Job - Commentaries by Unknown Author

God's Glad Tidings: Volume 1, Hypocrite's Hope, The

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“Can the rush grow up without mire? Can the flag grow without water? Whilst it is yet in its greenness, and not cut down, it withereth before any other herb. So are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite’s hope shall perish: whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider’s Job.”—Job 8:11-14.

These verses, beloved reader, are solemn and searching. They show the necessity of being real, for “the hypocrite’s hope shall perish.”

How different all is as to the path and hope of a real Christian. This is sweetly given to us in Romans 5:1, 2: “Therefore being justified by faith, we (real Christians) have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”

A Christian’s present portion, and hope are here described; he is justified, has peace with God, stands in grace, and rejoices in hope of glory.

This belongs to every simple believer in the Lord Jesus. Do you say, “Oh, that is worth having?”

You never said a truer word in your life; and now I would ask you one question: would you like to have it? “Whom do you mean?” do you ask. I mean you, dear unsaved reader. I am not speaking to those who are Christians, but to those who are not. “That is a very straight line,” you say. It is, but which side of it are you? Do you say, “We are all professing Christians?” I do not care a bit what you profess; the devil does not mind a bit your being a professing Christian; nay, more, he will help you to be such. Are you a professing Christian, and nothing more? Then you are a hypocrite! Are you a professor of Christ, and not a possessor of Christ? Then I want to show you your hope.

“What hope?” you say. Oh, the hypocrite’s hope. We have seen in Romans 5:2 The Christian’s hope, viz., “the glory of God,” and he rejoices in that hope. We see the hope of the man who is not a Christian in the verses at the head of this paper. It is a false hope. Before the sharp sickle of death comes, and you are carried from time into eternity, see to it, my reader, that your hope is not this. Is it mere profession without reality? There is no root, then; nothing to sustain the profession; you are like the rush, or the flag without water—wither away you must. Mark the 13th verse,

“So are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite’s hope shall perish.” “So;” mark that word. “Ah,” I hear someone say, “I am not a hypocrite.” What are you then? A Christian?

“No, I have not cared anything about these things.” Totally careless are you? Well, you shall perish in just the same way. “SO are the paths of ALL that forget God.” This sweeps the scene entirely; there is not one left; not one. If you are not in full association of life with Christ Jesus, you, too, shall perish; “All that forget God;” i.e., every simple, careless, unconverted man or woman. Do you say, “Oh! but I am not this careless person?” What are, you then? “I make a profession of Christianity; in my earliest days my mother instructed me, and as I grew older I became a teacher in the Sunday School, and member of a Church, and now that I am advanced in years I have a good hope.” What is your hope? Are you converted yet? Have you received Christ? Has your heart tasted the sweetness of knowing His love? Has your soul been washed through the cleansing power of His blood? If you have not been savingly brought to God, the word of God classes you on the same ground as the openly careless. If it is profession merely with you, and not possession of Christ, it is only hypocrisy; and remember, “the hypocrite’s hope shall perish.” Oh, what a thing for you to wake up by-and-bye in the lake of fire, and then discover that you have been all wrong! Is it not better to get a burning word of warning now, and wake up in time, while still you can turn round, while still you can get off this road, that, notwithstanding all its pretensions, leads straight down into the pit? Would to God I could tear away the garment of external form from every unsaved, unconverted soul, that all might see where they are, and whither they are going; and that nothing—no form, no external rites, no profession of Christianity—nothing but a saving knowledge of Jesus, will avail them anything. Knowing something about Him will not do, you must know Him; this only is eternal life. Is it not better to have the conscience cut to the quick here, and the remedy applied now, than to have the conscience cut to the quick in the light of eternity, and to find out then that you are, what REALLY YOU ARE NOW, an utterly lost person. What an awful thing to find this out when it is too late, when there is no remedy!

But, dear reader, I hope you have no desire to be a hypocrite, and at least from this moment, if never before, will be in real earnest about the salvation of your precious soul. Are you anxious to be saved? then hearken to the word of God I now quote: “For when we were yet WITHOUT STRENGTH, in due time Christ died for the UNGODLY. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet SINNERS, Christ died for us. Much more then, being non, justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if; when we were ENEMIES, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his ye. And not, only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement (reconciliation margin)” (Rom. 5:6-11). God has received the atonement, we receive the reconciliation. In this passage God shows us our natural state in four aspects. “Without strength,” “ungodly,” “sinners,” “enemies.”

What a picture of each unsaved soul! Yea, shall I say of you, reader? It was my state once, but, thank God, it is not now. Is your case too bad for God? No. He perfectly meets your need by His blessed Sort, You are without strength to do good, though with plenty of strength to do evil. What, then? How does God meet a sinner “WITHOUT STRENGTH?” Have you learned your own helplessness? Then listen: “When we were yet without strength, Christ died.”

When it was fully proved, after 4,000 years of probation, to try if man had any strength for good, then. Jesus came. The time when He came was remarkable. He appeared “in due time,” i. e., when it had been proved that man was utterly helpless. “In due time Christ died for the

ungodly.” What a word! What is the ground of a sinner’s salvation? “Christ died!” How can I have any hope? “Christ died!” But I am “without strength.” “Christ died!” For whom? THE UNGODLY! Look at it! Oh, look at it! Drink it in in all its sweetness, “Christ died for the ungodly.” Have not you been without God all your life? “Christ died for the ungodly.” Do you care to come in among that class now? Did He die for the godly? Where was such a man to be found? There was not one really godly, not one whose mind and ways met the mind of God; and then, because of that, Jesus came in and died for those who had not met the mind of God, viz., “the ungodly.” “But,” you say, “How am I to be sure Jesus died for me?” Suppose your name were written there in the word of God, would you be more comfortable, or sure that Jesus died for you?

No! Because the moment you were going to take the comfort of it to yourself some one might step in and say, “There is someone else of the same name, it does not mean you, He did not die for you.” But the title “ungodly” no devil in hell can take from you; he cannot say it is not your character; and, if it is your character, then Christ has died for you. Tell me, did you ever think of this, that Jesus died for you? Oh, did you ever think of it, He died for you?

But God commends His love in a peculiar way, the total contrast of man’s. The apostle names three characters. 1st, “a righteous man,” that is, a man that one can say nothing against, except, that he is rather hard, one who gives every man his due and expects the same in return, who, would pay to the last farthing and claim to be paid to the last farthing. Is he one who gains the affection of people? No. Does the heart go out after such an one? No. He may win respect, but will one die for him? “Scarcely,” the apostle says. But, 2ndly, give me “a good man,” one like John Howard or George Peabody, one who will sacrifice himself or his wealth for the good of others, what men call a philanthropist; will any die for such? “Peradventure,” he says; but, 3rdly, “God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet SINNERS, Christ died for US.” It comes with a sort of gushing warmth about it that goes straight to the heart.

Are you a sinner? Christ died for you. Oh! what wondrous love!

And now there is a fourth aspect in which we appear “enemies.” Are you “without strength?”

Christ died for you! Are you “ungodly?” Christ died for you? Are you a “sinner” going on in all the lust of the flesh? Christ died for you! Are you an “enemy?” He laid down His life for you, that He might reconcile you to God! Oh, will you not say “I have been an enemy, but I ground my arms from this hour, for I see that, when I did not care for Him. He cared for me I was exposed to the wrath of God, and His Son bare that wrath for me; Jesus has been my substitute; Jesus died for me! How deep is His love to me; I see it all. No longer can I be numbered among the ranks of His foes. His love has laid hold of me; that cross on which my Lord expired has made peace for me, that cross has delivered me, that cross wins my heart. I have discovered the deep untold love of God to me, my heart is caught, caught by the love of God.” All this a simple believer in the Lord can say. How great the change when you believe? You are “justified by his blood,” “saved from wrath through him,” “reconciled to God,” and can now “joy in God!”

