuous dark and stormy season, for these, too, have an end.

In Song of Solomon 2:10, we read: “My Beloved spake, and said unto me, rise up my love, my fair one, and come away. For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of the birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.” This deals with the deliverance from the winter and rainy season into the Spring season, or the deliverance from the season of despair unto the season of assurance, or the deliverance from the season of mourning into the season of rejoicing. (Read Psalm 40:1-3)

Let us quote this Scripture in reference to the deliverance from one night season: “For His anger endureth but a moment; in His favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.” (Psa. 30:5)

Psalm 126 gives a beautiful picture of the seasons of deliverance. We quote the first two verses: “When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, the Lord hath done great things for them.”

Psalm 23 gives a good picture of the seasons of Assurance, and the felt sense of the presence of God. Let us examine our experience. Have not there been times when we felt the presence of God leading us through heavy trials and manifold temptations as mentioned in I Peter 1:6? Have you not felt the guiding hand of God? He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me: Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.”

David felt the presence of God, and we trust that we have also. Notice the sweet assurance that was given him as in the 6th verse. “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.” In this sweet season of deliverance, he did not experience the many doubts. He was lifted up above the doubts and fears he so often experienced. Have not there been times when you were lifted up as was David — even if it was for a short while? But, we do not experience these sweet seasons continually while we are on this earth. The thorn in the flesh is needful for us. (II Cor. 12:1-9) I think of these sweet seasons as a foretaste of the hereafter, or of life beyond the grave. Notice David’s song of deliverance in II Samuel, 22nd chapter. In a sense, this is Jesus’ song of deliverance, as He rose from the dead on the third day. And, we trust that this is a pattern of our song of deliverance too.

In David’s last words, (H Samuel 23:1-5) we note that he was given this sweet assurance. A portion of the 5th verse reads: “...yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant...” “ As we read his last words, we cannot find any hints at any doubts, but we find that he was blessed with a sweet assurance. He felt included in this covenant, and in that blessed number.

Let us briefly notice Paul's assurance expressed in Ephesians 1: 4 & 5. We read: "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." And note a portion of the 11th verse: "In whom we have obtained an inheritance..." Now, if Paul had any doubts at this time, he would not have included himself in the matter, would he? He would have said, perhaps, "God chose His people," and would not have used us to refer to himself.

"Who hath saved us ... (II Tim. 1:9) Paul was inspired to write. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (II Peter 1:21) They suffered trials that we do not suffer, and we cannot expect to be lifted up to the same degree as they were. In other words, we cannot expect to be endowed with the Holy Ghost to the same degree that they were. They were given the gifts of healing, which we do not have. We may say that the Spirit of God drove out the doubts and fears as they were given to write concerning the assurance of salvation. Yet, God's people do experience the same things, and do travel the same road that leadeth to life. But, all do not have the same manner of experience. In other words, we cannot expect to have the same manner of experience that Paul had. And we find that some of God's people have more doubts and fears than others; some are given revelations that others do not have; some are lifted up to a greater degree than others; and some endure trials, afflictions, and temptations which others do not have to endure. "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." (Eph.4:7)

We notice that Paul was brought down low as David was. (I believe that David's writings deal primarily with the experience of

God's people, while Paul's writings deal primarily with the doctrines of grace.) In the 7th chapter of Romans, we quote the 24th verse: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" This is experiencing the corruption. The next verse gives the answer: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord..." Christ is our deliverance.

Let us notice the sweet assurance that Paul was blessed with at the time his death was at hand: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." (II Tim. 4:6-8) Paul was given "dying grace", meaning, he was given the grace to die for Jesus' sake. He was given grace to endure afflictions and hardships. We do not find any doubts in this Scripture. Paul was lifted up in the Spirit of God.

Let us briefly consider the experience of John the Baptist: He received the Holy Ghost while he was in his mother's womb. "And it came to pass, that when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost.".. "For lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy." (Luke 1:41, 44) This was a wonderful experience. But, the Scriptures point out that John the Baptist did not experience a continuous season of joy and rejoicing.

"Now when John had heard in prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and they said unto Him, Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?" (Matt. 11:2-3) If John did not have any doubts, do you believe he would have asked the question he did? No, he would not. Notice the wonderful experience he had, yet he is in

prison and doubting. Have you not had a wonderful experience, my friends, and then later on have doubts concerning your state? Do you desire reassurance? Do you not yearn for the visitations of God? Do you not yearn for His presence, and do you not yearn for a closer walk with God?

“Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see.” (Matt. 11:4) Notice the expression, “Shew John again.” John had seen and experienced these things before, and Christ says that he must be shown these things again. In other words John needs reassurance. Isn't that your case my brethren?

Let us state again that God's people experience a cycle of seasons: just as we have a cycle of natural seasons in this country. We have night and day, rainy seasons and seasons of sunshine, winter seasons and spring seasons, etc. In our experiences, we have dark and gloomy, and bright and sunny seasons; we have seasons of mourning, and seasons of rejoicing; we experience seasons of despondency, and seasons of the sweetness of assurance. “We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken, cast down, but not destroyed.” (II Cor. 4:8-9)

We hope for things we see not. We do not see the resurrection of the dead. “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Heb. 11:1) We are given this “lively hope” that our experience is not imagination, and that there is a God who controls all things. We are given this hope that our life reaches beyond the grave. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.” (I John 3:2) “Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things

unto Himself.” (Phil. 3:21) Notice the expression “Who shall change our vile body.” This refers to the future. We do not see it, yet we do believe it, and we believe God is able to change this vile body, and fashion it like unto His glorious body. We do not see it, yet we hope for it. You have experienced the sorrows of death, and you have experienced the joys of life. In other words, you have experienced the sweetness of deliverance. “Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us.” (II Cor. 1:10) This is a beautiful text. In it we see Jesus who died for His people, and rose again the third day. As it is written, “Who was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification.” (Rom. 4:25) In I Cor. 1:10, we also see the experiences of God's people as they sojourn here upon this earth. This text also tells of the future deliverance, and you have the evidence within that it will take place. Meaning, the power of God is felt within your souls, and it is not just a theory, but it is a reality with you. In other words, your religion is felt within your souls. As Paul stated, “That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.” (Phil. 3:10) You know the power of His resurrection when you experience the deliverance from corruption.