What were we? “Without strength,” “ungodly,” “sinners,” “enemies.” But we have heard and believed the Glad Tidings. What are we? “Justified,” “saved,” “reconciled,” we “joy in God,” and all because “Christ died for us.” These are blessed realities! How different from “the hypocrite’s hope.”

W. T. P. W.

Gospel Light: Volume 11 (1921), Just As I Am.

IT gives great rest to the heart of a sinner to know that the grace of God and the blood of Christ meet him just as he is and where he is.

A sinner does not need to be anything but what he is, in order to know and enjoy the sweetness of divine grace, and the cleansing power of the blood of the cross. All efforts to be anything but just what I am, can only ha\ e the effect of hiding from my view the light of the Dayspring from on high, which has visited us, as sinners, in the darkest depths of our moral ruin. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." (1 Tim. 1:15.)

There are three expressions used in the Scriptures to set forth the truth as to a sinner's state before God.

1. “Look not upon me, because I am black." (Song of Sol. 1:6.)

2. “Behold, I am vile." (Job 11:1.)

3. “Woe is me, for I am undone." (Isa. 6:5.) Here, then, we have the plain truth of Holy Scripture in reference to ourselves: "black"; “vile”; and "undone." Our character, "black"; our nature, "vile"; our condition, "undone.”

There is no use in seeking to make it out otherwise. Such is the plain teaching of God's holy word respecting the writer and the reader of these lines; the plain truth as to our character, our nature, and our condition.

Let us repeat the words: "black," "vile," and undone." These are very humbling words.

Man's proud heart does not like them. But they are God's words; and if we do not, from the very inmost depth of our souls, own the truth of this, it is only because we do not see ourselves as God sees us. All who do not see and ow n this are wrapped in the shades of ignorance, enveloped in a mantle of self-conceit, or clad in the rags of their own righteousness.

Now, I want the reader to cast aside the “rags,”

to put off the "mantle," to rise above the "shades," and to see and own, clearly and fully, that he verily is as viewed in that light w here all are seen to be what they really are, "black," "vile," and "undone.”

This is a grand point in the history of the soul.

Very many, from not being thoroughly grounded in this, pursue a zigzag, up-and-down course all their clays. They have not laid hold of the truth of God as to their character, nature, and condition. They have not begun w here God begins; namely, at the very lowest point. They have not fixed the steady, intelligent, earnest gaze of faith upon the sacrifice of the cross, as God's own remedy clear, full, and entire, for their own very character, nature, and condition, as laid bare in the searching light of the divine presence. They have not traveled to the utmost limit of nature's ruin. They have not viewed it as a dead, worthless, judged thing, wholly and forever gone, as regards any confidence in it, or expectation from it. They think there is still something to be done with it, something to be done by it, something to be got from it; and, inasmuch as their thoughts respecting it are never realized, and never can be, they are always in a state of uncertainty as to their acceptance before God.

Intimately connected with this failure in learning the reality of nature's ruin stands another thing, namely, failure in apprehending the reality of God's grace. If divine grace deals with my sins, what must it do? Assuredly, it must put them away. This is what divine grace must do, because it is divine. If divine righteousness were to deal with my sins, it would condemn them.

I have both the one and the other in the cross of Christ. There divine righteousness dealt with my sins; and there divine grace reigns toward me as a sinner. "Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 5:21.) The grace which forgives me is as perfect and as divine as the righteousness which condemns my sin. Nay, more, when the eve of faith rests upon a risen Christ we see that God is not only gracious, but righteous, in accepting as righteous the most ungodly sinner that simply trusts in the blood of Jesus. The entire question of sin and righteousness was gone into, and finally settled, between God and His Christ, on the cross; and when the sinner believes this, he has peace, peace as settled as the work of the cross could make it.

That which must ever produce uneasiness of conscience and anxiety of heart, is the thought that perhaps, after all, there is something between me and divine righteousness which has yet to be settled. This will yield mental anguish and soul-torture just in proportion to my earnestness and sincerity. And hence it is that many truly converted, divinely quickened, godly souls, looking at themselves, and not seeing that the whole question of sin and righteousness has been finally settled, that every divine claim has been answered, that sin has been condemned, that their old man with his deeds has been crucified and set aside forever, and, finally, that a risen Christ in glory is the full definition of what they are before God, are filled at times with terror, doubt, and uneasiness.

I say "at times," for it may be that occasionally they enjoy gleams of sunshine, that at intervals they experience a respite from the terrible workings of legality; and their renewed affections getting, for the time being, occupied with Christ and heavenly things, their whole souls are drawn out in earnest aspirations; and they feel as though they could, now, "read their title clear to mansions in the skies," and they fondly hope that the days of their mourning are ended. But, alas! soon again, the mists and vapors rise around them; the dark shadows of legalism settle down upon them; and they are ready to say that their past joys were all vain and delusive, and that they doubt if they have either part or lot in God's salvation.

Should the above be, in any measure, descriptive of my reader's condition, I would earnestly entreat him to draw nigh once more, and, in the clear light of divine revelation, GAZE UPON THE SACRIFICE. Therein he will see, not an attempt to whiten the blackness of his character, to improve the vileness of his nature, or amend his undone condition.

Oh! no; in the cross he will see God's full salvation erected on the clearly discovered ruins of "ALL FLESH." (Gen. 6:13.) On the cross, the whole question was settled. There was nothing left undone.

Where is the proof? I look down into yonder tomb, where the Victim lay, and I see it empty.

I look up to the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, and I see it filled. Filled by whom?

Filled by the One who hung on the cross, and lay in the tomb. What does this tell me? It tells me that all is done; sin condemned and put away; everlasting righteousness brought in, and secured to the believer; the law magnified and made honorable; God glorified in the putting away of my sins, as He could have never been in the punishment thereof; Satan thoroughly vanquished; marvelously foiled by his own weapons; death robbed of its sting, the grave of its victory.

Such are the wondrous utterances of the vacant sepulcher and the occupied throne.

Then, as to the mission of the Holy Ghost; what did He come to do? Was it to whiten, by His blessed operations, nature's blackness, to improve its vileness, or amend its undone condition? Nay. What then? He came TO TELL OF THE SACRIFICE; to point to a crucified and risen Saviour; to declare that all was clone; to apply, by His resistless energy, "the word of God" to the hearts and consciences of sinners, and so wake them up from nature's death and darkness, and introduce them into the life, light, power, and blessedness of the "new creation," wherein "all things are of God." (2 Con 5:17, 18.)

It is well to see this; well to see that no energy, operation, or influence of the Holy Ghost could whiten my blackness, improve my vileness, or amend my condition. "If any man be in Christ" he is not whitened, improved, or amended "flesh," but a "new creation." (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15.) This makes a vast difference. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. (John 3:6.) If I am looking for any improvement in my nature, I am looking for what I shall never find. I am sowing the wind to reap the whirlwind. Hopeless labor! But, if I simply hearken to what the Holy Ghost tells me about Christ; if I believe on the name of the only begotten Son of God; if I believe, through grace, the record which God has given of His Son, then have I eternal life; I am born of God; I am "a new creation." I am no longer looked at as being in the nature, condition, or guilt of the old Adam, but as being in Christ, possessing His nature, standing in divine righteousness, and accepted in all the acceptableness of God's beloved Son. My old nature, with all its guilt and all its liabilities, came to its end in the death of Christ, who, as risen again from the dead, is the measure of what each believer is in the divine presence. (Let the reader look carefully at the following scriptures, which prove all that has been stated: John 1:12, 13; 3:5-8; 5:24, 25; 6:10; 20:31; Acts 13:39; Rom. 5:1; 6:6; 7:5, 6; 8:9; 2 Cor. 5:17-21; Eph. 1:6; Col. 2:10; 1 John 3:1; 4:17.)

This makes the whole matter very clear. The believer is no longer to be occupied with the expression "Just as I am." He can now say, "Just as Christ is"; for "as He is, so are we in this world." (1 John 4:17.) This is wonderful! But it is worthy of God. He could not have His child in any other condition before Him. Nothing lower than this could satisfy the infinite love of His heart. And, moreover, it is to the glory of His grace that we should be in His presence, in all the perfectness of His own beloved Son; "Complete in Him, which is the Head of all principality and

power." (Col. 2:10.) No human, no angelic mind could ever have conceived such love as this. It could only have had its source in the bosom of God. That one who is "black," "vile," and "undone," should have all his blackness, vileness, and ruin put away by the cross, and he himself linked with a risen, ascended, and glorified Christ in heaven, is what only God Himself could have planned, accomplished, and revealed. But thus it is, and all that is needed in order to enter into, and abide in, the joy and comfort thereof, is an artless faith in God's pure record, in the word which is settled forever in heaven. (Psa. 119:87.)

May God the Holy Ghost, by the application of the truth as it is in Jesus, strengthen the foundations of personal faith, give full deliverance from the dreadful workings of legality, and lead forth the people of God in that sacred liberty wherewith Christ makes His people free. (Gal. 5:1.)

Do any inquire, Can God love sin? All answer, No. Can He love the sinner? Many hesitate to answer fearlessly. But what does Scripture say? God commendeth His love in not sparing His own Son. He thus commends, proves, makes manifest, His love by Christ dying for sinners, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. (Rom. 5:8; 8:32; 1 Peter 3:18.)

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, Peacock in Job 39:13?

Question: Job 39:13. Can the peacock be meant here? Q.

Answer: The A.V. is far from a correct representation. The peacock seems first known, even to Israel in the days of Solomon, and the name is Indian Hebraized. It is the ostrich which is really in the first clause, contrasted with the stork in the second. “The wing of the ostrich flappeth joyously (or, rejoiceth): but hath she the stork’s pinion and plumage?” This the Revisers considered a figure, in order perhaps to smooth the connection with what follows, and say “are her pinions and feathers kindly” (and in the margin, “like the stork’s”). But assuredly the peacock is not meant here, a bird more striking for its splendid tail when expanded, which does not enter into the description given; whereas the ostrich, unlike the stork for power of flight, runs with the utmost rapidity, and is devoid of that parental fondness which characterizes the stork. The same ancient versions are vague enough.

Present Testimony: Volume 4, 1852, Job 35:5-11

OB 35:5-35:11{Look unto the heavens, and see; and behold the clouds which are higher than thou. If thou sinnest, what doest thou against him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto him? If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand? Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art; and thy righteousness may profit the son of man. By reason of the multitude of oppressions they make the oppressed to cry: they cry out by reason of the arm of the mighty. But none saith, Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night; who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven?

Present Testimony: Volume 10, 1859, Job 35:6-11

If thou sinnest, what doest thou against Him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto Him?

If thou be righteous, what givest thou Him? or what receiveth He of thine hand?

Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art; and thy righteousness may profit the son of man.

By reason of the multitude of oppressions they make the oppressed to cry: they cry out by reason of the arm of the mighty.

But none saith, Where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night;

Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven?

Things New and Old: Volume 13, Now I Am Free

At the close of the preaching I stated that if any were anxious about their souls, I should be happy to speak with them in the adjoining room, while those who could remain, in the large room, would continue in prayer for the Lord’s blessing.

Scarcely had I entered the side room, when a young and well known friend came up to me in great earnestness of spirit, exclaiming, “Now I am free! Now I am free!” As I grasped her hand and looked at her, questions were unnecessary. The brightness, the decision of her countenance, and the fervency of her words, were enough to satisfy the most anxious or questioning mind. I could only look at her and say, “Is it you? Is it you? Bless the Lord—His name have all the glory!”

I had often talked with her about spiritual things; but her natural tendency was to reason and speculate. She was what would be called a reader, and I had been dreading the hurtful influence of the books she read. So that, putting all things together in my own mind, I was astonished as well as delighted.

After recovering from our happy surprise, and having indulged ourselves in a few exclamations of thankfulness, we began to realize our new position and relationship.

“And now, tell me,” I said, “has all this blessed work been done tonight?” “Yes, tonight, and I may say, in a moment. As you were repeating those words, ‘Christ gave Himself a ransom for all’—He put into God’s hands the ransom price of our redemption, and God having accepted that price, He now proclaims the good news; Deliver from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom—I have it in my hand. Then I said to myself, I must be free. —If Christ has paid the ransom, and if God has accepted the ransom, I am free; and from that moment I was perfectly happy, and could only praise the Lord.— I know I am saved!” And she looked and she said. And much more she said, and much more I inquired; but I can only give in substance what will answer the end of publication. The reader will be satisfied to know that all proved a blessed reality. I have seldom seen the truth take a more thorough hold of a heart at the moment of conversion, or at any moment; and time has proved that it was not the shallow joy of the stony ground hearer, but the deep and permanent joy of God’s grace in the heart. Her joy soon became the joy of many; just as the joy of each in heaven will become the common joy of all throughout eternity.

Oh! that the same blessed truth, in God’s hands, may become the means of the happy deliverance of every soul that reads this brief record! And why not? we ask. Is it not as true now as then? —is it not as true to thee, dear reader, as to her?—is it not as true to all as to one? Most assuredly! Christ gave Himself a ransom for all—that is, He paid a price adequate to the redemption of all; and God accepted the price. Surely then, believing this, thou art free, and righteously free on God’s own ground. This is God’s grace to all who believe in Jesus. Hence we read, “Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.” God, foreseeing the work of Christ from the beginning, ever acted towards the believer according to its completeness. Job 33:24; Romans 3:25.

Could better news ever be made known to thee, my fellow sinner? —for sinner thou art, and the bond slave of thy sins. Chains stronger far than brass and iron bind thee to thy cunning but cruel master. Twenty millions of British gold struck from many a fettered limb the galling chain of slavery, about 30 years ago, and tided the British dominions with the song of Jubilee. But twenty thousand millions could not break the chains of unbelief that now bind thee to the love of sin, the pleasures of the world—the drudgery of Satan. The power of God alone can do this, and that without money and without price from thee. The price was paid on Calvary—the atonement was offered unto God—reconciliation is ours through faith in the atoning work. Heavy indeed was the ransom-price that Jesus paid, but redemption to us is as free as the air we breathe. “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price.” Isa. 55:1.

Whether, then, wilt thou have thy freedom, or hug thy chain? This is the question. The perfect liberty of the children of God is set before them in the gospel. “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed;” are the assuring words of Jesus Himself. But if He be rejected in unbelief, the chains of sin and slavery remain. Satan may succeed in concealing the chain from thy sight now; and he may allow thee to think, and even to boast, that none are so free or so independent as thou art; that outward profession is nothing, seeing thou art light in heart. Thus he deceives, and thus he strengthens the chains of thy slavery.