We are given this foretaste of eternal life, and made to yearn for it, and to look forward to the time when time shall cease for us, when the Lord will carry us home. We realize this world is not our home. It is a temporary dwelling place. We trust that we seek a heavenly country. “And they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city.” (Heb. 11:13, 16) Their main desire was life beyond this life, and we trust

that this is our desire to “Seek those things which are above.

“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) As we read the verses before this, we note that Paul is treating upon the wonderful subject of deliverance in the future. We experience seasons of deliverance from corruption, but in these passages of Scripture Paul is treating upon the resurrection of the body. Let us notice verse 11: “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.” Paul is speaking to a people who have been called out of darkness unto the marvelous light of God. He is speaking to a people who have been quickened by grace. “And you hath He quickened.” (Eph. 2:1)

But, this old body is not quickened in regeneration. This body shall die. “...shalt also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.” It means that this shall take place in the future.

In the 21st verse of Romans 8, we read. “Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” We do not see this deliverance as yet, but we are given this hope that it shall take place in the future.

“For we are saved by hope.” We are saved from despair. Without this hope, we are of all men most miserable (I Cor. 15:19) This hope gives us courage to press on. Although we experience so many troubles, afflictions, etc., along the way, we press on through all difficulties knowing that some sweet (lay we shall enter that eternal rest. Notice Rom. 8:18, “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory’ which shall be revealed in us.”

This hope enables us to press on, and not give up and sit down in despair. This hope enables us to view this beautiful, this everlasting place of rest.

“We are saved by hope.” We are saved from this untoward generation. We are saved from the rudiments of this world. We are saved from following after the ways of this world. “The sorrow of of the world worketh death.” This hope gives us fresh courage to travel the strait path that leads to life.

Our afflictions here are termed as “light afflictions”: “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” (II Cor. 4:17) “For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.” (I Cor. 13:12) This hope enables us to view Jesus through the eye of faith. We know in part here, but then we shall know all things.

The joy of eternal life is the goal of God’s people. We do not see it here. This body of ours is getting older and weaker as time passes on. It is subject to sickness, disease, and lastly, death. As it is written: “Although the outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.” It is renewed by fresh supplies of grace. This hope is strengthened. These natural eyes get dim, and we realize that as each day passes by, we are getting nearer to death. At times this may cause us to fear, and we would hang our heads in despair, if it were not for this hope to enable us to press toward the mark of the prize of the high calling. This hope enables us to look forward to the time when we shall see Jesus face to face. It enables us to look forward to the time when the Lord shall carry us to our heavenly home where we can rightly sing praises unto His wonderful name for ever and ever — arid where there will be no more dark seasons, no more seasons of despondency, but where there will be an eternal season of singing and

rejoicing, and basking in the sunshine of God's mercy: An everlasting season of rest! Is not this wonderful, my friends? Then hope shall be done away with. It will be an everlasting reality.

Elder Silas Durand expressed his views on the subject in the following words:

"For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." This earnest expectation is entirely of the Spirit. It is the view of faith, looking to things not seen by mortal powers. It is the expectation of things promised in Christ, and revealed to the faith of God's people. Faith makes no guesses, but sees eternal realities. Concerning these things it is said, "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him; but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." Therefore, while there is deep suffering because of the corruption of the flesh, there is at the same time, down in the depths of the soul, a calm and confident waiting for that which the quickened soul so earnestly desires, to see in ourselves the manifestation of that relationship as sons of God. We cannot see it in ourselves now, but we long for it, hunger for it, have been made to expect it, and quietly wait for it. We are saved by this sweet and sure hope. all this expectation is in the Spirit; not in the Spirit of Christ considered in itself, but in that spirit as given unto us, and as living in our poor hearts, and as able to turn our thoughts toward heavenly things, and to set our affections on things above.

Now the apostle shows against what great and dire obstacle the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for such a wonderful and holy manifestation. That obstacle is the vanity of our fleshly nature, which He afterward calls the "bondage of corruption." This is why we do not see in ourselves evidences of sonship, such as we desire.

Though to our faith may come assurances at times that "we are now the sons of God," yet "it doth not yet appear what we shall be:" and we are often left to doubt that we bear such a relationship, because of the vanity of the flesh. (*Fragments*, pages 101.102).

"Then how sweet and comforting the assurance that this subjection of God's gracious work in us to vanity is in hope. We cannot see in ourselves now what we wish to see, (Rom. 8:24,25) but we are given good ground to hope for it. For the apostle by inspiration positively asserts that we shall be delivered from this vanity, from this "bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God." This we are given faith to believe shall be. We long for it, and in the Spirit we expect it, and thus we have that hope which saves us from being overcome and brought down to the gates of despair by this vanity. "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." No child of God can see himself as he wants to be, therefore he can never be pleased or satisfied with himself while in the flesh. He must see himself compassed with infirmities, held down by a bondage of corruption, therefore he cannot see himself as a son of God now, cannot see himself without sin, cannot see in himself, that is, in his flesh, any good thing. Therefore he is not only subject to vanity, but is subject to the temptation with which Satan tempted Jesus, "If Thou be the Son of God." (Page 103).