“Deliver him from going down to the pit,” is the cry of love, of divine, eternal love. Oh! that fearful word, “the pit”—“ going down to the pit.” The very thought of a pit, of being cast forsaken into a pit, is too awful to think of. The very thought of it makes the whole frame shudder, and the flesh creep on the bones: or, as the prophet says, “When I heard, my lips quivered at the voice; rottenness entered into my bones.” (Hab. 3:16.) I know it may be said that the word “pit” in Job, means the grave. Be it so; but of what, I ask, is a Christless grave the emblem? Surely of a pit deeper far than the grave, and out of which no soul ever escaped. No chain can ever be broken there. then, dear reader, in the name of all that is fearful to contemplate, and of all that is blessed to anticipate, look at once to Jesus, He only is the deliverer from the thralldom of Satan. He died to ransom thee from the power of the grave; He died to set thee free; He has in righteousness paid the adequate price of thy redemption; God has accepted the ransom and is satisfied; He asks no more; He asks no ransom from thee; He says, “I have found it.” Why then, why, shouldest thou despise liberty—the glorious liberty of the children of God? Awake, awake, AWAKE, from the awful sleep of sin—the lullaby of hell! Arise, arise, and shake from thy long-enslaved soul the captive’s chains! Another day and it may be too late; another hour and thy chain may be riveted in the depths of hell forever. The danger is great; it is imminent; it is irreparable; it is thy soul—thy immortal soul; no appeal can be too loud; too long; too earnest; eternal liberty or eternal slavery is the mighty issue.

But what can I say more? Christ has paid the ransom in His own precious blood. God has accepted the ransom; wilt thou be free? Free through faith in the great Redeemer; righteously, honorably, gloriously, happily, eternally free! The faith that looks in simplicity of heart to Jesus, can honestly say, “Now I am free! Now I am free!” “We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.” Eph. 1:7.

Correspondence, Correspondence: Mark 16:15;Call Jesus King; Acts 1:11; Job 33:14-30

Ques. "And is baptized, shall be saved.”

(Mark 16:15.) Is baptism necessary for salvation? M. C.

Ans. There is nothing vital in being baptized. The Lord instructed His servants to go and preach the gospel, and they are instructed to baptize their converts. It was obedience in the servants to baptize them, but if those heathen converts refused baptism, and still remained on heathen ground, they would be still outside the Church on earth, and who could say that they were saved. That would be a question left to the Lord. "The Lord knoweth them that are His." Obedience to baptism is the obedience of the servants, not of the converts. They do not baptize themselves, but are to submit to it being done. It is a privilege. The eunuch esteemed it so. (Acts 8.)

Ques. Is Jesus our King? Should we call Him that? C. M.

Ans. Many crowns are on His head. He is King of kings, and Lord of lords, King of Israel, King of Nations; but to the Church, He is our Savior, our Lord, our Head, our Bridegroom. He is our Beloved.

“His scepter rules creation. His wounded hand rules me; All bow before His footstool, I but the nail prints see. Aloud they sound His titles, as Lord of lords, most High, One thrilling thought absorbs me-this Lord for me did die.”

Ques. Is Acts 1:11 Christ's coming for us, or is it His appearing? C. M.

Ans. "Shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go." The believing remnant of the Jews saw Him go, and they will see Him come for their deliverance. But at the rapture, it will be in a moment, when the shout is given, we shall find ourselves there,-the dead raised, the living changed, and every believer caught up to meet the Lord in the air, so to be forever with the Lord. (1 Thess. 4:15-18.)

Ques. Please explain Job 33:14 to 30. It is taught by some that the "messenger" (verse 23) teaches healing of the body, a so-called faith healer. W. I. C.

Ans. If you take your Concordance, you will often find that "healing" is figurative of the restoration of Israel, and so it is in Isa. 53:5. For us there it is the salvation of the soul. It belongs to Israel's earthly calling.

In Job. 33, Elihu is God's messenger to interpret God's dealings with men.

Verses 8 to 11 describe Job's mistake in upholding his own integrity, for God is greater than man.

Verses 14 to 22 describe some of God's ways to make men think of eternal things, we get dreams and pain and wasting sickness with no hope, dying in darkness, to go down to the pit of destruction.

Verse 23. The messenger, an interpreter, one among a thousand, shows the man his uprightness or duty, and this convicts the sinner of his sins, for he has failed to do his duty, and he needs to feel that he has sinned, and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23), and is guilty and lost (verse 19 ibid). When the sinner takes this place, then God's gracious messenger comes to him, "Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom." God has in view, Christ and His finished work, and on that ground could deliver or save his soul (Rom. 3:25).

Verse 25. We now see a new man (in figure, see Col. 3:1-3). It is the new creature in Christ Jesus, where no condemnation can ever come (Rom. 8:1).

Verse 26. There we get him in communion with God in prayer, enjoying God's grace and seeing His face with joy, for God has given him His righteousness through the death of Christ His Son (2 Cor. 5:21).

Verse 27. (New Trans.) He will sing before men, and say, "I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it was not requited me." Another bore our sins in His own body on the tree, so sin is not requited to the believer in Christ.

Verse 28, continues his song. "He hath delivered my soul from going into the pit, and my life shall see the light." It is as when first we sang,

And as another wrote,

In verses 29, 30, Elihu further says, God repeatedly works in those ways to save men's souls. There is no mention of healing of the body in the chapter. God's discipline was removed when Job took the place as an unworthy sinner when he said, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Chapter 42:5, 6. God put him through all that discipline to give him the, peace that he did not have before. (See chap. 3:25, 26.)

How The Believer Has Been Justified with God, How the Believer Has Been Justified With God: No. 1

We now turn to the New Testament. Is it possible that millions in Christendom are as ignorant of the righteousness of God as Job was, or as Israel were? And is it true, that so far as there is any attention to their souls' interest, they are seeking to attain to a righteousness of their own? One would think that the experience of ages would convince men of the folly of seeking to attain to righteousness or justification by works. Did the teaching of all the schools of heathen philosophy improve man? Let Rom. 1 answer the question. Man sank to the lowest possibility of degradation. Even the moralizers and great teachers, learned and eloquent, " Who, knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them. Therefore, thou art inexcusable, man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things." All ancient histories confirm the awful description in Rom. 1 of human society.

Every scheme of human improvement left man growing worse and worse. Did the law of God improve man? Scripture answers, No. (Rom. 2)

The sure word of God concludes all guilty, the Jew no better than the Gentile. " 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." (Rom. 3) All are under sin; every one. AH are guilty before God. All subject to the judgment of God. And still much further: " Therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

How then can man be justified with God? God in His word takes pains, if we may so speak, to show that on the principle of works, or law, this is impossible. That is, that which man is still preaching, teaching, trying to do, God says is impossible. Nay, further, if righteousness can be in this way, Christ died in vain. (Gal. 2:21.) And if it is impossible to attain to righteousness, so as to be justified before God by the law of God—how much more so by the ritual, the mass, sacraments, and works of that vast confederacy of opposition to God's word, which calls itself " the church "? No wonder that this vast confederacy of rebellion against the word of God swells into increasing millions. It is the principle of every human heart. Oh how your heart and mine have longed to keep the law, to be so righteous by works, that God might approve us!