J.C. Philpot expressed about the same when he wrote: "A time to kill, and a time to heal." (Ecc. 13:3) All through the Christian's life there will be a "time to kill, and a time to heal." We sometimes read in books, and hear in conversation, an experience of this kind — a work of grace commencing with powerful convictions of sin, and the soul

brought almost to the very brink of hell, and, then a wonderful revelation of Jesus Christ, a powerful application of His atoning blood to the conscience, and a blessed manifestation of God's love to the soul. And then what follows? If we can credit their account, and they are not deceiving us, or not deceiving themselves, or if we do not misunderstand their statements, they possess an unwavering assurance during the remainder of their sojourn upon earth. Sin and Satan never distress nor wound them; the flesh lies calm and tranquil, like the summer sea, never lashed up by angry gusts into a storm of fretfulness and rebellion; the sea birds of doubt and fear never flit with screams around them, as harbingers of a tempest, but the gale of divine favor gently fills their sail, and wafts them along till they reach the harbour of endless rest. Is this consistent with Scriptures of truth? Does not the word of God set forth the path of a Christian as one of trial and temptation? Can a living soul pass through many scenes without ever being experimentally in his feelings as one of "the flock of slaughter?" Does not a chequered experience run through the whole of a Christian's life? Does the Scriptures ever afford us the least warrant to believe that a man can be walking in the foot-steps of a tempted, suffering Lord, who continues for months and years together at ease in Zion, without any trouble, exercise, grief, or distress in his soul? David never was there. Jeremiah never was there. Paul never was there. Heman never was there, Asaph never was there. You will find that NO SAINT of God, whose experience is left on record in the Bible, ever were there; but their path was one of change and vicissitude; sometimes down, sometimes up, sometimes mourning, sometimes rejoicing, but never long together in one unvaried spot. The Spirit of the Lord, in carrying on this grand work in the hearts of God's people, will be continually operating in

two distinct ways upon the souls. Jeremiah was a prophet of the Lord, and he was "set over the nations and over the kingdoms to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down" — thus ran one of his commissions: "to build and to plant" — that was the second part of his office. These two distinct operations were to run through the whole of his mission; they were "the burden of the Lord," laid upon him at his first call to the prophetic office, and they continued during the whole of his ministry, a space of more than forty years. Did he, then merely on one occasion pull down, and on one occasion build up? Was not the whole of his ministration, as evidenced in the prophecies that are contained in the book that bears his name, a continual pulling down with one hand, and building up with the other? So is it then with the ministration of the Spirit of the Lord in a vessel of mercy. He continually heals, is continually casting down, continually raising up, now laying the soul low in the dust of self-abasement, and now building it up sweetly in Christ." (*Through Baca's Vale*, pg. 226)

Let the reader please examine carefully the last sentence, as it sums up the subject in a "nut-shell." In his sermon, "The Son of the Living God," Philpot treats upon the subject of Assurance in these words:

"But Peter speaking for himself and fellow-disciples, added, "And we are sure." Here is assurance, certainly, undoubting persuasion. To believe is not enough; we must be sure. But how can we be sure? If we have seen a thing with our eyes, we are sure of that. If we have touched a thing with our hands, we are sure of that. And if we have walked to any place with our feet, we are sure of that. So it is in spiritual things. If I have seen the person of Jesus with a believing eye, if I have heard the words of Jesus with a believing ear, if I have touched the hem of Jesus with a believing hand, if I have walked in Jesus with

believing feet, then I not only believe, but am sure that lie is Christ. Now this assurance Peter had, and this all the saints of God in their measure have, it does not say that you are always sure of your interest in Him, and never doubt nor fear; it does not say that you have no infidel temptations, no departings in thought, no waverings of mind, no sinkings of feeling. But have there not been times and seasons when you believed and were sure that Jesus is the Christ? You have had such a manifestation of His Person, discovery of His grace, revelation of His love, or of His sufferings, as received by a living faith, that you are sure that lie is the Christ. Now this kept Peter, and this will keep you. Nothing else will. Sin, Satan, the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, with the various temptations spread in your path, will surely draw everyone aside who has not Peter's faith wrought in his heart by Peter's God, so as to believe and be sure that Jesus is the Christ." (*Selected Sermons*, pg. 134-135)

Notice that Philpot was given to enter deeply into the beauty of 'the subject of Assurance. Did not he describe your experiences, my friends? "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, arid our bodies washed with pure water." (Heb. 10:22)

In closing, we quote Elder Bellows: "Now let us see the result of the outpouring of this water. Arid this seems like a climax to me. "One shall say I am the Lord's." I have often wished I could say this with all my heart, without doubt; but most of us have doubts and fears, don't we? Sometimes those doubts are removed, but often we go in darkness: a mourning people; but sometimes, Oh, sometimes, we say, that we know we have passed from death unto life because we love the Brethren. I have conic down to Salisbury for twenty-five years, and have

grown to love you; and have dared to embrace many of you, because I loved you; and do not apologize for the demonstration of a love which makes you seem unto me clearer than any person that was not a professor, or confessor. Yes indeed, many witness that love shed abroad in the heart: a fulfillment of a promise. — the result of the outpouring of the Spirit. Now, don't you see there are times when you can say, as one of old did sweetly say. "My beloved is mine, and I am His; he feeds among the lilies." Jesus said, "Consider the lilies, how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin, yet I say unto thee that Solomon in all his glory, was not arrayed as one of these." Therefore, when the water of the word is life to your soul, there comes a sweet time; it may not be too often, but you can say, "I am the Lord's." (*Signs*, March, 1963, pg. 55)

I trust that you all have been comforted by the above writings.

Yours in hope,
W.W. Hudson

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GOSPEL REPENTANCE

By J. Max Walker, 1958

Your queries concerning the high and noble Scriptural subjects of repentance, following the Lord in baptism, exhortation, etc., have most solemnly arrested my mind. I can witness with your confession — yet far more so — respecting the meager part, I have played in the vast field of true *gospel preaching*. Oh, how little I know, actually, of its real manifold intent! And how few times I have come even close to the real unction and power of it — just close enough to realize that

neither I nor men in my time, have entered fully into the blessed field. Oh, to understand it more is truly the cry, daily, of this poor, smitten heart of mine — so embittered to the things of this vile, despicable world, yet so void, feelingly, of sweetening, enlightening grace! But with such as I have, I most willingly consider briefly:

1. Repentance. This blessed subject has in Scripture, its divers phases and heads. However, I deem it expedient (if indeed I am able to discern between them), to confine my considerations to (1) inward, or spiritual; (2) gospel, or evangelical; (3) legal, or external.

Inward, spiritual repentance is a Spirit work, wrought solely and sovereignly by efficacious, free grace (Heb. 8:14), upon the heart and conscience of the elect. This is that repentance which godly sorrow worketh (II Cor. 7:10), not to be repented of. And as God's Ransomer was exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to *give repentance* to Israel (Acts 5:31). This is as sure for every elect vessel — and they for it — as Jehovah's eternal, unconditional election that embraced them, and the "blood of the everlasting covenant" that ransomed them. Yea, one may not have this repentance wrought upon his soul until his dying hour, but if he be of that "remnant according to the election of grace," it will not fail, somewhere between the womb and the tomb!

Gospel, or evangelical repentance is no less the peculiar gift of God. For unless men are called thereunto, and given "eyes to see, and ears to hear" the truth of the kingdom, they *cannot* attain to it. Although all the chosen, elect of God shall and must have the former inward, spiritual repentance, and it is the prerequisite to the latter, yet it is certain truth that they all have not the special grace-accompanied call to *gospel repentance*. Now that inward repentance is essential and a *prerequisite* to evangelical, none can deny. This truth is signally set forth in the very

outset of the gospel kingdom on earth (Matt. 3:8; 7:17). And immovable soever it is that every blood-ransomed soul has had, or shall have, the blessed inward work of God the Spirit — Scripture abundantly sets forth invincible account of some elect who are not able in this present world to attain *gospel repentance*. Such as, the elect who die in infancy, as those whom Herod slew (Matt. 3:16); the poor, crucified malefactor (Luke 23:42); the national elect Jews whom Paul defends in Romans 11:27,28. How pregnant with gospel truth is the Psalm of Israel's sweet singer (127:1): "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." Many good (sic) men have labored to bring "converts" into the camp of the Lord's witnesses upon whom God laid no burden. This blessed burden will not be laid upon even elect men by the power of the persuasion of man (Matt. 16:17; Gal. 1:11,12). Such Scriptures as Luke 14:23; Acts 2:47; and Rom. 11:29; and the whole of I Cor. 12, declare that the church visible, as well as general is in the hands of Jehovah, and that the almighty Husband, and Head of the church calls *with power* every witness for His truth severally and invincibly from apostles to the weakest, most insignificant member. Then with this sovereign truth in view, what a vast ocean of mercy it is, even with the reproach that ensues, for a poor creature who is no better by nature than the damned to have this distinguished treasure, *evangelical repentance*, wrought so beautifully and immovably upon his heart, with the blessed door opened by the Holy Spirit to the unsearchable riches of Christ's free gospel.

Legal, or *external* repentance is that outward turning away from sin and wickedness. This is an *obligation resting upon all men* (for they are His creation— Ed.) from which *none* are excused. The mighty language of John: "Repent ye: for the

kingdom of heaven is at hand,” embraced this phase of repentance, as well as gospel repentance. It laid immovable responsibility upon *all men* to repent legally and literally from an adulterous, idolatrous course to a land morally worthy of the kingdom of heaven. And this glorious kingdom will not remain visibly in *any nation* unworthy of it. Jesus Himself followed up John’s ministry, upbraiding them. “wherein most of His mighty works here done, because they repented not,” and pronouncing God’s everlasting judgment upon them for the same. (Matt. II: 20-24) These righteous judgments of Jehovah God are often poured out upon wicked men, because they repent not of their deeds; (Luke 13:3,5) that is because they turn not away from their external sinfulness. Yea, many a whole nation has fallen utterly in their impenitence. This also is meant in Psa. 9:17.

There lies a profound characteristic in the proclamation of God’s literal preached word, in the world, respecting the subject of repentance that few men of our day have acknowledged. That is: when the creature (man) fell under the curse of God’s infinitely righteous law and lost by that fall all ability of himself to do good, morally or spiritually, God LOST NOT, NOR CAST AWAY His sovereign right and power to command. Man’s inability, therefore, *does not* render him excusable. It is of God’s holy justice then, as well as His decree, that men perish in their impenitence. And, but for the eternal merits of Christ’s atoning blood, and God’s gift of grace through faith, the elect must needs perish (as the reprobate) in theirs.