What unspeakable distress has it given us to find this impossible. The more we have struggled to keep it—yes, the more we have tried to attain to righteousness by works—the deeper we have sunk in the mire and filth. Thus striving, we only found we had no power to do the things we would. Yea, we did the things, the horrid things, we hated. (Rom. 7)

Oh where is Job's interpreter? May the Holy Ghost now set God before us. Yes, the Holy Ghost is J ob's interpreter; He alone can answer Bildad's question: " How then can man be justified with God?" Let us recall that all Job's talk about being clean without transgression will not do. It will not do for you. It will not do for me. Let us then examine the full revelation of God in the New Testament, even in Christ, as to a few

things Elihu said to Job in his deep distress.

1st. He says God is gracious to him.

What saith John? " God is love." His very nature is love. " God ×so loved." Such was, is, and forever shall be the unchanging God, against whom we have sinned. The law did not reveal this. Very justly it demanded love to God from us. But when God in man was here, He only found hatred. Oh, my soul, dwell on this: God is gracious to thee. He has shown that love in the gift of His Son for thee.

2nd. God saith, "Deliver him from going down to the pit."

Is there a pit? Yes. Jesus thus describes it, " And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." There is a pit, and here we see a departed spirit enduring a foretaste in fearful consciousness of what it will be to be cast into the lake of fire, after the resurrection of the body. (Luke 16:19-31; Rev. 20:12-15.) "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Man may believe the lie of Satan, and be indifferent: he may even deny there is " the pit.'" God is not indifferent for poor deceived man. No, God in grace says, " Deliver him from going down to the pit." Are you on the way to that pit?

Yes, you say, and I deserve it; I cannot deny I am guilty, and I cannot make myself fit for God and heaven. Hearken then to what God says further.

3rd. "I have found a ransom,"—an atonement.

What is this, that God hath found?—that God hath provided? This is the most serious question that can occupy us; for in this atonement, the whole character and righteousness of God, in justifying the hell-deserving sinner, is involved, and revealed. This is the great substance of all revelation of God. Paul takes this ground very distinctly; so that to set aside the atonement, is to set aside God, and His righteous dealings with man. Satan, and his ministers may seek to destroy its whole value by a play on the English word " atonement," by making it "at-one-ment." If it be said " at-one-ment" means " reconciliation," even then let us remember that our reconciliation to God is the effect of the atonement. (Rom. 5:11, margin.)

It you take a Hebrew Concordance and examine all the ninety-six places where the Hebrew word occurs, you will not find a single one that can possibly have such a meaning. The word " kh-phar " is used to mean a covering. (Gen. 6:14.) That is, the ark was covered and made waterproof by pitch. It was God's purpose to cover man to make him proof against every charge of the enemy. Was not this distinctly seen in the first recorded case of death, since man's creation and fall? The Lord God made coats of skins and clothed them. There must be death of a victim; blood must be shed, before God could cover the sinner. This is the great truth of scripture. Without shedding of blood there is no remission: no justification in the sense even of forgiveness. Do you not hear in this very verse God saying, " I have found a ransom"? God did not clothe, or cover them with the wool of the living animal. It must die. They also do err, not knowing the scriptures who teach that the living obedience of Christ to the law will cover the sinner for righteousness. Nothing can cover or meet the full need of the sinner, but the atonement which God has found. God in one verse corrects, if we would be corrected by Him, many of the mistakes of men. (Gen. 3:21.)

God is love: and love in all this, but what meaneth all the thousands and thousands of victims killed, their blood shed for atonement—from Abel to the Lamb slain as the substitute of Israel’s first-born in Egypt—and all the victims slain for 1500 years until Christ came, the Lamb of God? This was all done by the express direction of God, to His servant Moses. It is ever set before us as " atonement," and is justly translated sometimes, " to make reconciliation for sins and iniquity." Did they not all point to the Lamb of God drinking the awful cup of divine wrath against sin? As Gabriel said to Daniel, " To make reconciliation for iniquity." Can this mean that God would by the death of Messiah be at one with iniquity? Oh that every author who has so misrepresented the atonement, would buy up their books, and burn them!

God says, " I have found a ransom f the same word is translated, " atonement." And for what purpose? That God, in righteousness, may deliver every soul that believes Him, from the pit of deserved everlasting wrath. And, oh, what a Ransom has God found! No mere creature could pay a ransom for man—a mere creature could only die for himself. " My son," said Abraham, " God will provide himself a lamb." We now know who that Lamb was. The eternal Son that dwells in His bosom. Such a ransom, such an atonement, fully vindicates the righteousness of God. " Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference." (Rom. 3:22.) But this righteousness cannot be of man or his works; " for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

Now mark, reader, are you a believer? It is not then, How can you be justified, but the most clear explanation how you are justified before God. Let us keep this before us. " Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

It is one thing for a poor slave, with a deep anxiety, to inquire how he can possibly be delivered from his present hopeless condition; and quite another to hear with joy how he has been delivered. In like manner, it is one thing for a sinner under the just condemnation of guilt and sin before God to inquire how he can be justified. And quite another, to have it fully explained how he has been delivered: for he is justified, and how God is righteous in declaring him without condemnation.

God knows thousands of believers need this explanation. And a knowledge of the love of God alone will not give this explanation. Do you know, clear reader, clearly how God is righteous in justifying you? It is essential you should know this, in order to really have peace with God, and enjoy it. How gracious of God to take such pains to explain this matter. May we be before Him, and sit as it were at our Lord's feet whilst He by His word makes it plain to us.

How Then Can Man Be Justified with God?, How Then Can Man Be Justified With God? No. 2

After the speech of Elihu, Job had to have personal dealings with God. " Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me." This is a serious matter, to have to do with God alone. Job had said his words were ended. Not so. What is his answer to God -to all the demands of

God? What is your answer? What is mine? If we get before God in His majesty and glory, and hear His demands on us as creatures of His hand, how have we answered those demands? What then was Job's answer?

" Then Job answered the Lord and said, Behold I am vile: what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea twice; yet I will proceed no further." Oh what amazement of soul, the true sense of the vileness of sin puts a man into. You may have felt this amazement; you may have said with Job, I will proceed no further: he did go much farther, and so may you.

Before we look at God's answer to Job, let us recall Elihu's interpretation of the grace of God. When man is seen in self-judgment and deep distress (chap, xxxiii. 17-28), then God is gracious to him. Does the reader know what real soul distress is? Is it after weary years of seeking to attain to righteousness by the law, or still more earnest seeking to attain to a sinless state of perfection? and after all to be only able to say truthfully, " I am vile." Yes, and that sense of vileness is overwhelming.

Do you notice Job is only occupied with himself, " I am vile "? Elihu had said that God was gracious; that God had said, "Deliver that poor wretched man from going down to the pit; I have found an atonement." Elihu had brought out what God is. This was the glad tidings. But Job had not seen this yet. Have you?

Let us then fix our thoughts on this revelation of God—God, who knows all our vileness, and wretchedness, and all we have done. Here is a fact, God is gracious. How far has He shown that free favor? He has decided to deliver the poor sin-burdened soul from going down into the pit. Man deserves to go into the pit—you, I- ah, most truly—but God says, " Deliver him from going down to the pit." Oh, what a fact What a God of grace! But how shall the sinner be delivered from going down to deserved darkness and everlasting despair? Blessed reply of God to that question, " I have found a ransom'- an atonement.