Oh, blessed be that spotless, covenant blood! There is in it efficacy enough to impute to every vessel of mercy. *Repentance* in all its phases. Yea, they stand complete in Him.” (Col. 2:10)

But the ministry who takes the “oversight thereof” to “feed the flock of God” (I Pet. 5:2), is to follow the tenor of God’s word, arid

command “all men everywhere to *repent*, (Acts 17:30) for they know not “the mind of the Lord” — demanding of ALL who would follow the Lord Christ, “*fruits*, meet for (evangelical) repentance —instructing in meekness “those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth,” (II Tim. 2:25) pronouncing God’s promised judgments upon all types of *impenitence*. For, to better understand the righteous doom of the wicked (Psa. 73:3-17), will check time envy in artful saint toward their prosperity, and make him more diligent and concerned in his own soul’s safety.

Now to follow the Lord in baptism, those two borne testimonies (spiritual, and evangelical repentance) must be witnessed in the comers thereunto. These are drawn forth by the ministry in one singular, blessed method — “preach unto them Jesus!” (Acts 8:35). And they, in patience, should always wait the Spirit’s prompting in the hearers to inquire: “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37), “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30), “See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?” (Acts 8:36).

Exhortation is peculiarly given to the household of faith. (Acts 2:40; 27:22; II Cor. 9:5; I Thess. 4:1; 5:14; II Thess 3:12; I Tim. 2:1; 6:2; II Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:9; 2:6,9,15; Jude 3; and I Peter 1:5). “But exhort one another daily, while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.” (Heb. 3:13).

How beautiful and expedient then is this noble work, seeing it is given of God to His church — those who have both spiritual and evangelical repentance. But this, as all other precious gifts, has seemingly become obsolete in our sad day, some falling into fatalism and deeming any form of exhortation as something that belongs to the Arminian camps; while others mutilate this precious

heritage by shamefully misconstruing it to authorize them to recruit the militant fold of baptized believers. Yet God's way stand unaltered, immovable as the Rock upon which it is built, saying plainly, "that he who may run that readeth it," "Feed My sheep, feed My lambs;" "feed the flock of God;" "exhort the brethren." — selected from *Old Faith Contender*, Vol. 36, 1958.

Surely it is better that the ministry be Biblical rather than traditional.

JAMES OSBOURN TO J. C. PHILPOT
By James Osbourn, 1827

James Osbourn was a Baptist minister in Baltimore during the Great Baptist Schism. His name does not appear among the signers of the Black Rock Address, but from this and other writings he was opposed to the development of the Modern Missionary Movement. In the 1850's, he was identified with Old School Baptists, and there was a brief period when New School Baptists referred to them as "Osbournites." This letter was printed in the *Gospel Standard* in 1844.

We present it to the readers because of the spiritual exercises expressed during the "time of Jacob's troubles" which struck the churches in England and the United States at the beginning of the great apostasy. A few months back this writer went through a dark season, and found comfort in this article. Feeling much alone, I felt a kindred spirit with the related experiences of James Osbourn. Perhaps others may find the same. — Ed.

Dear Sir, — Grace and peace be with you.

From the word of God I find that there is such a thing as for people to be "unknown, and yet well known." Perhaps this may be said of us. It appears, however, that you have

heard of me by the hearing of the ear, and know me as an author; and from hearing what some who know me personally have said of me, and from reading my writings, it may be that you are ready to think that you really know me. "Unknown, and yet well known." I also, from reading a letter or two from your hand, conclude that I know you in Christ the Lord; and as a believer in the Saviour of sinners, I now address you, and take upon me to say that if we have been inwardly taught of the Spirit of God, we are one spirit with Him and in union one with another, as the whole family of saints is kept together in peace and love by the Spirit; and hence we read of the "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." And this blessed Spirit stamps a general likeness on all believers in Christ, teaches them essentially alike, presents the same objects to their view, inclines their feet to the same paths, creates in them the same desires, builds them up in the same truths, feeds them with the same bread and water, comforts them with the same word of promise, bears the same testimony in their hearts, is to all of them an earnest of the future inheritance, and seals them all to the day of redemption. They also are all loved alike, without any difference, by the same glorious Person; they all have their standing in Christ alike, are alike secured, and alike defended and watched over; and their patrimony above is alike, for it is said, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." And hence they are one lump, one body, one bread, and one church; and Christ is "head over all things to this church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." From Christ their Head they all alike receive grace for grace; and all new covenant mercies come to them all gratuitously, which mercies are all deposited in Christ, who is the foundation and source of all good, and their great covenant Head. And to this His dear church, Christ is a foundation, a refuge, a Rock, a Saviour, and a

God.

Now, if you and I, my brother, are interested in these things, and have been brought to know, and feel, and enjoy more or less of them in our souls, I am as sure as I now draw the breath of life that “we are of the circumcision, who worship God in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” And thus, although we are unknown, yet we are well known. But if our religion consists only in outside show, a name to live among men, in bare speculative notions, in merely knowing the truth in the letter, in an undue attachment to some man or to some religious party, in a blazing zeal, in a vehement prejudice in favour of a certain order of things without Scriptural authority, I am as sure as I am of my own personal existence, that we are just where Adam left us, namely, dead in trespasses and sins.

You know, Sir, that we are God’s creatures, and that it is with God, and not with men, that we have to do in all matters relating to our eternal salvation; and that our future destiny is not to be decided by men, (supposing them even to be good men), or by what they may think and say of us, but by what God’s thoughts towards us are, whether they are thoughts of peace or not; as also what our thoughts of God are, and what *experimental* knowledge we have of the Lord of Hosts. “On this point, much with us depends.”

As I have been brought to see and feel the vast weight and importance of this matter, it is a point of no kind of moment with me what men, good men (sic) or bad men, think and say of me on the score of religion. In fact, this thing is to me of *less* consequence, if possible, than whether I shall live to be a hundred years old or only fourscore. When God smiles upon me, and blesses my soul with joy and peace in believing, all is well, let saints and sinners say what they please about me; but if God hides His face from me, and leaves me to the

buffetings of Satan, and at an uncertainty how things of a spiritual nature stand with me, the reproaches of men go hard with me. and I appear like “a sparrow alone upon the house top.” I well know what such sore trials are; and I also know what it is to be blessed and marvelously indulged of the Lord. And from what He hath done for my soul, I am induced to believe that He will yet do more for me, hereafter completely deliver me from all the dregs of corruption yet remaining in my heart, and from every vestige and fragment of pride and self-conceit, and from all and every lineament of infidelity, and introduce me at last into that happy abode where the weary are at rest. And the same things I hope will be done for him to whom I am now writing.

It is to me at times a most pleasing reflection that I shall by and by not only be delivered “from this body of sin and death,” but that this “vile body” will be changed into the likeness of Christ’s “glorious body,” and then be for ever with the Lord. And these are my present prospects, nor can the devil *now* put me to shame “in this confident boasting:” but perhaps he will by the time this letter reaches England, for I am like a reed shaken with the wind when under a cloud; and I confidently find that my attempts to—resist Satan in my own strength will
“No more avail than breath against the wind,
Blown stifling back on him that breathes it
forth.” — Milton.

I am free to confess that it requires the arm of God to support and keep me from falling in an evil day. And while many are looking to themselves, and more or less resting on and admiring their own performances, I am obliged wholly to look out of self, and to renounce all confidence in the flesh, and relinquish all hopes of being saved by the deeds of the law, and of being heard and answered, blessed and indulged, smiled upon and beloved, on account of any merit, worth, or worthiness, performed by or found in me. If

other persons have whereof to glory in themselves before God, I have not, nor do I ever expect to have. These things were, I trust, “purged from me by the Spirit of judgment and by the Spirit of burning,” when God as “a swift witness came near to me to judgment,” and sat before me as “a Refiner and Purifier of silver.” And I am persuaded that the man who hears God’s voice in his holy law, and receives the spiritual contents of that law in his conscience, will be afraid, and will tremble; his lips will quiver, rottenness will enter into his bones, his beauty will consume away like a moth, and he will cry out in his affliction with David, and say, “O Lord, thine arrows stick fast in me, and thine hand presseth me sore. There is no soundness in my flesh, because of thine anger neither is there any rest in my bones, because of my sin; for mine iniquities are gone over my head; as a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me. My wounds stink, and are corrupt, because of my foolishness. I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly. I go mourning all the day long; for my loins are filled with a loathsome disease, and there is no soundness in my flesh. I am feeble and sore broken. I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.” And by the time this process is over, the man will not be able to find anything in himself whereof he may glory before God, but will be ready with Paul to say, “In me, that is, in my flesh dwelleth no good thing.”

This, my dear Sir, is the point, the grand culminating point to which men must come before they will feel disposed to give up all confidence in the flesh, and before they will be able to see the beauty, the worth, the charms and glories that there are in our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And when men are brought here, the Gospel is opened up to their view, and they are enabled to realize their interest in the same; Christ becomes their boast, their glory, their song, their theme, and their all. And, as God has

brought me here, “of whom,” as David says, “should I be afraid?” and why should I put myself to any trouble in order to gain the applause of fellow-mortals, whose breath is in their nostrils, and whose praise is like the morning cloud and the early dew that pass away?

I am ready to acknowledge (and God knows that I lie not) that I have found more real peace, comfort, and divine consolation, in the space of one hour, communing with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ, in my closet, at midnight, than ever I have found, or ever expect to find in the approbation and applause of saints or angels. And to this day I can say of communion and fellowship with Father, Son, and Spirit, what David once said of the sword of the great Goliath, of Gath, “There is none like that; give it me.” (I Sam. 21:9) In the exercise of prayer, when spiritually performed, there is a yielding of all up to God, and a bowing down of the soul before the Majesty of heaven, and a creeping *into the bosom* of the Saviour of sinners, and drinking a large quantum of divinity at one draught. At this blessed employment my worthless soul has spent many a happy hour, both by day and by night, and when none but God and myself have been privy to this most mysterious intercourse.

Arid to the present moment no person knows so much of these secret matters between God and my soul as does my highly esteemed and greatly beloved George Arrowsmith, of New York city, with whom you as well as I correspond. To him I have communicated many of the dealings of God with my soul, and have found a pleasure in so doing. We also have more than once visited those secret places in the fields and woods where the God of Jacob, thirteen and fourteen years ago, seemed to rend the heavens in order to visit my soul, and to communicate such things to me as I shall never be able fairly and fully to divulge while here on earth.

And the name of the place I call "Patmos" to this day.

I meet with but very *little* of this kind of religion among men in my traveling about this vast continent; and what you see of it in the old country is not for me to say; but, if I may judge of this matter by what I see and hear from those I meet with who have within these few years arrived in this country from among you, I cannot persuade myself that you are so far above us as to make it worth my while to visit the place of my nativity with a view of seeing more of the works of the Lord in that land, and of His wonders among the people. We here, however, have but little more than the sepulchre, the napkin, and the linen clothes. THE SUBSTANCE IS GONE, AND WE ARE AMUSING OURSELVES WITH THE SHELL, THE SHADOW, A GREAT NOISE, AN OUTSIDE SHOW, ANOTHER GOSPEL, LIP-SERVICE, A FALSE LIGHT, AND A BLIND ZEAL.