Mark, the righteousness of God is in this very thing. He has found an atonement. God has provided Himself a Lamb. He has sent the Lamb of God. All is of God. And the love of God, the free grace of God, is first. The very character of God shines out in this: as it is written, " God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." " God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." " Christ died for the ungodly." " In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

Yes, God's judgment of our need and lost condition was shadowed forth in this most ancient book of Job. The only true interpretation of how man can be justified before God is this, the pure grace of God come down to deliver the hell-deserving sinner from going down into the pit; and He says, " I have found a ransom."

Job does not yet understand: he is still occupied with vile Job—the vile Job that longs to be righteous. He says, " Behold, I am vile: what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further."

Dear old Job! The knowledge of what you are will never save you—never enable you to see you are justified from all things. Whilst we are occupied even with our vileness, we have not submitted to the judgment of God—the righteousness of God. As yet, Job's eyes seem fast closed as to what God is to the ungodly sinner. Are your eyes open to what God is in grace to you? When your eyes are open to what God is, you will very likely see your deepest sin is in rejecting the grace of God, and the infinite provision He has found for you in the atoning death of Christ. As God says to Job, " Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?” (Job 40:8.) Can Job meet this demand of God? Can we meet it?

You may say, Oh that I could be better by sacraments, and fastings; by prayers; by punishing my body; by holy days; by good works; by sinless purity; by vows and pledges; by sorrow for sin; by keeping the law of God: but after all, I am vile. Now, poor striving Job, if you could possibly be justified before God, by all these, would it not disannul the judgment of God? He judged far otherwise. He says to all such," Wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?" Oh, that the Romanist, the Ritualist, nay, that man in his blind pursuit of righteousness by works, might just see how he strives against God; how he condemns God, that he might by all these, or any other means, be righteous.

But, you say, Must we not say, "I am vile"? Surely; but you may say that, and all the while have a secret hope that you will be better and more fit for God. Self can never be really given up, until God is known in Christ, the Justifier of the ungodly. You say, Hold! that is dangerous doctrine. How can God do that, and maintain His own righteousness? Ah, Job, you must now learn that God can do everything. You ought to have learned this from Elihu, but you did not.

God now shows Job his utter helplessness, even by the things of creation. He brings before him a few of the works of His own hands. Light now breaks in upon Job. (Chap, xlii.) He turns to God; it is now what God is: " I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." He had said, a I know that thou canst do everything." He now sees God. All is perfectly clear. He changes his mind, in dust and ashes. Now, Job, how can man be justified with God? God can do it. I see God: He has done it; He has found a ransom. Then your mind is entirely changed about God. Entirely changed; I repent.

Now, Job, further; what about Job? What is old Job now? Dust and ashes. What do you mean? I mean that old Job is dead. I abhor him; dust and ashes to him. I have no further hope or need in him. All is new. " And it was so.”

Elihu had said, " Then he [God] is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom. His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth; he shall pray unto God, and he will be favorable unto him; and he shall see his face with joy: for he will render unto man his righteousness." " And it was so." I see it now, says Job: " Now mine eye seeth thee." God is seen first, then Job repents. This is the true order. Beautifully, now, is resurrection shadowed forth. Job has far more in the new place than he had lost in the old.

The revelation of God in grace and righteousness, produces true repentance. What deep self-judgment! " Now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." No longer the cry, " Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me," &c. There was, then, the earnest desire that he might be righteous, so that God could shine upon him, because of his own righteousness. Every effort after such a thing is now gone, and seen to be rebellion against God. Man cannot look at himself and at God at the same time. Whilst Job looked at himself, he did not apprehend the favor of God in providing a ransom.

Must it not, be so with us? Whilst we are seeking to attain to righteousness by works, we neither know God nor the value of that atonement which He has found and provided.

How then can man be justified with God -with God in righteousness? Man is a sinner, guilty before God: how then can he be accounted righteous? The book of Job proves that by works this is impossible. As we have seen, Job was the most religious man on earth. There was none like him; upright and sincere before God and man: when he was tried he was found to maintain his own righteousness; yea, he made the most desperate efforts to maintain that he was righteous, exactly like Israel in an after day. He was completely ignorant of God's righteousness; and when that righteousness was put before him by Elihu, he did not understand it. God revealed to him " a ransom," but he did not understand God or the ransom God had provided, until light broke into his soul, and then he saw it all, and repented, entirely changed his mind, abhorring himself in dust and ashes.

How is it with the reader? You may not have sought to be justified by works, as Job did. Indeed, careless indifference rather marks this Laodicean period in which we live. Still, the question has forced itself on you, How then can man, can I, be justified with God? ' It is quite true that you have failed to satisfy your conscience; yet, you have tried a little, a very little, to be religious, far behind Job in that race. You hope to be more in earnest yet; you do not think of going down to hell; you never intend to lift up your eyes there in torment; you intend to turn over a fresh leaf; you hope to be truly religious. But if Job's race was striving against God, what is yours, or what will it be? Job had never seen or understood " the gift of righteousness." (Rom. 5:17.) No, as we have said, he was just like Israel when they were put under law. " For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. (Rom. 10:8.) Read that verse again. Does it not exactly describe Job of old? Do you know any other Jobs? Is it not an exact picture of Christendom? It may be of your very self.

At all events it is a striking fact, that man, as Job, before the law was given, to convince man of his sin—yes, even back to the first man born of a woman—then Israel under the law—and now, Christendom for centuries—the universal state of man is described in this, the oldest of books. Yes, it is the universal ignorance of the righteousness of God, and man striving against God to maintain his own righteousness, and condemn God; and also, we may say, how wonderfully in those early days, how clearly the glad tidings were announced, how God has met the question, How then can man be justified with God? Has this question been fully revealed? Let us turn to the New Testament and see.

How Then Can Man Be Justified with God?, How Then Can Man Be Justified With God? No. 1

This is the great question still for many a soul. How can man be justified with God? There is not so much difficulty as to how a man can be justified with men, or before men. That must be by works—what men can see, as is very fully brought out in the epistle of James. But how to be righteous before God, that is a very different matter, and that was Bildad the Shuhite's difficulty.

This question is illustrated by the history of a remarkable man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job. This man was the most religious man on the earth at that time. " And that man was perfect [or sincere] and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil." "And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil?" Had he lived in the days of the law, he might have said with Saul, " Touching the righteousness which is in the law blameless." Before men and in his own eyes, he was the fairest specimen of man in the flesh on record. Surely it was for our instruction, that this man was allowed to be so severely tested by Satan. Patiently he bore much, enough, we might say, to crush any man: Loss of children, and all his property. Then smitten with a loathsome disease. Then harassed by his wife; and lastly by his three friends. They do their utmost to prove that God is against him, because of his wickedness. And the verses we have read, are amongst their last words, " How then can man be justified with God?" Job is now in great distress and perplexity, and the gloomy thought took hold of him that God must be against him: he says: "As God liveth, who hath taken away my judgment; and the Almighty who hath vexed my soul:.... My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit..... My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live." (Job 27:2-6.)

Now if you would see how a truly upright religious man would struggle to hold fast his own righteousness, read chapters xxvi. to the end of xxxi. All this time he was suffering from a most loathsome disease, like leprosy—a most striking figure of sin in the flesh, the loathsome condition of the old man. To a man born of God, an upright sincere man, nothing could be more loathsome.

You may go on for years, and never know, or even suspect that you have a nature so utterly vile. You say, I have given my heart to God, and see how useful I have been to others in the Sunday school, or the pulpit; how I have been respected and looked up to by my fellow professors. But now to find that I have a nature worse than a beast. The thing I feared has touched me. What awful thoughts of God. Is He, must He not be against me? What darkness, what doubt! When I think of my present state, what I am, I say surely God is against me; yet all the while struggling desperately to hold fast my own righteousness.