When I say that I meet with but *little* real religion among the sons of men as I travel from state to state, it implies that I meet with some that love and fear God; which implication is true, and as such I wish you to receive it. Blessed be God, that He hath not left the earth without a witness! but, amidst the dreadful corruptions of our times, and the *great dearth* which is come upon us, and among the vast swarms of carnal preachers and graceless professors, the Lord reserves a few to Himself, who are lovers of divine truth, and contenders for the same. It appears plain, from Scripture and experience, that the Lord will seek His own sheep, and pardon those whom He reserves; and as He pardons them, so lie will carefully watch over them; and as He watches over them, so lie at last will save them with an everlasting salvation. And these, whoever they are, or wherever they are, constitute the *spiritual Israel of God*; and they are called a remnant, a seed, a tenth, a nation, a chosen generation, and a royal priesthood.

But there is a *large company* of professors of religion in the world who pertain to another tribe, and are defined by an inspired penman thus: "Hypocritical mockers, time-servers, menpleasers, will-worshippers, vain janglers, disputers about the law, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof;" and from all such we are told to turn away.

I, Sir, have a fair opportunity of seeing the various movements and positions which these carnal Israelites take, traveling so extensively as I do. My circle of acquaintance also is vastly large, and my correspondents very numerous; all which tends to increase my knowledge of this lamentable subject. And from the observations which I have made on men and things, and from the information which I have received from different quarters of the world, together with what I can gather from the Word of God concerning the present state of the church, I clearly see, and certainly know, and now positively declare the same to you, that corruption of a *frightful kind*, and darkness to an *alarming degree*, have crept in, and are still creeping in and *increasing* upon us; and that the present great outcry, noise, and bustle, which are made about religion, about the prosperity of Zion, about the *great spread of the Gospel*, and the increase of spiritual light, *I believe in my soul* are a mere SATANIC CHEAT; and when I consider what sort of preaching passes for the gospel, and what kind of preachers pass for ministers of the Lord, and what sort of professors pass for Christians, and what kind of religion passes for the religion of Jesus Christ, I am as much confirmed in this belief as I am in my own personal existence. And were I to lay before you, as I could, a minute detail of these things, you perhaps would cry out, and say, "Is this the city that men call The Perfection of Beauty, The joy of the whole earth?" (Lam. 2:15)

Ever since I have been in the ministry, I have more or less testified against the

spurious religion of our times, (this was written in 1827 — Ed.), and, by the help of God, still testify against it, and will to my dying day; for I believe this testimony to be part of the ministry which the Lord has been pleased to commit to my charge, and which testimony I consider to be of vast importance in the day in which we live — a day in which the *soul* of religion is rarely taken into view, or thought of, or talked about, or sought after; and yet, at the same time, men are so far from being inactive, that they are all alive to such things as come within the reach of human power, such as missionary concerns, tract societies, Sunday schools, &c.,&c. These things, and many others of a similar nature, constitute all the religion that thousands of florid professors possess or know anything about in this day of general profession.(!) And as these things, to make the best of them, only go to compose the *shell* of religion, being merely *superficial* matters; so we conclude, and so indeed we find it to be, that the religion of our times is a superficial religion. (It did not improve with time either — Ed.) It is admirably adapted to the *pride of blind mortals*, who are proud and lifted up with the shell of religion; and we may say of them as was said of some of old, “They rejoice in a thing of nought.” (Amos 6:13) The pulpit, however, exhibits a worse picture yet; for there precious truth is exposed to contempt, *another gospel* brought to view in lieu of the Gospel of Christ, men taught to build their hopes of salvation on the sand, carnal professors nurtured and buoyed up in a false peace, Christ mocked with lip service, and the souls of men completely deceived in matters of the highest importance; and, hence, what is called a *place of worship*, is often “a den of thieves.”

And shall we not, then, be safe in concluding that the state of things in the temple at Jerusalem, at the time that the Saviour entered it with a scourge of small

corde, is a pretty fit representation of the corrupt state of things in religion at the present period? And as it was necessary then for our Lord to drive many out of the temple with a scourge, surely our Saviour will by and by find it necessary also to take His fan in His hand, and thoroughly to purge the floor on which we stand. [This purge had already begun in 1827, and continued for the next twenty-five years. It is now being repeated, as we understand it. —S.P.] Perhaps the fan or scourge made use of to purge, purify, arid cleanse the church, will be hot persecution from the anti-christian party, which party is now mixing in outward things with the true church, the Lord’s hidden ones, or, as the Scriptures say, “They cleave to them with flatteries.” (Dan. 11:34) As the antichristian party, (or, which is the same thing, false professors,) in cleaving to and mixing with the Lord’s hidden ones, act in fawning and hypocritical manner, there is but just here and there a saint that suspects whom he is surrounded by. I have seen much of this fawning and hypocritical conduct since I have been in the ministry; and, from what I have seen, and do still see, of these abominations under a garb of religion, I am disposed to think that if the perilous times of which Paul speaks are not at hand, we may conclude that they never will come; for the very prominent traits which Paul gives us to understand shall characterize the last days and perilous times, are now before our eyes. Among these traits, are a departure from the faith, a giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, not enduring sound doctrine, heaping up teachers having itching ears, turning away from the truth, and turning unto fables. All these things now exist among us, and are the chief traits of the religion of this day; and not a few who once seemed to hold the truth are now departed from the same, and are giving heed to doctrine which is repugnant to the word of God, and satisfying themselves with a mere

form of religion, paying no regard to, and knowing nothing about the power of divine grace, or the Gospel, in the love and power of it; all which things Paul places under the head of the “mystery of iniquity,” which began to work in his day, and which now powerfully works among us with signs and wonders and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness. And work these things will, until the iniquity of the mystical Amorites is full; and when this is the ease, antichrist (or the Amorites in a mystery) will be ripe for ruin, and God’s judgments ready for execution, and the time will be at hand when the church will be delivered from her present Sardis state. At this time, God will appear in His glory; and it shall go well with His church, for the Lord will be as the dew of the morning unto her, and she shall spring up as among the grass, and her leaf shall be green, and shall not cease from yielding fruit. “When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory.” (Psa. 102:16) But this will not be yet; for while “the mystery of iniquity” is working, Zion will have to contend with the anti-christian party, (or the tribe of Ishmaelites of the present age), who will be sure to deride and scoff at all the legal heirs of promise. So it was of old, and so it will be for some time yet to come.

But what is so vastly mysterious to many true Israelites, is, that these scoffers and mockers of the heirs of promise, and deriders of “the truth as it is in Jesus,” should assume a religious form, and carry on a war against God and truth, under a show of what is called piety and ardent zeal for the welfare of the church of God on earth. But thus it is; and it will be found, in the end, that the principal opponents of Zion and of divine truth, in the love and power of it, are men *under the garb of religion*, and who *appear* to be doing much in the cause of God, while there is a secret enmity in their hearts against those very things which go to constitute real religion. “If

the light that is in them be darkness, how great is that darkness!” (Matt. 6:23)

These are serious things, Sir, and they are facts; but whether your mind is in a state to receive them or not, I am not prepared to say. This much, however, I do know, and this much I can say, namely, there *are but few people of God* even among the saints of God, that see and understand anything about the signs of the times; and the few that do know about these things, know but very little; whereas, the Lord knows all about these serious and important points, all about His church and the state she is now in, when and by what means she will be delivered from her present dark and corrupt state, and what her appearance will be when brought forth; for He “declares the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure.”

It is our consolation that the Lord, with all His adorable perfections and everything that is near and dear to Him, stands responsible for the preservation and eternal salvation of His church, for whose best interest, while here on earth, everything in Providence must become subservient. Happy, therefore, and greatly blessed, is that man who has been, by an act of grace, brought to Zion weeping, and led into her courts with supplications, as no teaching is equal to the inward teaching of God the Spirit, nor any wisdom like that which cometh down from God the Father, nor any gift half so important as the gift of eternal life, which life is in God the Son; nor is any light in this world to be compared to that divine light that shines into the soul when it is delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of Christ, the Lord of life and glory.

And now for a few best wishes, and I shall have done. I wish that the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, may dwell richly in your heart; I wish that you may be

enabled to say, "And truly my fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ;" I wish you may be blessed with the Gospel preached in the spirit, life, love, and power of it, and that, under the same, you may "spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses;" I wish you may walk worthy of the Lord, and in all things adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour; I wish you would write to me, if you think me worthy of writing to; I wish you and I, and my much-beloved G. — A. —, and a few more dear Christian friends that I could hunt up, could spend an afternoon together in my never-to-be-forgotten Patmos; I wish you would remember me before God; and I wish you may "stand fast in the Lord, my dearly-beloved." Amen.

Baltimore, 1827

James Osbourn

PS. As I find that I cannot comprise my communications to you in a single letter, I will proceed to lay a few more things before you, which things you may view as fragments.

1. I meet with many difficulties in the divine life; but I know that this is nothing new or strange, as it is a thorny road that leads to a better world than this; and through the thorns strewed on this, road every spiritual Israelite has to pass; some, however, are much harder put to it than others.

2. My conflicts of mind, at times, are so extremely piercing and cutting, that my soul is greatly bowed down within me; and Satan tries hard to take every possible advantage of me that he can, in order to sink me in eternal despair, and to plunder my mind of everything that is good and desirable.

3. At times, I am violently tempted to give up that marked regard for Truth and the good old way which I have all along maintained, and to fall in with the popular religion of the day and with the general mode of preaching, as such a course, says the

Tempter, would be much to my advantage, ease, peace, and comfort. I find this to be very trying indeed; so much so, that I cannot describe my feelings, nor can a person enter into them without being in circumstances like or similar to mine. I bless God, however, that I have not been suffered as yet to yield to this vile temptation, but have been enabled, in the midst of opposition, frowns, scoffs, and scorn, to abide by the truth as it is in Jesus, and to oppose a false religion, a false confidence, a false faith, a false peace, and a fallacious hope. And, indeed, my zeal for divine truth, and opposition to error, greatly increase upon me, notwithstanding my great temptation to the contrary.

4. I almost generally am much aided in the pulpit, so that I neither fear the horse nor his rider; but when I am out of the pulpit and alone, I often suffer a sort of a martyrdom in my mind, which compels me to cry aloud to God in secret. I do not say that I always suffer thus; for, at times, it is far otherwise with me.

5. Hardness of heart also, and a want of love to God and of a going out of soul after Him, are things which, at times, trouble me most amazingly indeed; and I think, "Surely the true ministers of Christ cannot, and do not, feel as I do." I suffer much from this quarter.

6. I stand pretty much alone in the ministry; and yet I am not alone, I trust; for the Lord is with my spirit, and his name is most sweet, yea, Christ the Lord is altogether lovely.

7. My own native country, and the county of Sorry, is still dear to me, as there I spent my juvenile days, and there I first enjoyed my God, though I sadly departed from Him after my arrival in this country for a time.