Still this awful, sinful flesh! Now you know it, once you did not. Now you groan," Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me. When his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness; as I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle.’ &c. (Job 29:2-4.) Did you ever say, " Oh that it was with me as when I was first converted "? Job tried to remember everything that he had done that would give him comfort -and at last in desperation he says, " Let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley. The words of Job are ended." (Job 31:40.) It is quite clear Job had not yet learned, How man can be justified with God. It is further manifest that his three friends could not tell him, It may be just so with the reader. And if looking for the solution in your own experience, however sincere and upright before men, however devoted in doing good to your fellows, as Job was; yet you say, It is not with you as it once was. You cannot clearly understand how you can be justified, reckoned righteous, before God; and none of your friends can help you. Such is the case so long as we are occupied with ourselves. And the more sincere and upright we are—the more earnestly we desire to be righteous before God, the more miserable we are, and the poor wearied soul is ready to say, I can do and say no more. The words of Job are ended. Yes, this is man's, Job's, extremity. It may be yours. Thank God if it is. Can you say another word for yourself I Do you say, How can you describe my experience like this? Nay, God has described it in this book of Job.

If any man could be justified before God by works, was not dear old Job that man? You and I, dear reader, are not fit to hold the candle to Job; but after five chapters of determined effort to justify himself, he is done. And so are we if we spend fifty years to do the same thing. You notice every word was about what he had been, what he had done; and what he had not done. Is it so with you? Then on that ground you never can understand how man, ungodly sinner as he is, can be justified with God.

We now come to the explanation. Another person appears on the scene—Elihu—(My God Himself). Yes, God will be His own interpreter. He will make it all plain to you. Elihu is angry with Job, " because he justified himself rather than God." (Job 32) He was also angry with Job's friends, " because they found no answer, and yet had condemned Job." God does not want to condemn us, but to justify us; but the question is, how is this to be done? One thing is very remarkable and little understood to this day after thousands of years, that to struggle as Job did to be justified by our works, and doings, is to strive against God—to make our righteousness to be more than God's righteousness.

Elihu says, " Surely thou hast spoken in mine hearing, and I have heard the voice of thy words saying: I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me. Behold, he findeth occasions against me, he counteth me for his enemy; he putteth my feet in the stocks, he marketh all my paths. Behold, in this thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man. Why dost thou strive against him?' Is it possible for a religious man to strive against God by thus seeking to attain to justification by his works? And the most terrible thing is, that a man may be so deceived as to say he is without sin, that he has not sinned for years. And all this is found to be striving against God. And the man may be sincere all the time, as sincere as Saul of Tarsus, or Job of old, or as the Jaws when they cried, u Crucify him."

You may ask, How is it when I have spent a religious life in seeking to do good, that I find no rest or peace to my soul or body? I am so troubled, because of the chastening hand of God. I lose my sleep, and lose my appetite, and seem ready to die in despair. All this k exactly described in chapter xxxiii. 14-22. And in it all God has a gracious purpose of love “That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man. He keepeth back his soul from the pit." What can be the meaning of all this? Ah, God has sent One from heaven to explain it all.

" If there be a messenger with him, an inter-prefer, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness; then he is gracious unto him and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom." It is very humbling to think amongst those that profess to be the messengers of God, and teachers, it is most probable that you will be deceived. But there is a Friend that never deceives. Now where is the point of uprightness where God thus can meet a soul that takes the place of self-judgment? "He looketh upon men; and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; he will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light. Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living." The meeting-point then is, first, on God's part: " I have found a ransom." Secondly, on man's part: " I have sinned." The order is most remarkable. It is the grace of God that bringeth salvation. When God reveals Himself in having found a ransom, having provided an atoning Lamb—when thus revealed to the soul, the effect is that man can say, (in the original it is " he sings"), I have sinned; but God hath redeemed me, delivered my soul from going clown into the pit. This is the only true meeting-point between God and man. It is not, I have given up my sins, or I am better than others, or I am righteous, clean without transgression, or without sin. How many, like Job, try to meet God on that ground, or in that way.

Has the one Interpreter met you and led you honestly, and in deep reality, to come to God just as the prodigal with " I have sinned "? God says first, " Deliver him from going down into the pit, I have found a ransom." " If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

How beautifully the new creation is shadowed forth in the words of Elihu: " His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth: he shall pray unto God, and he will be favorable unto him; and he shall see his face with joy" Oh, mark the sure result of thus meeting God in truth: " I have sinned." The prodigal saw his Father's face with joy -and so shall we, for God hath found a ransom. Not only delivered us from going down to the pit; but we shall see His face with joy. Yes, and the Father saw the face of His lost one with joy. And oh, the joy of God when He shall see the face of His ransomed one in glory. Poor weary soul, long hast thou sought in vain to meet God in thine own righteousness: thou canst only meet Him in the full confession of thy sins before Him. " Hold thy peace, and I will speak. If thou hast anything to say, answer me: speak, for I desire to justify thee."

Did not Gain say, as it were, I am righteous; here I bring the fruits of the earth, results of my labor? Did not Job say, " I am righteous? Every thought centered in himself—what he was, or what he had been. Is not this the human heart? Oh, how many thousands around us are seeking to be righteous, and to establish their own righteousness before God, like Job. What is so tenacious as self-righteousness? Job did not give in, and change his mind yet. Many a religious reader may not give in, and give up all hope of being better and more fit for God, and thus take the counsel of the Interpreter, and come at once with those three words, "I have sinned." Oh how ready God is to meet us! Oh, my soul, think how God found, provided, sent the ransom first. Yes, He gave His only begotten Son—the holy, holy, holy One. He who dwells in the bosom of the Father; He who created this vast universe, was given a ransom for me, a poor, vile sinner! And how long did I spurn the proclaimed redemption, by seeking to work out a righteousness of my own, like Job?

How long have we said, like Job," My righteousness is more than God's"? (Job 35:2.) Surely, you say, I never said or thought that. God's righteousness is unto all through the death of the ransom. But have you not made more of your own doings, or feelings, and works? Have you not thought much more about these, about your righteousness, than God's? Have you, or can you, find peace in that way? Never. Did Job find peace by being thus occupied, with himself? No: it is a hard struggle to give up self. Hard for Job, and hard for you. Very striking, and most true, the teaching or preaching of Elihu: but still Job was not brought to the end of Job. You, too, may have met the " one in a thousand" of Teachers among men: and still you may not have come to the end of yourself. What had to be done in Job's case. We will next inquire. It may be blest to you.

Christian Truth: Volume 28, Life's Experiences: His Appointments

"He performeth the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with Him." Job 23:14.

Believing that life's experiences are HIS appointment can make a tremendous change in one's life. Interruptions, even when unreasonable, will be met with patience. Irritations will not upset us. Ill-treatment and misrepresentation will not worry us. Duties will be gladly accepted. "Overwork" will not be resented. The reason? God is seen to be over all. Nothing comes to us but by His permission.

I can afford to let Him choose, and lay my care to rest;

For well I know my loving Lord will give to me the best.

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, Meaning of the First Clause of Job 22:30

Question: Job 22:30. What is the meaning of the first clause?

Answer: There is no “island” expressed in either the Sept. or Vulgate, which removes one difficulty. But Schultens seems to have perceived first that the word so translated is a negative, as we see in Ichabod. That sense therefore is quite opposed by those two ancient versions, and it should run thus: “Him that is not guiltless shall He deliver: yea, he shall be delivered by the pureness of thy hands.”

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, Job 22:30

Question: What means Job 22:30? Or is it that the A. V. fails, as well as others? The connection too in ver. 29, is obscure as we read them. X.

Answer: The translation correctly given serves to make all plain, as any one may find in a version which appeared long ago in the B. T. and reproduced by Morrish, the Publisher.

This was unexpectedly illustrated before the book closed in the rescue, not of Eliphaz only but of the other two self-righteous friends, when Jehovah’s anger was kindled against them and their unjust opinions, and Job prayed for them. “Island” or “house” (J. M. Good) ruins the sense of the sentence; for the word here is simply a negative particle, as taken in the Chaldee paraphrase, and approved by the ablest of late. I. Leeser’s Version is even closer: “He will even deliver” &c., i.e. not the humble only, but the faulty.

Scripture Queries and Answers, Scripture Queries and Answers: Peacock; He Who Runs May Read It

Q.-1. Job 22:30. What is the meaning of the first clause?

2. Job 39:13. Can the peacock be meant here? Q.

A.-1. There is no " island " expressed in either the Sept. or Vulgate, which removes one difficulty. But Schultens seems to have perceived first that the word so translated is a negative, as we see in Ichabod. That sense therefore is quite opposed by those two ancient versions, and it should run thus: " Him that is not guiltless shall He deliver: yea, he shall be delivered by the pureness of thy hands."

2. The A.V. is far from a correct representation. The peacock seems first known, even to Israel in the days of Solomon, and the name is Indian Hebraized. It is the ostrich which is really in the first clause, contrasted with the stork in the second. " The wing of the ostrich flappeth joyously (or, rejoiceth): but hath she the stork's pinion and plumage?" This the Revisers considered a figure, in order perhaps to smooth the connection with what follows, and say " are her pinions and feathers kindly " (and in the margin, " like the stork's "). But assuredly the peacock is not meant here, a bird more striking for its splendid tail when expanded, which does not enter into the description given; whereas the ostrich, unlike the stork for power of flight, runs with the utmost rapidity, and is devoid of that parental fondness which characterizes the stork. The same ancient versions are vague enough.

Q.-Hab. 2:2. What is the true bearing of the last clause? There seems some confusion in the quotation of it that one almost invariably hears. Is the Synopsis or Dr. Pusey right in their view? They say that " he who runs may read it," i.e. that it was to be written so plain as to be read by the hasty glance of one that hurried by. Is it really so? Q.

A.-There can hardly be a doubt that most versions are right, but the commentators wrong, even those who have rendered the Hebrew correctly. The translation of Isaac Leeser, generally correct, is here faulty and in accord with the common mistake, " that every man may read it fluently." Is the misunderstanding due to the influence of popular misquotation? For the word is written plainly, not " that he who runs may read it," but "that he who readeth it may run "—just the opposite. The inference may be merely that the reader need not stop; but may it not be the more worthy one of earnestly pursuing the work of making known the revealed purpose of Jehovah for others also to profit thereby? When the crisis comes, as we are told by another prophet, many shall run to and fro, and knowledge (surely of a spiritual and higher sort than of the stars or of the fossils, of chemistry or of electricity) shall be increased. Assuredly the need of that is as great as it is all-important.

Christian Truth: Volume 7, Grace

Job had the blessing, but was working to keep it, as verse 5 of the first chapter shows us. He did not fully know grace, and was miserable, as he himself says in chapter 3:25,26.

God sent all the trial to teach him grace so that he might know that he neither deserved the blessing, nor could he keep it.

This lesson, when learned, made Job a happy man. How many there are like Job! If I get the blessing without deserving it, it is clear I can never lose it for want of merit. We stand in grace (Rom. 5:2). Working to keep the blessing -with that object-is to have fallen from grace (Gal. 5:4).

Christian Truth: Volume 30, Grace

Job had the blessing, but was working to keep it, as verse 5 of the first chapter shows us. He did not fully know grace, and was miserable, as he himself says in chapter 3:25, 26.

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Bible Queries, Notes on Former Queries: Vol. 2, 378; Job 12:14

Q. 378, Vol. 2-This was misprinted, and hence not answered. I wanted to know how overcomers are found in Laodicea? Why do they not move into Philadelphia, as both go on together?

A. With reference to Q. 378, it is quite true that there are overcomers in Philadelphia, but I fail to find any in Laodicea. In Thyatira there is a remnant who of course are overcomers; in Sardis again a remnant who are overcomers; in Philadelphia no remnant, but all are overcomers; in Laodicea no remnant and no overcomers, but "If any man"; our Lord outside the church, the door shut against Him, He says, " If any man," &c. Till our Lord rises from His seat at the right hand of the Father, and judgment begins, the little but mighty word " if" keeps the door of grace open for " any man " to repent and be saved. I do not know a more expressive word in the New Testament.

Q. Job 14:14. Is not Job anticipating in this and the next verse the time concerning which he speaks so confidently in chapter 19? “For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand in the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself." It seems to me that he speaks with certainty in his own mind of that “trump of God” which shall call from their graves all the sleeping saints. “Thou shalt call and I will answer thee." The ground of his confidence being his assurance that God will have a desire to the work of His own hands, His own being begotten of Him.

Christian Treasury: Volume 6, Born like a Wild Ass’s Colt

Job 11:12

As the Lord needed the colt on which He rode into Jerusalem, so He needs every sinner. "Not a very complimentary simile to compare us to an ass!" someone may say. We often find that man is compared to animals in the Scriptures. He is compared to a sow for uncleanness (2 Peter 2:22), to sheep for stupidity (Isa. 53:6), to a dog for an object of contempt (Matt. 15:26), and to an ass for wildness and willfulness Gob 11:12). I am, therefore, warranted in using an ass to illustrate the condition the sinner is in, and what the Lord is willing to do for him.

1. IN BONDAGE. As the ass was "tied" (Mark 11:2; Matt. 21:2), so is the sinner under the bondage of sin (Gal. 3:22; Rom. 6:16).

2. WITHOUT GOD. As the ass was "without" (Mark 11:4), not in a comfortable stable, so the sinner is without God in the world (Eph. 2:12).

3. PLACE OF DECISION. As the ass was in a place where two ways met (Mark 11:4), so the sinner is where two paths are found in this life-the broad and the narrow way (Matt. 7:13, 14).

4. USELESS TO GOD AS A SINNER. As the colt had never been ridden on, and therefore had been of no use (Mark 11:2), so the sinner is useless to God, for they who are in the flesh cannot please God (Rom. 8:8).

5. KNOWN BY CHRIST. As the colt was known by Christ before it was brought to Him (Mark 11:2), and He directed where and how it would be found, so Christ knew us before we knew Him. He gives in detail our natural character in Rom. 3.

6. GRACE OF GOD. As the colt was loosed by a power outside itself (Mark 11:2), so the grace of God is the only power that can free us from the consequence and control of sin (Eph. 2:5).

7. POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. As the colt was brought to Christ (Mark 11:7), so the Holy Spirit is the power that leads us to the Lamb of God who takes away our sin (1 Thess. 1:5).

8. USED BY CHRIST. As the colt was used by Christ (Mark 11:7), so those who are brought to Christ are used by Him (Col. 1:29).

9. NEEDED BY CHRIST. As the colt was needed by Christ (Mark 11:3), so He needs all His people to carry out His purposes, even as the Head needs the members of the body to accomplish its will (1 Cor. 12:12).

F. Marsh

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